

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	[5] - [ALLIANCE4EUROPE GGMBH (A4E)]
PIC number:	[897888746]
Project name and acronym:	[Read Twice] — [R2]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	[1]
Event name:	Read Twice: Countering Disinformation in a Digital Democracy.
Type:	[ workshop/training]
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	[Germany], [Berlin]
Date(s):	[February 27-28 2023]
Website(s) (if any):	<a href="https://www.themayor.eu/en/a/view/read-twice-comes-home-from-germany-with-new-tools-to-fight-online-disinformation-11593">https://www.themayor.eu/en/a/view/read-twice-comes-home-from-germany-with-new-tools-to-fight-online-disinformation-11593</a>
Participants	
Female:	24
Male:	15
Non-binary:	-
From country 1 [Bulgaria]:	11
From country 2 [Croatia]:	11
From country 3 [Romania]:	11

From country 4 [Belgium]	1		
From country 4 [Poland]	1		
From country 5: [Germany]:	2		
From country 6: [Portugal]:	2		
Total number of participants:	39	From total number of countries:	6
<b>Description</b>			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>The capacity-building ‘<i>ReadTwice: Countering disinformation in a digital democracy</i>’ was the first event of the larger ‘<i>ReadTwice</i>’ (R2) project and the core of Work Package 2, that was led by Alliance4Europe. Initially, the event was scheduled as a second, but it was agreed within the consortium to swap the two capacity-buildings in Berlin and Porto. Nevertheless, the two agendas were synchronised and complementary to each other.</p> <p>The objectives, according to the Grant Agreement were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To exchange know-how and improve the capacity of 30 young media practitioners to identify disinformation and implement state-of-the-art practices for media literacy by involving them in international capacity building in Portugal and Germany.</li> <li>▪ To promote Germany and Portugal’s experience and positive results in addressing disinformation, including through promoting media literacy by identifying at least 20 initiatives</li> </ul> <p>The workshop gathered young media professionals from Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Germany and other countries, who were identified as young media professionals.</p> <p>Other than the training, they established an international network against fake news and disinformation. It has its gathering online space in a LinkedIn group where participants share resources and opinions on the topic.</p> <p>The capacity-building programme covered innovative approaches to countering disinformation and building media literacy. The workshop involved in-house presentations and exercises (given by the team of Alliance4Europe), coupled with visits from experts from the journalistic and media fields. The agenda for the workshop can be found in the attached documents at the end of the file (titled ‘20221206 R2 Capacity Building – Agenda’).</p>			

Day one started with an introduction to disinformation, the historic link between Berlin and the topic of disinformation, and explanation of the activities to follow. Participants started with an interactive introduction round and discussed expectations.

Using the mapping produced by Alliance4Europe, the group discussed examples of how disinformation affected communities and explored best practices that are currently in place in Germany and Europe for combating malicious manipulation. (The mapping of best practices represents Task 2.1 in the R2 project plan and is available to download on this link: <https://www.themayor.eu/en/a/view/countering-disinformation-german-style-11623> )

The group was then joined by two experts from the media outlet Deutsche Welle (DW). They presented a few of the tools they have developed to verify multimedia sources and extract information to give a clearer picture of events. (An overview of these tools can be found [here](#)). A video extract of the DW presentation can be found [here](#).

The media-literacy tool Public Editor was presented to the group by an expert from Goodly Labs and the Berkeley Institute for Data science. It was discussed how the tool works and how it can have an impact in communities. [Here](#) is a video extract of the presentation. The participants then had the opportunity to go through one of the Public Editor training modules that focused on reasoning fallacies in news articles.

The day closed with an interactive discussion on key news topics and vulnerabilities the participants could see in their own communities, and what this may mean for how disinformation can spread there.

The second day started with a visit to the media outlet Der Spiegel. The group was joined by journalists from the media who led discussions on fact-checking, government responses, disinformation and extremism in Germany, and the recent revelation of the Team Jorge case.

On returning to the main venue for the workshop, the participants went into breakout groups to resume the discussions of the closing session from the day prior. These discussions used example profiles of the type of community members the participants will likely be later training, and focused on the questions: Where are the risks for disinformation? How could these risks be reduced?

The afternoon session introduced the participants to a disinformation campaign framework called DISARM. The framework, which is currently being used and tested by international institutions, breaks down the stages of a disinformation campaign into specific tactics and techniques. Participants were able to explore the framework ([available here](#)) and then

conduct an exercise which applied the framework to a real-world example (called [The GhostWriter influence campaign](#)).

The second day concluded with a session on how to train others. Participants discussed their challenges and needs for their communities, and reflected upon how the best practices and tools raised during the workshop could be applied in their context.

As a post-workshop task, the participants will each write a blog post on their learnings and findings from the workshop, to be presented at the following workshop in Porto at the end of March 2023. Their articles will be made available on the project webpage here: <https://www.themayor.eu/en/read-twice>

**Venue(s)**

**BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, Reinhardtstraße 58, 10117 Berlin (Main venue)**

The workshop took place for the whole of the 2 days in the BMW Foundation, where we welcomed the participants and the guest speakers. Some of the lecturers joined remotely from other parts of the world.

**Der Spiegel, Alexanderufer 5, 10117 Berlin (Visit)**

On the second day of the workshop, all participants visited the headquarters for the media outlet Der Spiegel in Berlin.

