



RURAL CITIZEN LAB 4 EU

WHITE BOOK

RURAL EUROPEAN'S VIEWS ON DEMOCRACY AND MISINFORMATION



Context

Misinformation has existed for centuries, but the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sharp increase in its spread. This exposure to false information has had a real and measurable impact on the health of European citizens, including in rural areas, which are a pillar of the European Union. The European Parliament has stated that it is aware of growing dissatisfaction among rural citizens, who feel neither listened to nor helped with their problems. The development of these areas is therefore a priority for European institutions, in economic, social and civic terms. Faced with this problem of misinformation, what should we do to avoid it?



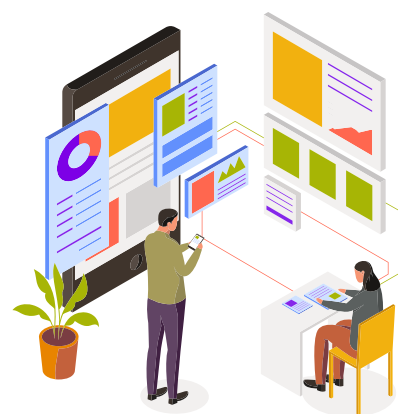
About the programme:

The European program "Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values" aims to protect and promote the rights and values enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

It is based on 4 pillars:

- Equality, rights and gender equality;
- Citizen involvement and participation;
- Daphné: combating violence, particularly gender-based violence and violence against children;
- EU values: protecting and promoting the values of the European Union, such as democracy, freedom, and unity.

The CERV program offers significant funding opportunities for civil society organizations at local, regional, national, and transnational levels to support democratic, inclusive, and egalitarian societies and promote a European vision within civil society.



Organizations involved

To carry out the project, five organizations from four different European countries joined forces.

- Foyer rural CEPAGE (France)
- DRPDNM (Slovenia)
- CICIA (Romania)
- ADEGUA (Spain)
- Maison de l'Europe de Montpellier (France)

The Project

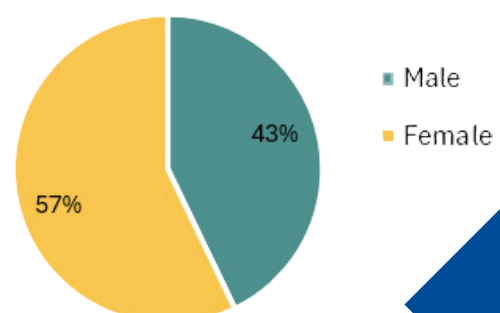
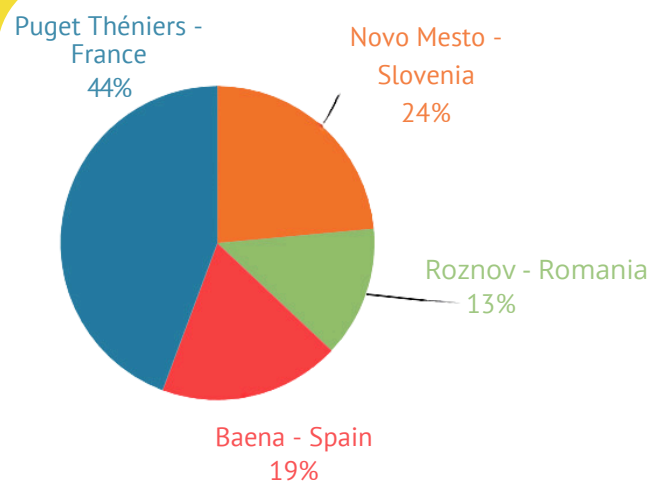


The Foyer rural CEPAGE, ADEGUA, CICIA, and DRPDNM each organized two round tables in their area. These two events were aimed at different audiences. The first one took place in a school setting and provided an opportunity to gather the opinions of young people in rural areas on disinformation and democracy, at both European and local levels. The second one was open to the public, allowing all citizens to express their views and participate in the creation of a census of the views and ideas of people living in rural areas of the European Union.

Methodology

To ensure that citizens can express themselves freely, we ask them to answer specific.

Thanks to the World Café format, a facilitation technique used to create small-group debates in a dynamic format, the round table participants were able to express their visions and ideas without being constrained by a restrictive format. A total of 616 people took part in the round tables. 57% of the participants were women. There was a wide range of qualifications and ages among the participants.



Results

The opinions and views of the European citizens interviewed at the round tables about Democracy answer that populism and extremism are the main threats to democracy. The consensus among the participants was that once elected, political decision-makers no longer listen to their citizens and decide in their place, without taking account of their electoral promises. There is a trust crisis of citizens toward political representatives.

Although misinformation has always existed, the development of new technologies has accentuated this phenomenon. It is increasingly easy to create and disseminate false information to social Networks and artificial intelligence. However, many citizens, particularly younger ones, have highlighted the importance of social networks as a space for free expression and opposition, particularly to governments in power, which is essential for a healthy democracy. The consensus was that some form of control should be imposed to ensure that the media could not publish false information without sanction.

Broadcast

More than just an inventory of rural citizens across the European Union, this document should support legislators and political representatives in rural areas or at the European level. This project's high level of interest has shown that the people who live in these areas want to be heard. By distributing this white paper, we give political decision-makers a voice. This White Book is a photography of the opinions and ideas of rural citizens throughout Europe.

French Version



**Funded by
the European Union**

English Version

