

Creative Europe Programme (CREA)



[MEdia Literacy for SEnior European citizens]

Project Deliverable

D2.1

Inventory of Best Practices and  
Educational Resources

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## Scope

This document provides the results for the first phase of the MELISE project, namely Media Literacy of Senior Citizens in Europe for the Deliverable 2.1 Inventory of Best Practices and Educational Resources. In this document, we can see the work of all partners of the MELISE consortium. D 2.1 consists of 7 desk research about the status of media literacy for senior citizens in Europe in

different countries. Finally, in the document we can find the results of our research aiming to find the existing gaps that will be covered in the next Deliverables.

## 1. Introduction

This report is produced in the framework of the Erasmus+ (name of the program). This joint research project MELISE – Media Literacy for Senior Citizens in Europe – is coordinated by Editorial Octaedro from Spain. The consortium has 9 partners from 5 European countries, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Spain and Greece. We count with 2 higher education (HE) partners and 7 SMEs.

Media literacy is an essential part of our modern society. The ability to access, analyze and evaluate media messages, and to create and share media content effectively, is now more necessary than ever. As technology advances, the number of media platforms available to people increases. In this scenario, older people face a number of challenges related to digital technology. A number of factors limit or hinder their use, such as unfamiliarity with digital technology, cognitive impairments, sensory disabilities, sometimes limited access to technology or the internet, and fear of being scammed. This digital divide among older people can have a negative impact on their overall well-being. On the one hand, older people who are not digitally literate are at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing information, which can lead to social isolation and lack of engagement with current affairs. On the other hand, older people who are digitally literate are more likely to engage with their communities, participate in social activities and maintain cognitive function. Media literacy education can play a crucial role in bridging this digital divide. It can enable them to navigate the digital landscape, access relevant information and critically evaluate media messages. In addition, media literacy enables older people to create and share their own media content, which can be a valuable tool for self-expression and social engagement. So we see that media literacy is a constantly evolving field. The MELISE project is linked to the need to be prepared to respond to the changing media landscape. It is committed to the development of critical media literacy skills in relation to the following issues:

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- Critical thinking: this is a fundamental component of media literacy and involves questioning the authenticity, accuracy and reliability of media content. This includes evaluating sources, checking for bias and verifying facts.
- Digital citizenship: This involves understanding and applying ethical and responsible behaviour when using digital media. This includes respecting privacy, staying safe online and actively participating in digital communities.
- Social networking: Social media has become a pervasive force in our lives.

Media literacy programmes need to teach people how to navigate social media effectively. This includes understanding privacy settings, identifying fake news and misinformation, and recognising the impact of social media on mental health. On the basis of the above, the MELISE project aims to achieve the following general objectives:

- Preventing disinformation: With the rise of fake news and disinformation, it is crucial to be media literate in order to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information. Older people can be particularly vulnerable to misinformation due to their limited exposure to digital media and lack of familiarity.
- Avoid scams: Older people are often targeted by scammers who use digital media to deceive and defraud them. Media literacy can help older people identify and avoid scams.
- Communication: Knowing how to use social networking and messaging apps can help older people stay connected.
- Improving mental health: In today's world, it is important to understand the consequences of misusing digital technologies and to learn how to use them ethically and responsibly.

In order to work towards these goals, the MELISE project has the following specific objectives

SO1. To help media literacy practitioners adapt their practices to the rapidly changing media landscape and consumption patterns. To this end, this web

platform will facilitate the exchange of high quality content, provide a permanent forum for media literacy trainers to share knowledge and experience, and promote best practice for older people.

SO2. Develop inclusive and diverse learning resources, tools and educational materials for older people. This will promote their critical media literacy and enable them to recognise and respond appropriately to misinformation.

SO3. Increase the capacity and expertise of media literacy professionals to teach older people, thereby promoting a more inclusive society.

SO4. Strengthen cooperation and collaboration between partnerships to develop complementary activities based on shared knowledge, good practice and common synergies. The aim is to promote a pan-European consortium that extends media literacy tools and good practice across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries.

To increase the visibility of the CREA program by disseminating the results and achievements of the project.

To accomplish these objectives, we conducted desk research for 7 European countries. Our aim is to collect the best practices and educational resources for media literacy across Europe. We have analyzed the practices developed and implemented on media literacy specifically on media literacy for senior citizens. Our aim is to refer to the tactics-methods used in each of them and point out the existing gaps in the media literacy programs and their focus on senior citizens. The current task aims to justify the role of MELISE and gather the existing initiatives and the gaps that our project is called to cover. Based on the gaps noticed the content of the courses will be developed. Also, emphasis will be placed on the methodologies developed in each project. Additionally, we did an analysis at the European level, to gain some insights about the media literacy for Senior Citizens around Europe. In this document, we can see the work of all partners of the MELISE consortium, for D 2.1.

So, in the next sections, there is a compilation of the work conducted by all consortium partners, the main results/conclusions that we learned from it.



## 2. Desk Research for each country

### 2.1 Austria

The desk research for Austria was conducted by IDYL Lernen, the German-based partner of the consortium.

#### 2.1.1. Media literacy in Austria

Media literacy programs are offered by various institutions and initiatives that focus on promoting the safe and responsible use of digital media. These programs are aimed at different target groups, including children, young people, parents and teachers. Saferinternet.at is an initiative supported by the EU as part of the CEF Telecom program and offers extensive resources and training to strengthen the media skills of children and young people. The platform promotes the safe use of digital media and provides information for parents and teachers. Demokratiezentrum Wien in cooperation with the Association of Austrian Adult Education Centers, a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) was developed that focuses on democratic political education. This course is flexible and can be attended from any place and at any time, making media literacy education widely accessible. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, the Federal Chancellery also offers information and resources on media literacy, focusing on the promotion of media education in society. Various programs and initiatives are presented that aim to increase media literacy among the population. In Austria, several organizations offer media literacy programs that focus on promoting the critical and responsible use of media. Medien-Jugend-Info (MJi): This initiative of the Federal Chancellery offers workshops and seminars for young people, parents and educational professionals. The MJi continuously develops new media education programs that are tailored to the needs of the target groups. Wiener Bildungsserver offers comprehensive information on media education and supports schools in integrating media skills into the classroom. Various perspectives on media education are dealt

with here in order to prepare pupils for the digital world. Centre for Information and Media Literacy (CIM) offers training courses for schools, universities and adults that focus on information literacy and the use of digital media.

Media literacy programs are supported by various organizations and institutions, communicated through their close cooperation and a variety of channels to effectively reach the target groups. In particular through national institutions and government agencies. Online platforms and resources that provide information, workshops and guides on media education that are accessible to teachers, students and parents alike. The Federal Chancellery supports the promotion of media literacy through various programs and information services aimed at the general public. It promotes the development of media literacy as a key qualification in the digital society. Publications and publications by institutions such as Medien-Jugend-Info and the magazine Medienimpulse, which regularly publish articles and reports on current media education topics and new programs. The 'Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research' plays a central role in the development and support of media literacy programs. It promotes initiatives that can be integrated into the school curriculum and provides resources for teachers and pupils.

### 2.1.2. Media literacy for senior citizens in Austria

In Austria, special media literacy programs are offered for senior citizens to make it easier for them to use digital media and promote their digital participation. 'Digi4Family' offers webinars aimed specifically at senior citizens. They help people familiarize themselves with digital media and tools and improve their communication skills. Digitalessenioren.at platform offers extensive information, studies and materials on digital education for older people. It supports education providers in developing programs that are tailored to the needs of senior citizens and provides examples of good practice. 'PC and internet meeting points' promote dialogue and learning how to use digital media in a supportive community. 'Senior Media Mentor Programme' is offered in some federal states and enables older people to train as media mentors. 'Media education through local initiatives' such as adult education centers offer special courses and workshops geared towards



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the needs of older people. These programs aim to reduce fear of contact and awaken interest in digital technologies.

Numerous media literacy programs are active in Austria, but there are no specific statistics documenting the exact number of these programs. The available information suggests that there are a variety of initiatives - some of which have already been mentioned - that are supported by different actors, including state institutions, educational organizations and local initiatives. The response to media literacy promotion among seniors in Austria is characterized by a growing awareness of the importance of digital participation, both on an individual and institutional level. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that seniors receive the support they need to use digital media safely and competently. Many seniors are showing an increasing interest in using digital media, especially to keep in touch with family and friends. The ability to use video telephony is seen as particularly valuable for participating in the lives of their loved ones.

### 2.1.3. Institutions for Media literacy initiatives for Senior Citizens

There are various institutions, universities and NGOs in Austria that are involved in promoting media literacy among senior citizens. Some of the most important players have already been named in paragraph 4. Scientific work and studies show that the discussion of media literacy in old age has long been neglected, but is becoming increasingly important. It is emphasized that it is necessary to improve the training of teachers and mentors in order to offer more effective programs for seniors. Educational institutions such as the University of Vienna offer programs and research projects that deal with the digital education of older people. These institutions develop didactic concepts for the effective use of learning technologies. In Austria, learning technologies, including Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle, are increasingly being used to deliver courses for seniors. Some organizations are using e-learning platforms such as Moodle to make it easier for seniors to access media literacy courses. Webinars and online courses

such as the Senior Media Mentor Program are combined with face-to-face sessions to provide a flexible and interactive teaching experience. In Austria, some universities offer special modules and programs to promote media literacy, such as media education, with some modules in the areas of methodology and didactics, media ethics, teaching and learning with media, communication theory, media design and practice.

There are various partnerships and networks in Austria with foreign organizations in the field of media literacy promotion, particularly at European level Saferinternet.at is part of an EU program and networks with partners from other European countries in order to exchange resources and best practices. Austrian educational institutions participate in European cooperation projects as part of Erasmus+ to promote media literacy across borders. Austria is part of the European strategy to promote digital skills and works together with other member states to realize common goals. There is a lively exchange and joint projects between Austria and Germany in the field of media education, e.g. through cooperation between educational institutions. Austrian Development Cooperation supports Eastern Partnership countries such as Armenia, Georgia and Moldova in developing media literacy and strengthening digital skills.