**Link to webpage where the EDS will be published:**

<https://www.themayor.eu/en/read-twice>

**Methods for selection of participants:**

For the 2 capacity-buildings as part of work packages 1 and 2, the R2 partners have jointly approved a selection methodology. In brief, each partner from Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, gathered 10 young media professionals/practitioners. They were pre-selected after open calls and conversations to establish the participants' motivation and capacity to participate in the following project activities. Then, they invited them to capacity-building events in Berlin and Porto. Some participants will participate in both events, while others will join only one of the CBs - this guarantees that more young people will be involved in the project and its impact will be greater.

The profile of the young media professionals was: 18-29 of age, nationals of Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia; people who work or want to develop in the media sector. These include

young journalists, social media influencers, content creators, digital competences, experts, fact-checkers.

When they return to their host countries, the young media professionals will take on the role of trainers by sharing their first-hand impressions and skills obtained from the international capacity buildings to produce and promote verifiably reliable information and inform citizens about the EU's activities to tackle the infodemic crisis, by involving them in effective proactive communication.

**Methodology for selection of participants:**

**Step 1:** Send a call for participants to each organization's networks and the young people who they are already working with.

**Step 2:** Invite prospective participants to justify their motivation to participate and explain to them the project objectives and context

**Step 3:** Rank participants, taking into account their:

- Overall motivation to engage with the project and pursue its objectives throughout the project lifetime and beyond;
- Overall motivation to participate in the event;
- Commitment to participate in subsequent project activities;
- Availability to attend the events on the specified date/time
- Attitude and reliability based on previous interactions.

Partners seeked for diversity and inclusion, gender-balance while selecting participants. Each partner did draw a list with potential participants and reserves.

**Achieved results and impact**

Before the workshop took place, the project team distributed a preliminary survey, to establish the baseline level of media literacy and disinformation response readiness of all participants and to adapt the event agenda to the needs of young participants. According to the results:

About half of the participants had taken courses in media literacy, fake news and disinformation before. All of them encounter fake news and disinformation more than once per month. Almost all of them think that the internet and social media offers the most favourable environment for the distribution of fake news and disinformation. On a scale of 1

- 10 most of the participants selected at least a 5 or higher when it comes to feeling confident in discerning fake news or disinformation in news articles online. But the majority felt even slightly more confident in discerning fake news and disinformation in social media posts, but less confident in print media and Radio/TV.

All of the participants felt pretty confident in discerning opinions from facts, none of them selected less than 6 on the scale.  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the participants said that they do check the credibility of the sources of the news they are reading most of the time or even always. The participants are familiar with the general terminology around the issues of fake news and disinformation, but at least half of the participants lack the knowledge of a more specific terminology around the issues. Nevertheless all participants seem to be fully aware of the threat and danger the spread of fake news and disinformation can cause as well as of the main reasons and drivers behind such purposely false news.

The participants want to take part in the workshop to build their skills in order to be able to give a similar training to their own communities.

### **Results and impact:**

Based on the CERV values survey that was completed at the end of the capacity-building event, the team discovered that the participants are generally well-educated, pro-democratic and they feel that they are citizens of the EU. They know about their rights as EU citizens and they identify themselves with the values of the EU. At least half of the participants are not satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. About a third of the participants think that the core values of the EU, such as fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law are NOT well protected in their country.

For the overall assessment of the workshop the majority of participants gave the highest score, which was a 5 out of 5. The majority of participants experienced an increase in awareness, knowledge, skills and cooperation from the workshop. To all participants the format and content of the event has been highly relevant and adequate to their situation and practice. Any kind of preliminary information was also evaluated from the majority of participants with a high or even very high score. Almost all participants felt that the action taken by the activity organiser helped to promote gender equality and/or to ensure equal opportunities for all. In most cases the perception on the topic of disinformation has changed during the workshop and the participants believe that they will react differently now when

confronted with the topic of disinformation. They also believe that they will use what they have learned during the workshop in their everyday lives.

From the evaluation of the received feedback from the participants and their self-assessments, we can say that the workshop was very successful. The impact the workshop had on the participants was very high and to the full satisfaction of the participants.

A more detailed evaluation on the impact compared to the baseline data will be provided at the end of the capacity building in Portugal, since the two events are complementary and have to be completed in order to establish what skills and knowledge participants have learned and improved under the R2 project.

### **Findings of the Mapping of best practices (for WP1,2)**

The Mapping of German best practices for tackling fake news and disinformation was an integral part of the Work Package 2. It aimed at identifying at least 10 initiatives (public and private) to serve as best practices in addressing fake news and promoting media literacy at national level. A4E carried out research to identify initiatives of leading organisations, experts, and practitioners in Germany, including think tanks, academia, civil society, social enterprise, schools, universities, and vocational education. The mapping outlined Germany's experience in tackling disinformation and the policy developments concerning this issue.

According to the document, in Germany countering disinformation is dispersed between government, trade union, education associations and institutions, and media. Importantly, many of these sources of best practices for countering disinformation are integrated with wider European Union initiatives and organisations. The mapped initiatives for the R2 project exemplify the critical practices used by German and International initiatives to counter disinformation. These initiatives align with the TEFU article 2, enabling the fundamental values of the European Union. Along with desk study and triangulation to mitigate the bias to bring best practices, and the newly adopted directives from the EU on tackling disinformation, this mapping offers the state-of-the-art of media literacy and practices. Target audiences are an array of actors, including the general public, government entities and NGOs. The initiatives offer media and information literacy, vocational training, and democracy education to bridge the gap between information practices. Germany's best media practices tackle the disinformation flow that violates the fundamental rights of the EU citizens. With the help of all these practices, one comes closer to the efforts made by the actors to counter disinformation and build better information practices.

