

## EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PEOPLE

**A conference to empower citizens to address cyberbullying and social media manipulation issues.**

Group Members:

Óscar, Oliver, Tiberiu, Stefania and Enrique (Spain, Italy and Romania).

### **What are the needs? (Why do we want to do this conference?)**

Nowadays, we are experiencing different media issues and we realize that, among all the problems, cyberbullying and social media manipulation are harming and killing people. Therefore, our proposal focuses on strengthening the society's response through creating a space for debate where all stakeholders have the opportunity to come together to share ideas, opinions, best practices and policy initiatives.

In order to achieve a common agreement on solutions to the current media issues and make possible changes, we would like to call for a conference to address the following needs:

1. To create a debate between all stakeholders involved to reach concrete solutions on cyberbullying and social media manipulation
2. To make sure that all the voices are represented and heard
3. To generate innovative ideas
4. To bring together European institutions and representatives from media and the general public

### **What are the objectives? (What do we want to achieve with this conference?)**

- *The objective 1* is eradicating the dynamics of the cyber-bullying and generate a critic thinking against the social media manipulation.
- *The objective 2* is to raise awareness, to promote and disseminate the outcomes of the conference.
- *The objective 3* is to address tendencies, progress and challenges of cyber-bullying and social media manipulation.
- *The objective 4* is improving media quality.
- *The objective 5* is to create a tool and space for debate where actors involved can share innovative ideas on how to tackle cyber bullying and social media manipulation.

### Description of the conference

In this conference, all 28 member countries are involved in the event. The conference should take place every two years and should last three days and it will be live streamed on the major online platforms.

Participants: government representatives, universities, public institutions, media companies, NGOs, civil society organizations, all relevant stakeholders who are interested in the topics of the conference (e.g. individuals from youth councils, informal groups, etc.).

Topics: cyberbullying and social media manipulation will be the main themes of the conference. We have chosen to focus on these issues as there is evidence on the rising of these phenomena at a global scale.

Regarding cyberbullying, a lot of research has been commissioned, and this shows the growing importance of this phenomenon, especially among teenagers and young people. At the European level, studies show that North-eastern European countries tend to have the highest rate of online risks experienced by children and young people, including bullying online, whereas Western and Southern European countries have the lowest risks encountered online. Furthermore, cyber-bullying is directly linked to mental health issues and suicide tendencies.<sup>1</sup>

As for social media manipulation, this is clearly perceived as critical threat public life. In fact, government agencies and political parties have an invested interest in spreading fake news and increasing control and censorship especially in political elections periods. This affects people's trust in media, public institutions and science.<sup>2</sup>

Outcomes of the conference:

- to raise awareness;
- to create new guidelines in order to improve trust in social media;
- to generate new ideas and stimulate active participation;
- to increase accessibility on high quality information;
- to create a website containing all materials collected from the conference (videos, news, official documents, statements, policy papers, positions);
- to set tools to create a strategy to reduce control over people's lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL\\_STU\(2016\)571367\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU(2016)571367_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/research/cybertroops2018/>