Various agreements have been signed between the French government, the regulatory authority Arcom, the Centre for Media and Information Education (CLEMI), the University of Sorbonne (CELSA) and ARTE Education to jointly strengthen media literacy. Many universities in Austria offer special certificate courses to help seniors develop media skills. These programs are often free or inexpensive and are funded by various institutions. In the context of new media, university lecturers rely on the services of organizations that support them in preparing and running their courses. A new division of labor is emerging in which the technical implementation, support and evaluation are taken over by external bodies in addition to the content creation. Universities often work together with computer centers, media production service centers and other institutions to support teachers in the integration of new media.

In Austria, there are successful examples of cooperation between business and universities in the field of media skills. These co-operations aim to promote the

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media skills of students and at the same time fulfill the requirements of the economy. Universities of Applied Sciences often collaborate with companies to develop practical projects that offer students hands-on experience in media literacy. These collaborations can take the form of internships, joint research projects or workshops. Many universities participate in European projects as part of the Erasmus+ program, which promotes the exchange of students and teachers. These programs often also include modules on media skills and enable the exchange of best practices between different countries. Universities carry out joint research projects with companies to address current challenges in the field of media literacy. These projects not only promote research, but also offer students the opportunity to work on real-life problems and expand their skills. Initiatives such as ‘Digitalisation and media literacy: often launched by universities in cooperation with industry, aim to promote digital education. They offer programs aimed specifically at certain target groups, including senior citizens, to improve their media skills.

### 2.1.4. Media literacy competencies and validation

The recognition and validation of media skills is an important aspect of educational and social policy. There are various systems and programs aimed at promoting and assessing media skills. Austria has introduced the digital competence model ‘DigComp 2.2 AT’, which is based on the European DigComp standard. This model serves as a framework for defining and assessing digital competences. Programs such as ‘Info.Sicher’ offer free courses that are divided into several modules. After completing these modules, participants receive a certificate attesting to their digital media skills. This is particularly valuable for people who want to demonstrate their skills on CVs. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research’s ‘Competence Framework for Media Education’ defines what skills and knowledge are expected in terms of media literacy. This framework is used in schools and educational institutions. Efforts are being made to evaluate the effectiveness of media literacy initiatives. This is done by collecting data on the

participation and learning outcomes of participants and by analyzing the impact on media use and critical thinking.

The validation of informally acquired competences is playing an increasingly important role for educational institutions (universities and vocational training institutions) as well as for companies and employers. In Austria, IT-supported validation tools are used to record and assess informally and non-formally acquired competences. Austria has introduced the digital competence model 'DigComp 2.2 AT', which is based on the European DigComp standard. This model serves as a framework for defining and assessing digital competences. It includes various dimensions of media competence that help participants to identify and develop their skills. Such competence models are often used in digital tools and assessments that enable participants to self-assess and evaluate their digital competences. Examples include the 'Info.Sicher' initiative, which provides free online tests to assess media skills.

In Austria, several players are working together to promote and standardize the recognition and validation of skills. Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research plays a central role in the development and implementation of the Austrian validation strategy. It promotes the integration of validation procedures into the education system and supports various initiatives for the recognition of informal learning processes. Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) is responsible for quality assurance in higher education and develops recommendations for the recognition of non-formal and informal competences. The agency works on the creation of quality assurance procedures for the validation of these competences at higher education institutions. The Austrian Academy for Continuing Education (wba) offers programs for the validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. It supports the development of standards and procedures for the recognition of these competences. Various adult education institutions in Austria carry out validation procedures. Austrian organizations participate in European projects dealing with the validation of informal learning. One example is the Erasmus+ project 'Transnational Peer Review in Validation of non-formal and informal Learning Extended', which promotes the exchange and networking of validation

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initiatives. Initiatives at regional level, such as the ‘Du kannst was’ initiative in Upper Austria and Salzburg, which aim to make informally acquired skills visible and validate them. These initiatives often work in cooperation with local education providers and companies.

### 2.2.Germany

The desk research for Germany was conducted by IDYL Lernen, the German-based partner of the consortium.

#### 2.2.1. Media literacy in Germany

In Germany, media literacy programs are offered by various organizations and institutions that focus on promoting digital skills in different target groups, including senior citizens. The programs are diverse and are supported by both governmental and non-governmental actors. The evaluation of media literacy initiatives plays an important role in measuring and adapting the effectiveness of the programs. In Germany, there are efforts to systematically evaluate media literacy promotion in order to better understand and address the specific needs of target groups, including senior citizens.

Media literacy programs are offered by a broad network of organizations and institutions that focus on promoting digital skills. These programs are crucial to facilitate older people’s access to the digital world and promote their participation in society. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) funds media literacy projects aimed at different age groups, including senior citizens. It supports initiatives that promote the creative and responsible use of digital media. The state media authorities in Germany, such as the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia or the Media Authority. Organizations such as the Digital Opportunities Foundation are committed to the digital participation of seniors. Many adult education centers in Germany offer special media literacy courses for seniors. Universities, such as the TH Köln, are developing research projects and teaching concepts on media literacy that also involve senior citizens. These

programs can be interdisciplinary and combine social, technical and educational aspects.

In Germany, media literacy programs are offered through various communication channels and supported by national institutions and governments. Many programs are communicated through public events, workshops and seminars. Institutions use online platforms and social media to promote their programs and provide information. This includes websites, newsletters and social media channels that are regularly updated to inform the public about new offers and events. Schools, adult education centers and universities integrate media literacy into their curricula and communicate this through their official channels. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) has issued recommendations on media education that serve as a guide for schools to anchor media literacy as a compulsory task. Scientific and academic publications play an important role in the communication of media literacy initiatives. Important players at federal level are the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport Affairs (BMDV) and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). Federal Centre for Child and Youth Media Protection (BZKJ) plays a central role in the development of programs that focus on the media literacy of children and young people and often works in cooperation with other ministries and organizations. State Media Authorities are responsible for the implementation of media literacy projects at regional level. They offer training, workshops and information materials aimed at various target groups, including senior citizens and families. Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) formulates recommendations and strategies for media education in schools and supports the federal states in integrating media literacy into the curricula.

### 2.2.2. Media literacy for senior citizens in Germany

In Germany, special media literacy programs for senior citizens are offered by various organizations and institutions to make it easier for older people to access digital media and to promote their media literacy. Senior media mentor program is a program offered by the Baden-Württemberg State Media Centre (LMZ). It aims to enable older people to use computers, smartphones and the internet safely and

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independently. Seniorennetz Berlin, supported by the AWO Landesverband Berlin e.V., offers a platform to strengthen the digital participation of older people. It includes free tablet courses for internet beginners and provides analogue contact points. Wissensdurstig.de is a portal which belongs to the Federal Working Group of Senior Citizens' Organizations and provides information on educational offers for seniors. Smart Seniors offers structured training for seniors to learn basic digital skills. The courses cover a range of topics, from smartphone use to social media and online communication. Digital Opportunities Foundation promotes digital participation and offers special programs for senior citizens to make it easier for them to access digital media and strengthen their media skills.

In Germany, numerous players are active in the field of media literacy, focusing on the promotion of digital skills and the responsible use of media. These actors include government institutions as well as non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF) is responsible for the development and promotion of educational programs, including media literacy. It supports initiatives aimed at integrating media education in schools. Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport Affairs (BMDV) promotes digital education and media literacy programmes to strengthen digital participation in society. State media authorities are responsible for the implementation of media literacy projects at regional level. Adult education centers offer specialized media literacy courses tailored to the needs of older people and other target groups. Universities are developing research projects and teaching concepts on media literacy that also involve senior citizens. These programs combine social, technical and educational aspects. BAGSO (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft d. Seniorenorganisationen): This organization is committed to the digital participation of older people and promotes media literacy programs. Stiftung Digitale Chancen, Digital Opportunities Foundation promotes digital participation and offers special programs for senior citizens to make it easier for them to access digital media. Although there are no comprehensive statistics that quantify all media literacy

stakeholders in Germany, studies show that 46% of Internet users surveyed in Germany have low levels of media literacy, 33% have medium levels, while only 22% achieve high levels.

In Germany, individuals and interest groups are responding to the promotion of media literacy among senior citizens in various ways. These responses are characterized by a growing awareness of the importance of digital skills in old age and the need to engage older people in the digital world. Many seniors show interest in media literacy programs to improve their digital media skills. Studies show that older people are increasingly willing to take part in training courses and workshops to learn how to use smartphones, tablets and the internet, for example. Senior media mentoring programs, such as the one run by the Baden-Württemberg State Media Centre, rely on peer-to-peer approaches in which experienced seniors help other older people. This form of knowledge transfer is considered to be particularly effective as it is based on trust and shared experiences. Adult education centers and other educational institutions offer targeted courses for senior citizens that are tailored to their needs and prior knowledge. These institutions recognize the need to make digital education accessible to older people and develop corresponding programs. Organizations such as BAGSO (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen) actively promote digital participation for senior citizens. They promote the networking of initiatives and offer information materials to raise awareness of the importance of media literacy. Support from state institutions, such as the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, is crucial. These ministries promote media literacy programs and provide funding to strengthen digital education for seniors. Media use among senior citizens shows that many older people use the internet primarily for basic activities such as email communication and searching for information. According to a study by the Federal Statistical Office, senior citizens between the ages of 65 and 74 use the internet primarily for emails and information research, while the use of social networks is less pronounced.



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### 2.2.3. Institutions for Media Literacy initiatives for Senior Citizens

The Project 'KommiT - Communication with intelligent technology', led by the TH Cologne, developed a media education concept to reduce older people's fear of contact and awaken their interest in the digital world. Volunteers were trained as 'KommiT companions' to support senior citizens in the use of digital media. Project 'DiBiWohn', in collaboration with various universities, focuses on digital education processes for older people in senior-specific forms of housing. The aim is to develop informal and non-formal educational formats to introduce senior citizens to digital media. The Federal Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) is actively committed to the digital participation of older people. It promotes the networking of initiatives, offers information material and raises awareness of the importance of media skills in old age. Digital Opportunities Foundation promotes digital participation and offers special programs for senior citizens to make it easier for them to access digital media. The programs include technical support and lifelong learning. AWO Landesverband Berlin e.V with the 'Seniorennetz Berlin' project, the AWO Landesverband is making a contribution to strengthening digital participation in old age. The project is based on a platform for the collection of offers, analogue contact points and free tablet courses for internet newcomers.

In Germany, various institutions, apart from universities, offer special media literacy programs for senior citizens. These programs aim to make it easier for older people to access digital media and to promote their media skills. Baden-Württemberg State Media Centre (LMZ) trains interested senior citizens to become media mentors. These mentors help other older people to use digital media safely and independently. The program includes training on topics such as internet use, data security and communication options on the internet. The LMZ also offers information events and workshops for older media users. Digital Opportunities Foundation promotes digital participation and offers special programs for senior citizens. These programs focus on technical support, lifelong learning and the teaching of media skills. AWO Landesverband Berlin e.V. - Seniorennetz Berlin, is a project that strengthens the digital participation of older

people. It provides a platform for collecting offers and organizes training courses that are specifically geared towards the needs of senior citizens. 'Digital-Kompass' is an initiative that offers local contact points for senior citizens to help them deal with digital media. Foundation MedienKompetenz Forum Südwest operates the 'Silver Tips' portal, which provides information and tips for senior citizens on the use of new media.

In Germany, learning technologies, including Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle, are increasingly being used to deliver media literacy programs, especially for senior citizens. LMS such as Moodle are used in various educational institutions and by organizations to deliver digital learning content and manage participation in media literacy courses. Many programs combine face-to-face events with online learning modules. This allows seniors to learn at their own pace while receiving personalized support in face-to-face courses. Blended learning is seen as an effective method to facilitate the transition to digital learning formats. Platforms such as 'Digital-Kompass' offer special e-learning courses for seniors organized via LMS. These platforms enable senior citizens to familiarize themselves with digital technologies and improve their skills in a protected environment. Organizations such as the 'Stiftung Digitale Chancen' and the 'BAGSO' use learning technologies to support their media literacy programs for seniors. These organizations use LMS to provide training and materials tailored to the specific needs of older people. Many adult education centers in Germany integrate LMS into their educational programs for seniors. These institutions offer courses that combine both digital and analogue learning formats to meet the different needs of participants.

In Germany, there are various support measures from the public and other parties that promote the acquisition and validation of media skills for senior citizens. The Senior Media Mentor Programme of the Baden-Württemberg is funded by the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg and offers training on topics such as internet safety, data protection and the use of smartphones and tablets. The aim of the Digital Opportunities Foundation is to get people, especially senior citizens, interested in the possibilities of the internet and to help them get started. Digital-Kompass is an initiative that organizes over 150 PC and Internet meeting

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points for senior citizens throughout Germany. 'Wissensdurstig.de' is an Internet portal of the BAGSO (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen) that provides information on educational offers for older people. The Silver Tipps portal, run by the MedienKompetenz Forum Südwest foundation, offers information and tips for senior citizens on the use of new media.

In Germany, there are special programs and modules for acquiring media literacy-related skills in higher education that are aimed particularly at senior citizens. The 'Senior Media Mentor Programme' of the Baden-Württemberg State Media Centre offers a ten-hour training course for senior citizens who are training to become media mentors. Project 'KommiT - Communication with intelligent technology', which was carried out by several partners, including universities, aims to reduce older people's fear of contact and awaken their interest in digital media. 'Digital-Kompass' is an initiative that offers local contact points for senior citizens to help them deal with digital media. Many adult education centers in Germany offer special media literacy courses for senior citizens. These courses are often practice-orientated and cover topics such as internet use, social media and data protection.

In Germany, there are various partnerships and initiatives that deal with the promotion of media literacy for senior citizens, also in an international context. The European Union has launched several programs dealing with media literacy. These initiatives aim to promote media literacy among different age groups, including senior citizens. The program funds projects that focus on media education for older people. These programs enable the exchange of best practices between different European countries and institutions in order to improve the digital participation of seniors. The Senior Media Mentor Programme of the Landesmedienzentrum Baden-Württemberg is part of a broader initiative that also takes international aspects into account. It promotes the exchange of experiences and methods with other European countries in order to strengthen the media skills of senior citizens. Digital Opportunities Foundation works with various international partners to develop programs to promote digital participation. These

partnerships aim to strengthen the media literacy of seniors and promote the exchange of best practices.

The e-teaching@university project in North Rhine-Westphalia links universities with industry in order to develop media-competent forms of teaching and learning. It promotes the exchange between educational institutions and companies in order to implement innovative teaching methods and improve the media skills of students. The results of this project are documented in the 'Schriftenreihe Medienkompetenz des Landes NRW', which also serves as a platform for dialogue between various stakeholders. In cooperation with companies, many universities offer workshops and training courses that focus on improving media skills. Universities and companies often work together on research projects to explore new technologies and media developments. These collaborations make it possible to put scientific findings directly into practice and develop innovative solutions for current challenges. An important aspect of cooperation is the development of further education programs that are tailored to the needs of industry. Universities offer special programs that focus on media literacy and digital skills in order to train skilled workers for the labor market. Cooperation between universities and industry also promotes innovation. Universities help to develop new ideas and put them into practice, while companies gain access to the latest research results and technologies. This is particularly important in areas such as the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), where the demand for qualified specialists is high.

#### 2.2.4. Media literacy competencies and validation

In Germany, there are various approaches to recognizing and validating media skills, but a standardized system is still lacking. Educational institutions are increasingly recognizing the need to validate informally and non-formally acquired competences. This enables students to integrate their practical experience and skills into formal educational pathways. Programs such as 'ValiKom' offer standardized procedures for the validation of competences acquired outside the formal education system. IT-supported validation tools are increasingly being used to validate informally and non-formally acquired competences. E-learning

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platforms such as Moodle or other Learning Management Systems (LMS) are used to document learning progress and support the validation of competences. Initiatives such as the European Digital Competence Reference Framework (DigComp) provide a structured approach to the assessment and validation of digital skills. Software validation is increasingly being used in vocational education and training and in companies. Companies such as DHC Consulting offer services that focus on the validation of computerized systems (CSV). The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) has developed various methods for measuring and validating competences that include IT-supported procedures. The 'Handbook on the validation of non-formally and informally acquired competences' provides an overview of various methods and instruments for validation.

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) is a central institution in Germany that deals with vocational education and training. It has published studies and reports dealing with the challenges and opportunities of validating informal and non-formal learning. BIBB develops concepts for integrating these forms of learning into the German education system and supports the implementation of validation procedures. Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung (DZHW) conducts research projects that deal with the validation of learning achievements and outcomes. It investigates how informal learning can be integrated into higher education systems and which framework conditions are necessary for this. The 'f-bb' (Forschungsinstitut für Berufsbildung) is active in researching and developing validation procedures for informal and non-formal learning. It has conducted studies that analyse the recognition of such forms of learning in Germany and make recommendations for implementation.

### 2.3 Greece

The desk research for Greece was conducted by Peace Journalism Laboratory, Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Greek partners of the consortium.

### 2.3.1 Media literacy in Greece

In Greece, media literacy programs are increasingly being provided through online platforms, reflecting a broader European trend towards digital education. These programs are designed to be accessible to citizens regardless of their physical location, offering flexibility and inclusivity. Several key initiatives illustrate the approach Greece is taking. The National Digital Academy, for example, provides a range of online courses that cover basic and advanced digital skills, helping to enhance media literacy among the general population. These courses are part of a broader effort by the Greek government to foster digital competencies across society, including critical aspects like safe internet use, digital citizenship, and understanding the impact of digital technologies on society.

Additionally, the Hellenic Center for Safe Internet offers educational resources aimed at promoting safe and responsible online behavior, particularly for young people. These resources include interactive materials for students and informative content for parents and teachers, all of which are accessible online. In the educational sector, media literacy is being integrated into school curricula, although the approach is still evolving. The introduction of digital literacy and critical thinking skills into high school curricula is a positive step, yet challenges remain, particularly in the formal training of educators in media literacy pedagogy. The curriculum also incorporates media literacy through broader subjects like digital technologies and citizenship, though the implementation is sometimes inconsistent due to varying levels of teacher preparedness.

One of the significant challenges in the practical implementation of media literacy in Greece is the lack of standardized training for educators. Currently, media literacy is taught by teachers from various disciplines, who may not have specific training in this field. This can lead to inconsistencies in how media literacy is taught and understood across different schools. The pedagogical approach to media literacy in Greece is still developing. Schools traditionally focus on language literacy and academic skills, and media literacy is often an add-on rather than a fully integrated part of the curriculum. This reflects a broader issue in many educational systems, where new literacies are introduced without sufficient support or infrastructure to ensure their effective teaching.

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Media literacy in Greece is progressing, with significant efforts being made through online platforms and educational reforms. However, the field is still in development, particularly in formal education, where more structured training for educators and clearer curricular guidelines are needed. Public and private sector collaborations are playing a vital role in advancing media literacy, but challenges such as the digital divide and inconsistent implementation remain significant hurdles. As these programs continue to evolve, they will be crucial in equipping Greek citizens with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of the digital age.

Media literacy programs are offered by a diverse array of organizations, each contributing uniquely to the educational landscape in this field. The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute plays a critical role by focusing on the research and development of media literacy programs. It engages in various initiatives to promote the understanding and critical evaluation of audiovisual content among different demographics. The National Centre for Audiovisual Media and Communication (EKOME) is another pivotal organization in this space. EKOME is dedicated to advancing media literacy through a combination of educational programs and public awareness campaigns. It collaborates with schools, educators, and media professionals to integrate media literacy into educational curricula and to promote the responsible use of digital media. EKOME's initiatives often extend to creating synergies with other European organizations to enhance the impact of its media literacy programs. The Greek Safer Internet Centre is instrumental in promoting internet safety and digital literacy, particularly among young people. It provides a wide range of educational resources designed to teach safe and responsible online behavior. This organization collaborates with schools and parents to ensure that children and adolescents are equipped with the knowledge to navigate the digital world securely. Another significant contributor is the European School Radio, which offers media literacy through the lens of radio broadcasting. This platform allows students to create and broadcast their own radio shows, thereby learning about media production, communication, and the

ethical considerations of broadcasting. This practical approach helps students to develop critical thinking skills related to media content creation and consumption.

The Digital National Academy, operated under the Hellenic Ministry of Digital Governance, offers a comprehensive array of online courses aimed at enhancing digital competencies across all age groups. These courses are designed to be accessible to everyone, emphasizing inclusivity in digital education. The platform covers a wide range of topics from basic digital skills to more advanced media literacy, focusing on critical issues like misinformation and digital safety.

Internationally, the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Alliance supports Greek organizations by providing a global framework for media literacy. This alliance helps integrate international best practices into local initiatives, ensuring that Greece's media literacy programs are aligned with global standards.

The Digital Solidarity Platform and initiatives like "Can be heard 2021" also contribute to the media literacy landscape in Greece. These initiatives often target specific communities, promoting digital inclusion and ensuring that marginalized groups have access to media literacy resources. Among these, THISAM stands out as a prominent annual event organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Media of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. THISAM, which stands for Thessaloniki International Summer Academy on Media (THISAM), is an annual conference and summer school that offers in-depth education in media literacy. It brings together students, academics, and professionals from around the world to engage with current issues in media and communication, providing a platform for learning and discussion on topics such as media literacy, digital communication, and ethical journalism.

Similarly, the Peace Journalism Lab, also part of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, focuses on the intersection of journalism and conflict resolution. This lab offers specialized training in peace journalism, which is a critical component of media literacy. It emphasizes the role of the media in promoting peace and understanding in conflict situations, teaching participants how to report in ways that avoid sensationalism and instead foster dialogue and reconciliation. The lab's work is integral to advancing a more nuanced and responsible approach to journalism, particularly in regions affected by conflict. Both THISAM and the Peace



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Journalism Lab are integral parts of Greece's broader efforts to enhance media literacy. They provide specialized education that equips participants with the skills needed to critically analyze media content and understand the impact of journalism on society. Through conferences, workshops, and educational programs, these initiatives contribute significantly to the cultivation of a media-literate society in Greece. The Greek Ministry of Education also plays a crucial role by integrating media literacy into the national curriculum. However, the approach is still developing, with ongoing efforts to standardize media literacy education across all educational levels. These organizations collectively contribute to a comprehensive media literacy framework in Greece, each bringing its unique focus and expertise to the broader goal of empowering citizens to navigate the media landscape critically and responsibly.

The communication of media literacy programs in Greece is carried out through a multifaceted approach that leverages various platforms and channels to reach diverse audiences effectively. These programs are disseminated primarily through online platforms and dedicated websites, which serve as central hubs for accessing educational materials, resources, and information about upcoming events. Educational institutions and schools also play a crucial role in the communication process, integrating media literacy content into their curricula and organizing workshops and webinars to engage students and educators in interactive learning experiences. In addition to these direct educational channels, collaborations with media organizations and educational networks further extend the reach of these programs. Such partnerships often involve both print and digital materials, ensuring that media literacy content is accessible to a wide audience, including those who may not be as digitally connected. Workshops and webinars, often held in collaboration with educational and professional organizations, provide opportunities for hands-on learning and real-time engagement with media literacy topics. Organizations such as EKOME (National Center for Audiovisual Media and Communication), the Greek Safer Internet Center, the Digital National Academy, and the Educational Radio and Television Department are key players. These

institutions not only develop and manage media literacy initiatives but also ensure their widespread dissemination through official channels, providing legitimacy and broader access to these educational resources. By aligning these programs with governmental support, there is a stronger infrastructure in place for their promotion, implementation, and sustainability, ensuring that media literacy education is a prioritized and continuous effort across the country.

### 2.3.2 Media literacy for senior citizens in Greece

In recent years, Greece has made strides in promoting digital and media literacy across various age groups. However, while there are several initiatives aimed at improving digital skills, many of these programs are often designed for general audiences or specific age groups, such as younger people and working adults, rather than exclusively for senior citizens.

For older adults, especially those over 65, there is a growing need to bridge the digital divide and equip them with the skills to navigate an increasingly digital world. Despite this, the number of programs specifically targeted at seniors remains limited, with many initiatives referring broadly to "vulnerable groups" or "adults," rather than addressing the specific challenges faced by older individuals.

Programmes such as MADIS, part of the Erasmus+ initiative, address the barriers to digital inclusion faced by senior citizens. A key finding from MADIS is that many older people are reluctant to participate in digital literacy courses due to lack of confidence or perceived complexity. The project sought to engage older people by providing culturally sensitive and context-specific learning environments, offering models of best practice that can be transferred to different regions of Europe. Moreover, digital literacy for older adults goes beyond simple technical skills such as operating devices. It includes the ability to access, evaluate and manage information, making it crucial for safe navigation on the internet. This is particularly important in the current context, where misinformation and fraud are rampant. Older people, who are a vulnerable group, need specialized programmes that not only teach them how to use technology, but also enhance their critical thinking skills to help them stay safe online. Despite some advancements, the need for more focused and senior-friendly programs remains. Tailored interventions,

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such as training at slower paces, using easy-to-understand language, and offering hands-on support, are critical to ensure that older adults can overcome digital exclusion and fully participate in today's increasingly online society.

In Greece, several stakeholders are central to the promotion of media literacy. The Ministry of Digital Governance plays a pivotal role through initiatives such as the Citizen's Digital Academy, which offers free courses designed to enhance digital and media literacy skills. Regulatory bodies like the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV) also contribute by promoting responsible media consumption and addressing misinformation. Educational institutions, particularly universities, integrate media literacy into their curricula and conduct research to support evidence-based initiatives. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Media Literacy Institute, focus on educating vulnerable groups, including seniors, on the importance of critical media consumption. Private sector entities, including telecommunications companies, support media literacy through corporate social responsibility programs, often partnering with government and NGOs to provide educational content and workshops.

In terms of statistics, statistics on media literacy are somewhat limited in Greece, but there are some basic data. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2023, Greece ranks relatively low in terms of the digital skills of its population. Only 51% of people have basic digital skills, which directly affects media literacy levels. This gap is particularly pronounced among senior citizens, with a significant proportion of the population over 65 lacking basic digital and media literacy skills ( WHO Extranet ). Furthermore, a study by the European Commission in 2020 highlighted that only 21% of Greeks feel confident in identifying fake news, reflecting the urgent need for more targeted media literacy programmes( Frontiers). Overall, while Greece has made progress in promoting media literacy through governmental and non-governmental initiatives, significant gaps remain, particularly in reaching older people and marginalized groups. Expanding these programmes and making them more accessible is vital to ensure

that all citizens have the necessary skills to critically engage with the media in an increasingly digital world.

### 2.3.3. Institutions for Media Literacy initiatives for Senior Citizens

Universities in Greece are actively working on the field to promote and elevate media literacy. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Panteion University, and the University of Athens offer courses focused on media literacy, digital skills, and critical media consumption. More specifically the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) provides courses on Media Literacy and Digital Skills (module under Communication Studies), Journalism and New Media, Disinformation and Fact-Checking Techniques. As a part of AUTH, the Peace Journalism Laboratory school of Journalism and Mass Communication created projects as THISAM, Global Media and China and a variety of workshops which promote media literacy, AI technologies and critical media consumption. The Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences provides courses on Media Education and Literacy, Communication in Digital Media, Media, Culture, and Society. The University of Athens (UoA) provides courses on Media Literacy and Education, Digital Media and Democracy, Critical Media Analysis. The International Hellenic University (IHU) provides lessons on Digital Media Literacy and Media and Communication in the Digital Age. NGOs in Greece are also working on media literacy giving the chance to their participants to receive knowledge through trainings, workshops and educational campaigns. Media Literacy Institute (MLI) offers workshops on critical media literacy and disinformation, media literacy seminars for educators, media Literacy Week events, which include panel discussions, expert lectures, and media-related activities. Hellenic Foundation for Culture offers media literacy workshops targeting both students and teachers, public campaigns to raise awareness on the importance of critical media consumption. SafeLine (Greek Safer Internet Center) offers educational materials for schools on media literacy and online disinformation and workshops on navigating digital media safely and responsibly. HumanRights360 offers training sessions on media representation and human rights and public campaigns addressing the spread of fake news and how to critically evaluate media sources.

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Greek universities and NGOs actively participate in numerous international partnerships and European initiatives focused on media literacy. These collaborations are primarily driven through EU-funded programs such as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, and the Digital Europe Programme (DEP). These initiatives allow Greek institutions to cooperate with universities, research centers, and organizations across Europe to develop educational programs, conduct research, and address key challenges related to media literacy, such as misinformation and digital competencies. Greek universities, including Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Panteion University, and the University of Athens (UoA), partner with foreign institutions to enhance media literacy education. The Peace Journalism Laboratory at AUTH plays a significant role in these efforts, focusing on research related to media ethics, disinformation, and peace journalism. Key programs, such as THISAM and the Media Literacy for Empowering Society project, aim to empower citizens by developing critical thinking and digital skills. These collaborations often involve joint research, shared educational tools, and media literacy training, with partners from countries such as the UK, Germany, and Italy.

They collaborate with organizations such as UNESCO, the European Audiovisual Observatory, and INSAFE, fostering media literacy through public awareness campaigns, training sessions, and cross-border research. Greek institutions also play a key role in initiatives such as the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), where they contribute to combating disinformation and promoting fact-checking across Europe. These partnerships allow Greece to benefit from a wider exchange of knowledge and best practices, positioning the country as an active participant in global efforts to enhance media literacy and address the challenges posed by the digital age.

Institutions and NGOs have developed targeted initiatives to enhance media literacy among senior citizens, recognizing the importance of equipping this demographic with the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly digital world. These efforts are particularly vital as seniors often face unique challenges in

adapting to new technologies, making media literacy education essential for their inclusion and empowerment in the digital age. The University of Athens has taken significant steps in this regard through its Lifelong Learning Programs. These programs are designed to provide continuous education opportunities for adults, including seniors. Within this framework, the University offers courses that focus on digital and media literacy, helping older adults acquire the skills needed to critically engage with digital media, understand online safety, and utilize digital tools effectively. These programs are part of a broader initiative by the University to promote lifelong learning and ensure that education remains accessible and relevant to all age groups, particularly in the context of rapid technological advancement. On the non-governmental side, 50+ Hellas is an NGO dedicated to improving the quality of life for older adults in Greece. One of their key initiatives is the organization of Digital Literacy Workshops. These workshops are specifically tailored to the needs of seniors, focusing on practical skills such as using smartphones, navigating the internet, and understanding social media. By providing hands-on training in a supportive environment, 50+ Hellas helps seniors overcome the digital divide, empowering them to participate fully in the digital society.

Another important player in this field is the Greek Safer Internet Center, an NGO that is part of the European network for internet safety. While the Center's educational programs are aimed at all age groups, they include specific initiatives for seniors. These programs focus on safe internet use, teaching older adults how to protect themselves from online scams, misinformation, and privacy breaches. By addressing these concerns, the Greek Safer Internet Center helps seniors become more confident and secure in their online interactions. Together, these initiatives from universities and NGOs play a crucial role in enhancing media literacy among senior citizens in Greece. They provide tailored education and resources that address the specific challenges faced by older adults, ensuring that they are not left behind in the digital transformation of society. Noesis provides Digital literacy for senior citizens. Free intergenerational seminars for individuals aged 65 and older and their child or grandchild, from 4th grade and up. The program "Digital Literacy for Senior Citizens," a collaboration between NOESIS and the

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Independent Directorate of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support of the Region of Central Macedonia, familiarizes trainees aged 65 and older, along with their child or grandchild (from 4th grade and up), with basic processes of the digital portal gov.gr and other digital applications in an easy, comprehensible, and entertaining way. Within the framework of the program, educational seminars will be conducted at NOESIS facilities, as well as at locations of Municipalities and Communities in the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki, and also at KAPI (Open Care Centers for the Elderly).

All 4 Inclusion refers to a series of online courses, senior citizens will now have the opportunity to acquire basic computer and Internet skills, integrating activities into their daily lives that will make them easier and more fun. The educational program's material is specially tailored to this specific population group, describing step-by-step and in an understandable way the use of tools such as Facebook, Email, Smartphones, Word, Google, Electronic payments and purchases, Digital participation in public affairs and tables.

iHeal refers to the enhancement of relevant knowledge and the improvement of digital health literacy for the elderly are the main objectives of the iHeal program. The iHeal program, "Up-Skilling Elders in Digital Health Literacy to Prevent Marginalization and Exclusion," is co-funded by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union and involves a partnership of 8 partners from 6 countries (Greece, Turkey, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Cyprus). The program's online platform includes basic digital skills, guidelines and tips for safe internet browsing and data protection, searching for reliable health information, updates on social media and their use, navigation of electronic services, and more. The platform also provides information on the prevention and management of diseases or chronic conditions. Each educational unit consists of approximately six chapters and combines various learning tools, such as information, images, educational videos, assessment exercises, and online resources for further exploration and practice.

The Ministry of Digital Governance, through initiatives like the Citizen's Digital Academy, provides free access to digital education services. This platform offers

over 279 courses covering a wide range of digital skills, from basic to advanced levels, aimed at all citizens, including specialized training for the labor force and ICT professionals ([Digital Skills and Jobs Platform](#)). Institutions like NOESIS (Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum) which is a cultural and educational center. The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) and its national hubs work on media literacy projects across Europe, including Greece. They organize workshops, create educational games, and develop video campaigns to improve media literacy among various demographics ([Edmo](#)).

One significant example is the Hellenic National Alliance for Digital Skills and Employment, which includes members from both the public and private sectors. This alliance aims to promote digital skills across Greek society through various education and training programs. Members include prominent entities like the Onassis Foundation, the Rebrain Greece initiative, and the Association of IT & Communications Companies of Greece. These organizations work together to offer seminars and training programs that help citizens, including those from the business sector and academia, improve their digital competencies. Furthermore, the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute has been active in fostering media literacy by providing scientific expertise, conducting research, and organizing educational activities. This organization collaborates with various stakeholders, including those from the media industry and public sector, to enhance media literacy education for young people, students, teachers, and parents.

#### 2.3.4. Media literacy competences and validation

Media literacy competencies in Greece are increasingly recognized through initiatives supported by the government and educational institutions. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to enhance lifelong learning and digital literacy. The Lifelong Learning Law 3879/2010 established the National Framework for Lifelong Learning, which includes provisions for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. This framework aims to provide coherent procedures for quality assurance and qualification assessment ([UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#)). Greece is working to adopt and implement frameworks such as the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), which provides a



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comprehensive outline for assessing digital skills, including media literacy. This framework includes tools for evaluating competencies related to digital content creation, communication, and safety online.

IT-Based validation tools are being used in Greece. ICT Hellas provides certifications for various digital competencies, including media literacy, through an online platform. Their certification is structured to align with the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp). Universities in Greece often use Open eClass, an open-source e-learning platform, for delivering and assessing media literacy courses. The platform supports various types of assessments, including quizzes and interactive assignments, which can be used to validate competencies ([MediaSmarts](#)). Eduweb is a platform which offers online courses for teachers to enhance their digital literacy and media education skills. The assessments include practical tasks and quizzes that validate teachers' competencies in digital media literacy. The validation of informal and non-formal learning (VINFL) is supported by a number of key institutions and organizations that play a critical role in recognizing and certifying the skills and competencies acquired outside formal educational settings. This process is essential for enhancing the employability and lifelong learning opportunities of individuals who have gained significant experience through work, volunteering, or other non-traditional educational pathways.

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) is the primary body responsible for the validation of informal and non-formal learning in Greece. EOPPEP operates under the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and provides a structured framework for assessing and certifying the knowledge, skills, and competences that individuals acquire outside formal education. This organization plays a pivotal role in ensuring that such learning experiences are recognized and valued in the labor market, thereby promoting lifelong learning and career development.

Among academic institutions, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens are particularly involved in initiatives

related to the validation of informal and non-formal learning. These universities contribute to the development and implementation of assessment methodologies and validation procedures. They engage in research and pilot projects that explore best practices for recognizing non-formal and informal learning, ensuring that the academic rigor and standards are maintained in the validation process. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in particular, has been involved in various European projects that focus on the validation of prior learning, aiming to create pathways for learners to translate their non-formal and informal experiences into formally recognized qualifications. Similarly, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens has been active in the field of lifelong learning and adult education, offering programs that include the validation of informal learning, thereby enabling learners to achieve academic credit for their non-traditional learning experiences. These institutions work in concert with EOPPEP to create a comprehensive system for VLNFL in Greece, one that aligns with European frameworks and standards. Their combined efforts are crucial in advancing the recognition of diverse learning experiences, facilitating social inclusion, and enhancing the overall educational landscape in Greece.

## 2.4 Italy

The desk research for Italy was conducted by Dataninja and Grey Panthers, the Italian partners of the consortium.

### 2.4.1 Media literacy in Italy

In the European context, Italy is one of the countries with the lowest level of basic digital literacy, almost ten percentage points below the EU average. Over the last decades, the government and other actors have been looking to promote digital inclusion for all citizens with various efforts to invest in digital literacy, including specific programs for media literacy. However, the country still lacks a proper national media literacy strategy and statutory institutional coordination: media literacy programs are partially provided in school curricula, with consistent territorial differences, and outside compulsory education through in-person and online training programs carried out by a wide variety of actors. Some principles,

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coordination and regulation of media literacy activities were introduced in 2002 by the Carta di Bellaria, a non-binding agreement made by a multi-stakeholder group made of politicians, educators and media.

Initiatives addressing media literacy are provided by different organizations, including dedicated hubs and associations, municipalities and regional governments, non-profit organizations, public and private companies, schools, universities and libraries.

- One of the main actors in the media literacy field is the Italian Digital Media Observatory (IDMO), a national hub that supports and implements the work of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). It is coordinated by the Luiss Data Lab, a research centre of the Luiss Guido Carli University, and its activities aimed at fighting disinformation include the offer of media literacy programs.
- Another relevant organization is the Italian Association of Media Education (MED), which has played a coordinating and networking role between media literacy actors since 1996 and runs various projects and summer schools.
- RAI, the Italian national public broadcaster, and TIM, a major telecommunications company, run media literacy initiatives, such as webinars and educational resources promoting digital literacy and digital inclusion. These two entities are collaborators and financers of IDMO.

There are also some entities offering media literacy programs for schools and young people. Con i Bambini, a non-profit active in tackling educational poverty in children, funds the “S.C.A.T.T.I.” project (School, Community, Activation, Territories, Innovation), which promotes the positive use of digital technology. The organization Osservatorio Permanente Giovani-Editori helps young people develop their critical thinking skills and ability to assess quality information, in partnership with major news publications. One of its key projects involves introducing newspapers into secondary school classrooms. Dataninja runs “Open the Box”, a project spreading media and data literacy between girls and boys aged 11 to 18 through training courses that are aimed at their teachers and educators. Parole

Ostili is a non-profit initiative that promotes non-hostile communication actions in different contexts: educational, professional and civil society. In its wide-ranging offer, there are also courses dedicated to the topics of media and information literacy. Fondazione Mondo Digitale promotes various media literacy initiatives with both public and private stakeholders.

CREMIT, the Research Center on Media Education, Innovation, and Technology by Catholic University in Milan, offers media literacy MOOCs. Recently, the University of Modena and Reggio-Emilia has also established a new research centre in media literacy, PLAiCE (Postmedia Studies, Learning Analytics and Artificial Intelligence Center for Education)

Other examples can be found in regional and local institutions. One is the “Sapere Digitale” project, a public network created to support and promote the crucial role that libraries play in the cultural development of citizenship, in particular supporting digital civic education, information literacy and the development of digital skills. Promoted by Biblioteca Archimede, the project is active in two regions (Piemonte and Valle d’Aosta) and offers free training media literacy paths for librarians and teachers. Digital citizenship is also promoted by the Region Emilia-Romagna, with the “Pane e Internet” project, as well as by many municipalities and entities (see questions 4 and 7).

Media literacy programs are communicated through the different channels of the providing organizations, such as websites, social media platforms, publications and participation in conferences and events. Some of the previously mentioned programs receive the support of state funding. For instance, the Italian Digital Media Observatory is financed by EU Commission, while the “Sapere Digitale” project has been supported by Region Piemonte (together with Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo). “Pane e Internet” is supported by Regione Emilia Romagna. Thanks to European PNRR funds, the Italian Ministry of Education has financed “Scuola Futura”, an extensive teacher training programme that includes specific training on media and information literacy. However, public support for media literacy programs seems to be generally inadequate: according to the Media Pluralism Monitor of 2021 and 2022, Italy’s existing media literacy policies and initiatives are limited in scope and resources.

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### 2.4.2. Media literacy for senior citizens in Italy

Although in Italy there is a lack of specific media literacy programs for senior citizens, many initiatives regarding digital literacy in general are accessible, and sometimes directly dedicated, to them. In the public sphere, programmes have been implemented to increase the country's digital literacy across different social classes, including the over-65s. Among the most successful initiatives are the Italian Digital Agenda and the National Programme for Digital Culture, Education and Skills.

Among the measures implemented to address these challenges, Italy has also created the Department for Digital Transformation of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. This department focuses on two main axes: improving digital infrastructure and connectivity and transforming public administration operations to make them more digital. Repubblica Digitale (Digital Republic) is an offshoot of this department, designed to create and implement courses and tools to facilitate digital access for citizens.

Also in the public sphere, the Emilia-Romagna region has funded the “Pane e Internet” (Bread and Internet) project as part of the regional digital agenda to promote the development of digital skills and full access to information society. The key concept of the regional plan is to turn everyone into “digital citizens”, capable of using digital technologies to access information, use online services and take advantage of new opportunities available in the area, whatever their age. At the national level, a strong push to eliminate the digital divide is being made by the municipalities, which have launched projects and services in the different regions. Examples include the online platform dedicated to cybersecurity and the free digital education courses offered by the Municipality of Milan, the “Digital Facilitation Networks” with face-to-face courses and virtual advice via WhatsApp offered by the Municipality of Cuneo and 52 other municipalities in the area. Other examples of excellence: the Municipality of Novara with the “Mai troppo tardi” (Never too late) series of free meetings dedicated to citizens over 65 on the use of SPID (Sistema Pubblico di Identità Digitale) and digital identity; the Municipalities

of the Nuovo Circondario Imolese, which have activated 7 digital facilitation points with the “Digitale Facile” (Easy Digital) project, while the Municipality of Ancona has launched the “Casalinghe digitali” (Digital Housewives) project to facilitate the acquisition of digital skills by this particular type of worker, who is often forgotten. The Municipality of Macerata has promoted a digital literacy course dedicated to PEC (Posta Elettronica Certificata) and Digital Domicile, while in Bari a series of Digital Facilitation Desks are active in various municipal offices, physical places designed to promote the inclusion and digital literacy of all citizens.

The Italian government’s commitment to increasing the country’s digital literacy is also reflected in the creation of the “Digital Public Service” framework programme in 2021 by the Ministry for Digital Transformation and the Ministry for Youth Policy.

The programme has two main objectives:

1. to support and train one million citizens who will benefit from digital facilitation and training activities
2. to provide quality, equitable and inclusive education as a learning opportunity for all. This will reduce inequality within the country (a goal included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

The programme aims to promote a digital literacy approach in line with the National Digital Literacy Strategy. The activation in the three year period 2021-23 will involve about 9,700 volunteers and 100 organizations; in 2024, the organizations on the universal register of civic service will provide programmes for about 2,500 young volunteers.

Among the EU-funded projects, there is SUM - Seniors United Against Misinformation - promoted also by Housatonic, an Italian communication agency. The project is a two-year pilot aimed at developing a comprehensive toolkit that helps seniors identify trustworthy information, complete with instructions, strategies, and materials to replicate the project throughout Europe.

In 2024 the ngo Biblioteche Senza Frontiere, in collaboration with Dataninja and other partners, launched the “Nino” project. Supported by Google, this project aims to develop a mobile learning app to help digitalization of seniors providing

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gamified learning paths on media literacy and cybersecurity and AI-services to identify potential scams and fake news.

Italy does not have a specific national strategy for media and information literacy. Several national and local stakeholders are active on this issue, but without an organic reference framework. The public broadcaster RAI has launched several large-scale information and media literacy initiatives. The Ministry of Education also promotes some initiatives to raise awareness among teachers and students. Another key role is played by the previously mentioned Repubblica Digitale, a network of organizations promoting digital skills, promoted by the Minister for Technological Innovation and Digitisation. In 2020, Repubblica Digitale published a 'National Strategy for Digital Skills'.

According to the experience of Grey Panthers, institutions, associations and senior citizens have increased their awareness of the importance of digital literacy. However, the media literacy option is not yet fully understood, neither as a need of senior citizens nor as a proposal for activities of the entities that work with them.

### 2.4.3. Institutions for Media Literacy initiatives for Senior Citizens

The Digital Civil Service is a program that many national institutions (listed below) use to offer courses and digital support services for the population, including the over-65s.

- For instance, ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana) has promoted a digital inclusion project for the over-65s in Italy: territorial desks with dedicated and trained operators to support seniors in the use of digital technologies.
- The ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani) has developed two projects with the support of the Digital Civil Service. "Generazione Digitale" (Digital Generation) is a physical counter initiative that aims to facilitate the accessibility of digital services of the Public Administration and private citizens with greater technological difficulties. The second project, "Di

generazione in generazione” (From Generation to Generation), is designed to facilitate the meeting between the elderly and the young in order to combat social exclusion, isolation and the generational digital divide.

- AUSER (Associazione Nazionale di Volontariato e Promozione Sociale) has successfully promoted several Lifelong Learning activities. These activities are aimed at the digitalisation and technological training of seniors. Examples of these activities include the “Laboratorio Digitale per la Vita Quotidiana con Smartphone e Tablet” (Digital Laboratory for everyday life with smartphones and tablets) by Auser Liguria; the Digital Literacy courses throughout the region developed by Auser Piemonte; and the project “R.I.E.S.CO” (Reti Inclusive e Solidali per la Comunità, R.I.E.S.CO = l’Il’Try) by Auser Marche has created an inclusive and supportive network for the community, while Auser Emilia Romagna has launched free digitalisation services called “Facciamo rete” (Let’s Network).
- ANTEAS (Associazione Nazionale Tutte Età Per La Solidarietà) OF FNP CISL has joined forces with Google Italia to launch the “Vivi Internet, al meglio”(Live the Internet, at its best) project. This initiative is designed to equip the over-60s with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the digital landscape safely and responsibly.
- AIB. (Associazione Italiana Biblioteche, the Italian Library Association), which brings together more than 3,600 libraries throughout Italy, has developed several projects thanks to the contribution of young people from the Digital Civil Service. In 2024, the Arpino Civic Library in Nichelino (To) launched a project with volunteers managing Digital Information Desks dedicated to the over-65s. These volunteers provide digital assistance and online practices. It also runs basic computer courses on how to use the Internet and smartphones correctly.

In Italy, the private sector, consisting of companies, non-profit organisations, consortia and working groups, is also committed to bridging the country’s digital divide. These stakeholders not only provide the necessary support and resources, but also contribute to the implementation of digital literacy programmes, ensuring that these initiatives are relevant and accessible to the most vulnerable groups.



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- UniTre Milano, for example, is a private academic institute for the over-55s who want to take part in the more than 400 courses on offer, regardless of their qualifications. It offers 24-25 tuition-based courses per academic year, such as 'Basic Computer Lab', 'Using Excel', 'Using Smartphones' and 'Everyday Technology'.
- IG Students, in partnership with ASSOLOMBARDA (Associazione delle Imprese che operano nelle Province di Milano, Lodi, Monza-Brianza, Pavia), Grey Panthers and other stakeholders, continues to give voice to ABCDigital in 2024, which is part of a wider ministerial project on digital literacy. ABCDigital is a digital literacy programme for non-digital natives that uses reverse mentoring: students take the chair to teach seniors how to use the internet and related technologies, activating their digital native skills and enhancing transversal skills. Therefore, ABCDigital is a Transversal Skills and Orientation Pathway (PCTO) for students. The aim of the project is to bring seniors closer to the digital world and to help them use new technologies according to their needs and interests. Involved in the project are: Young digital natives; non-digital natives; Trainers and tutors from business/professional backgrounds.
- La Fondazione La Stampa- Specchio dei Tempi in 2024 has uploaded more than 300 completely free basic IT videos on the Foundation's website, covering 23 macro topics including: basic computer, smartphone and tablet commands, email management, using the main messaging applications and using social networks.
- Informatici Senza frontiere is a non-profit organization founded by a group of Italian IT managers whose aim is to use IT skills as a tool to provide concrete help to those living in a situation of poverty and marginalization, or as a means to offer more opportunities for social inclusion to disadvantaged groups. In 2024, it organized 3 literacy courses for senior citizens: for the "Avatar" project in the municipality of Schio, and in 11 other municipalities in the Alto Vicentino area, the association's volunteers gave free courses on

the use of smartphones: 8 practical sessions where, in addition to explanations and examples, assistance was given to the participants, who could immediately learn how to use smartphone applications and tools. The "Una Casa per Amico" (A Home for a Friend) project aims to improve the safety and autonomy of lonely elderly people and people with disabilities in their daily lives at home, providing support thanks to the concrete and continuous help of technology that monitors the home environment and remotely provides detailed and timely information on the assisted persons.

- The Lazio section of the association, together with students from the PCTO (Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e l'Orientamento), organised computer courses in local centres for the elderly, helping them to learn how to use computers.
- Grey Panthers, the Italian magazine online for over 55, continued to organize courses in 2024 with the aim of reducing the digital divide among the over 65s. With the support of PCTO students, it proposes cycles of lessons to become digital citizens, learning how to use SPID the citizen's file and the health file; in the classroom, seniors also learn the pleasures that the net can offer, such as booking a train or plane ticket online, reserving a seat at the theatre or cinema, doing their weekly shopping online and enjoying audiobooks and podcasts even when away from home.

The learning technologies employed to facilitate the delivery of the courses are often relatively basic, particularly in the context of face-to-face classes. Senior participants utilise their own devices (computers, smartphones, or tablets) while lecturers make use of PowerPoint presentations projected in class. In some instances, at the conclusion of the meeting, trainees receive handouts and slides summarizing the lesson via email. In the case of online courses, the educational institution makes use of video tutorials on its website (Fondazione Specchio dei Tempi), video clips uploaded on YouTube, and the entire training course delivered on a Moodle platform (the two Repubblica Digitale projects).

The Municipality of Milan offers cybersecurity courses in an e-learning format, which is asynchronous and does not require the temporal co-presence of the student and trainer. The online lessons are followed by the students individually

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and autonomously, while the digital education courses are held on the Teams platform. Informatici Senza Frontiere has opted to develop its own proprietary technology for the delivery of its courses, both in person and remotely

Only digitisation courses organized by public bodies, such as the Repubblica Digitale, municipalities, and regions, receive state funding. The funds used originate from the PNRR (implementation of measure 1.7.2 dedicated to the development of the Network of Digital Facilitation Services), the Social Innovation Fund, the Government Operational Programme POR FESR Axis 2 'Digital Agenda', and the winning of calls for tenders from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Courses organized by private individuals frequently require payment, or, if they are free, they are dependent on support from foundations or donations through the 5x1000 formula. Consequently, promising initiatives frequently lack the necessary investment and funding to develop and sustain their operations.

The Catholic University in Milan provides a two-year master's degree program in Media Education, as well as the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Digital Education bachelor and master in Media Education for Literary Disciplines and Publishing) and the University Roma Tre (E-learning and media education). In other universities, master's programs include single modules of media education within their curricula. This is the case of the University of Florence, within its master's program in "New digital skills: open education, social and mobile learning", and of the International Telematic University UniNettuno (Media education and digital school course).

The National Coalition of Repubblica Digitale is a member of the European Digital Skills Coalition (DSJP - Digital Skills and Jobs Platform), which facilitates the dissemination of information about the initiatives carried out by its member organizations through various communication channels. The stakeholders do not typically collaborate with companies or educational institutions on digital literacy initiatives, except for select entities, such as libraries and certain municipalities, which have formalized PCTO pathways with local high schools.

A significant proportion of associations are enrolled in the Universal Civil Service Register, thereby enabling them to employ young people who meet the eligibility criteria for participation in the digital literacy pathway established by the current reference legislation (Article 14 of Legislative Decree No. 40 of 6 March 2017). Young people may submit applications to the specific call for applications issued by the Department for Youth Policies and Universal Civil Service. ABCDigital has, by its statute, the objective of working in collaboration with companies, including Grey Panthers, that are part of the project's steering committee. Educational institutions across the country have entered PCTO agreements in order to participate in the project.

#### 2.4.4. Media literacy competences and validation

Media literacy is partially recognized in compulsory education curricula. Despite it is not treated as a distinct subject, elements of media literacy are contained in the guidelines of the National Digital School Plan (PNSD), provided for by the 'La Buona Scuola' law (Law 107/2015), which focuses on innovation in the school system and the opportunities of digital education. Moreover, Civic education, which became a separate subject in the curriculum in 2019, includes elements of digital citizenship. In particular, actions 14 and 15 of the PNSD define a framework for digital skills and media education, outlining plans to teach all children about their online rights and responsibilities, social network dynamics, source reliability, copyright, privacy, and data protection. The PNSD states that every school should have a Digital Animator, a teacher appointed by the school to support the head teacher in the planning and implementation of digital innovation projects. However, the effective implementation of these actions has meaningful differences between territories and there is no national assessment system. In particular, the teacher training in media literacy is decentralized, meaning it is managed and monitored at the local level. On one side, this is considered positive since it implements the principle of schools' autonomy. On the other hand, as pointed out by the vice president of the Italian Association of Media Education Mara Ranieri, this leads to a wide variety of interpretations of media literacy and a lack of shared definition and monitoring of competencies. "Media literacy is meant in very

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different ways, from being able to send an email to critically analyze a visualization. [...] There is low control on the quality of training activities. There is no monitoring at the moment ensuring the quality of the training of teachers in Media Literacy Education is fine". Mara Ranieri, vice president of MED, during the last webinar on Media Literacy in Italy organized by European Digital Media Observatory.

The problem was also highlighted by the 2022 Media Pluralism Monitor, which reports that despite "growing awareness of the urgency of intervening, the media literacy presence in the compulsory education curriculum is very limited from a quantitative point of view, and the teachers' training is not well-developed and comprehensive." Outside school curricula, in terms of recognition of the competencies, the Italian landscape would benefit from the introduction of a European e-skills certificate (EDSC), which is being developed by the European Commission. This tool would be useful for employers and training providers to quickly and easily recognise the digital skills acquired by European citizens, including media literacy competencies. During the selection of students educational institutions tend to favour formal education over informal education, while for companies informal acquire competencies usually represent an important added value to support an application.

An example of an assessment tool is the "Libretto Formativo del Cittadino" (Citizen Training Transcript of Records), a digital portfolio system where individuals can document and validate their formal, non-formal, and informal learning experiences and acquired competencies. This tool was introduced in 2003 by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies as an integral part of the Italian strategy to promote lifelong learning and improve people's employability. To use the system, citizens have to register on a regional platform and insert information about their education and certificates. The function of certification of skills is carried out by the Regions which, always within the scope of their legislative and regulatory autonomy, regulate the implementation procedures, taking into account the minimum standards set at national level.

On a national level, the Ministry of Instruction (MIUR) sets guidelines and frameworks for recognizing learning outcomes acquired outside formal education. In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, in 2015 MIUR defined the National Framework of Regional Qualifications, establishing a mutual recognition mechanism between regional qualifications and process, attestation and system standard procedures for services for the identification/validation of non-formal and informal learning. Similarly, another inter-ministerial decree established in 2018 the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a tool for describing qualifications awarded under the National Skills Certification System and linking these qualifications with the systems of other European countries.

Moreover, the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP) carries out studies, research, monitoring and assessment of public policies in several domains, including education and training. It is involved in projects and initiatives aimed at the validation of competencies gained through informal and non-formal learning. Chambers of Commerce support the development of tools and systems to certify professional skills (including INFL and NFL competencies), collaborating with businesses, training providers and regional authorities to build validation processes that meet labour market needs. Finally, universities are involved in recognizing prior learning, assessing and validating the knowledge and skills acquired by students through informal and non-formal means to make study paths shorter and avoid redundancies.

## 2.5 Ireland

The desk research done for Ireland was conducted by Octaedro Editorial, the consortium partner from Spain.

### 2.5.1. Media Literacy in Ireland

Media Literacy Ireland (MLI) is an informal alliance of individuals and organizations who work together on a mainly voluntary basis to promote media literacy in Ireland. Facilitated by Coimisiún na Meán, MLI has over 250 members drawn from a broad range of sectors. Their vision is for all Irish people to be empowered with the skills and confidence to be able to access and critically evaluate content and services

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across all platforms, understand and question how media and digital technology operate, identify and manage risks, and participate in the public sphere in a responsible, ethical and effective manner. MLI acts as an enabler for media literacy stakeholders in Ireland. Their aim is to create a platform for facilitating dialogue and the exchange of ideas, and encouraging the development of sustainable media literacy projects.

They are active in mainly four areas:

- Coordination: they aim to be the acknowledged first port of call to provide support and advice for media literacy stakeholders (national and international). They provide support, advice, guidance to a wide range of media literacy stakeholders at home and abroad.
- Innovation: they aim to inspire, encourage and facilitate the development of new media literacy projects, programmes and interventions.
- Communication: they aim to foster discussion and debate around all aspects of media literacy in Ireland with a view to helping to identify emerging issues, gaps in provision, opportunities for collaboration. They publish a monthly newsletter and organize events and networking opportunities for members.
- Promotion: they aim to use the strength, reach and expertise of MLI members to collectively highlight media literacy related issues and signpost to sources of support via multi stakeholder public awareness campaigns.

Media Literacy is provided by different organizations. There exists a course founded and developed by Vodafone, called Hi Digital. It is a step-by-step course designed for anyone who needs a bit of help developing their digital skills, particularly those who have rarely or never been online (often 65+ years old). The course has been developed by Vodafone Foundation, in partnership with ALONE. It consists of bite-sized lessons organized around key digital themes including: the basics of internet access and how to use your smartphone and other devices; researching hobbies and organizing travel; using Apps; and an introduction to online banking. Participants can work independently or alongside a mentor over a number of weeks to complete all of the lessons. Others may have assistance from

their children, grandchildren, or other people from their community. Their vision is that everyone has the right to a digital life; the comprehension and confidence to explore all the possibilities the internet has to offer. The mission of Hi Digital is to give everyone free access to the essential tools needed to become digitally independent. Increasing levels of digital literacy can have a positive impact on practical life and mental health. It leads to more opportunities to connect with essential services and engage socially with friends and family. Established in 2003, the Vodafone Foundation in Ireland runs a wide range of community initiatives and programmes, including charity partnerships with ALONE and the Irish Girl Guides.

### 2.5.2. Media Literacy for Senior Citizens in Ireland

While media literacy programs are offered in Ireland, very few are focused on helping older people. However, there are some that focus on them, both the country's own programs or projects and those funded by the European Union. In particular, there are two noteworthy programs. The Age Action's Getting Started, a free digital literacy programme, that helps older people to get online, or use their smart device with confidence. Age Action's Getting Started is the first competency-based digital training for older people in Ireland. DISERA: The Disinformation of SE尼ors in Rural Areas (DISERA) project that aims at improving the media literacy of rural adult and senior man and women in Italy, Ireland, Slovakia and Republic of North Macedonia through awareness-raising on disinformation, capacity-building on digital skills and promotion of critical thinking to access, recognize and act on information. This project will contribute to promoting intergenerational inclusion, bridging the rural-urban divide and strengthening European values and citizenship in rural communities.

Following with DISERA, the program explains that the target group of the "Disinformation of SE尼ors in Rural Areas" (DISERA) project are adults and seniors (35 years or older) that live in rural areas. These areas, which represent almost 30% of the EU population and 80% of its territory, show a declining population and a relatively old demographic structure, poor opportunities on the labor market and access to services, resulting in a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. Due to their age, economic situation and level of education, people living in rural areas are



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prone to receive, incubate and spread disinformation. For example, people with lower levels of education say that they come across fake news less often and tend to be less confident identifying fake news. With elderly people, EurAV has supported initiatives where they are taken through the different social media platforms and shown how to use them safely, while being trained on digital responsibility in information access and sharing. EurAV is based in County Meath, a rural county neighboring Dublin. It is a member of Working Group of Media Literacy Ireland and is led by socially-minded creative and media professionals, and has a strong command over the areas of the project. In particular, it has been involved in developing community media training as a way to combat disinformation. This training has involved practical ways to make low-budget social media memes, video clips and edited photos, which is a way to attract participants, but it is then linked to training in media literacy - how to fact-check for those receiving information and, importantly, how to recognize individual responsibility in ensuring the accuracy of information that it is shared.

### 2.5.3. Institutions for media literacy initiatives for senior citizens

Media literacy courses are also provided by EDMO Ireland, coordinated by Dublin City University. It has partnered up with the Media Literacy Ireland network to promote media literacy across the country. EDMO Ireland will also be in charge of the resources/training section of the brand-new Media Literacy Ireland website. This section will serve as a kind of depository of media literacy resources for the general public, including articles, learning resources, and training programmes. Even though there is not enough information provided in websites to know if the courses in Ireland use learning technologies, there is a programme, called Age Action's Getting Started Computer Training programme, that delivers one-to-one training with computers, tablets and smartphones to people over the age of 55 all over Ireland that enroll in their courses. Likewise, there are lessons developed by EurAV, the Irish partner and media expert in the DISERA project that made recordings of the transcribed courses (the ones transmitted through local radio

programmes in podcast format) available in an audiovisual version, although EurAV stressed that “the lessons and discussions that take place afterwards are aimed to be radio-friendly as many of the older target group are more likely to tune in to the radio than watch content online.” The lessons are also followed by a panel discussion.

From September 2022 to August 2024, Ireland, Italy, North Macedonia and Slovakia are cooperating under the Erasmus+ Programme to develop a new media literacy project targeted at adults and seniors, and more particularly seniors in rural areas. Coordinated by New Horizons, a non-profit organization located in Italy and dedicated to promoting social development and cultural preservation for the local territory, Disinformation of SEniors in Rural Areas (DISERA)<sup>137</sup> is aimed at improving the media literacy of rural adults and seniors (35 years or older) in those four countries. The main objectives are to educate and help seniors to access, recognise and act on information through awareness-raising activities, capacity-building on basic digital skills and the creation of a European network to promote critical thinking. The lessons were developed by EurAV, the Irish partner and media expert in this project.

In higher education, most Universities have yet to realize the importance of introducing media literacy topics (especially digital media) in the Professional Master of Education (PME) programme, which is a required qualification for anyone wishing to work as a post-primary teacher in the country. However, besides universities, there are other programs or projects focusing on these competencies too. As an example:

- Age Action’s Getting Started is a free digital literacy programme, helping older people to get online, or use their smart device with confidence. Age Action’s Getting Started is the first competency-based digital training for older people in Ireland.
- Webwise – the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre, promoting safer and better internet use among young people has various programmes.
- CRAOL – the Community Radio Forum of Ireland – is the representative, coordinating, lobbying, training and support group for Irish Community Radio. The organization has been to the fore in promoting media literacy

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over the past years, organizing conferences, promoting discussion, supporting national campaigns and running training courses on media literacy.

- The Irish Film Institute – The institute has long provided film education for both adults and young people. It delivers an extensive schools programme and film-based activities, developed around the concepts of film education, film as curricular support, film as art form and film and media literacy.
- EDMO Ireland – It has partnered up with the Media Literacy Ireland network to promote media literacy across the country. EDMO Ireland will also be in charge of the resources/training section of the brand-new Media Literacy Ireland website. This section will serve as a kind of depository of media literacy resources for the general public, including articles, learning resources, and training programmes.
- Media Literacy Ireland (MLI) – It is an informal alliance of individuals and organizations who work together on a mainly voluntary basis to promote media literacy in Ireland. Facilitated by Coimisiún na Meán, MLI has over 250 members drawn from a broad range of sectors. Media Literacy Ireland is a key player as described above, focusing on coordination, connection, communication and campaigning, as well as developing the Be Media Smart campaign.

Apart from the ones explained above, there are other supranational organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, UNESCO and EPRA have also been working on the issue, in particular through soft law instruments aimed at providing guidance to all actors involved.

In Trinity College Dublin, there is a class on Semiotics, Multimodality and New Literacies and since 2016 as part of the ICT in Education discipline. In this class, students are introduced to key concepts of Media Literacy, such as meaning making, multimodal communication and digital literacy practices. Overall, the response from student teachers has been very positive, and they have increasingly accepted and appreciated the fundamental connections between

education and digital media in the 21st Century classroom. Moreover, in this process they understand how the use of digital media goes beyond the technical aspects of the technology, embracing a broader understanding of media and communications theories and practices.

#### 2.5.4. Media Literacy competences and Validation

Media and information literacy education in Ireland is supported across a diverse range of subject areas, curriculum strands and themes. While many schools provide elements of media education, this is not always recognised as explicitly Critical Media Literacy provision. While the curriculum stipulates media education at various points within subjects such as English, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), it is not always formally assessed and much depends on the individual teachers and principals in promoting the area within their own schools. New reforms designed to give more autonomy and responsibility to schools in developing their own approaches to the curriculum will create new opportunities for media and information literacy, a subject area that enjoys a high profile in educational and public policy. In Ireland, the validation of informal and non-informal learning (NFIL) is known as the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) describe RPL as ‘a process used to evaluate skills and knowledge gained through life outside of formal education and training, for the purpose of recognising life achievements against a given set of standards or learning outcomes’.

EurAV has supported some initiatives of IT-based validation tools. It has been involved in developing community media training as a way to combat disinformation. This training has involved practical ways to make low-budget social media memes, video clips and edited photos, which is a way to attract participants, but it is then linked to training in media literacy - how to fact-check for those receiving information and, importantly, how to recognize individual responsibility in ensuring the accuracy of information that it is shared.

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Few institutions are involved in working on the validation of formal and non-formal learning (VINFL) in Ireland. Those includes universities and national institutions, such as:

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). It is the state agency responsible for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's further and higher education system. Ensuring that learners achieve qualifications that are valued nationally and internationally.
- The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). In the education and training sector, guidance services can be integrated into and delivered within the overall education / training programme or co-ordinated to ensure provision to a specific education and training programme. More specifically, DoE (Irish Department of Education) funded guidance is provided in Post Primary Schools (for students aged 12 -18 years) and in FET(VET) which includes the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI), Post Leaving Cert / Colleges of Further Education (PLC/CFE), Youthreach/ Community Training Centres (CTCs) etc. In the Higher Education Sector, the student support services include Careers Offices, Mature Student and Access Offices, International Office and Disability support. In the Public Employment Sector i.e. through the Irish Department of Social Protection (DSP) guidance related services are provided in Intreo offices and by EmployAbility and local employment and job placements services.
- Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). The main object of Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is the advancement of education and training, and specifically to collectively represent Education and Training Boards and promote the development of education, training and youth work in Ireland. ETBI comprises the staff of ETBI, the ETBI Chief Executives, Directors of Further Education and Training, Directors of Schools, Directors of Organisation, Support and Development Forums and the respective networks and groups associated with these forums.
- The Irish Universities Association. The Irish Universities Association is the representative voice of Ireland's research intensive, enterprise engaged, public

universities. We advocate for our member universities and support them to nurture the nation's talent and to create, disseminate and apply knowledge and innovation throughout all regions of the country and to build thriving partnerships across the globe. Their unique role as partners in securing the sustainable future of our nation and society is at the heart of what we do.

- Besides: Institutes of Technology Ireland, National Centre for Guidance in Education, the National Forum for Teaching & Learning, and Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

## 2.6 Portugal

The desk research done for Portugal was conducted by the Media Literacy and Journalism Association (ALPMJ), the consortium partner from Portugal.

### 2.6.1. Media literacy in Portugal

The Portuguese government has announced a new National Media Literacy Plan to be approved by the Council of Ministers (Resolution of the Council of Ministers 105/2024), which may occur by the end of 2024. While the plan is still pending, it is crucial to acknowledge the efforts of various entities directed toward different audiences, although these are mostly centered on access and usage rather than critical thinking (Gil & Patrício, 2020). The initiatives specifically targeting seniors are scarce.

“In Portugal, there is a wide range of entities that have developed media literacy initiatives, from public entities, universities, research centers, training centers, and media organizations, among others. These actors are adopting different approaches and media literacy is promoted through training, academic publications, social projects, and learning platforms. These actions, carried out in more or less formal environments, are aimed at different target audiences, from preschool children to the elderly” (Paisana, Foá, Vasconcelos, Couraceiro, Ferro-Santos, Margato, Crespo, 2024, p. 58).

The Portuguese policies seek to integrate media literacy across all school curricula, provide training for teachers and other education professionals, and encourage initiatives aimed at population segments with lower levels of media

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literacy, typically including seniors (Gil & Patrício, 2020). However, research in Portugal suggests that, regarding news consumption, although it is primarily done through television (Pato, Fincias, Margarido, & Pocinho, 2023), the reality is that Portuguese seniors are increasingly becoming users of digital media, which contributes to their social inclusion (Barroso, 2021). Consequently, the generational digital gap may be much narrower than previously reported (Quintanilha, Paisana & Cardoso, 2020).

In Portugal, there are at least 35 organizations engaged in media literacy activities at an individual level, comprising 19 in the public sector, 12 in the private sector, and four with both public and private participation (Paisana et al., 2024). Regarding the typology of organizations, there are 9 governmental organizations (26%), 8 companies (23%), 4 research centers (11%), 4 NGO (11%), 3 media companies, 2 higher education institutions, 2 Education agencies, 1 regulator, 1 foundation and 1 entity from the social sector. These actors were responsible for executing 69 initiatives primarily aimed at the school community, followed by the general public and teachers, accounting for 43%, 30%, and 10% respectively. Specific target audiences, particularly the elderly, represented 9% of those reached, in equal measure with journalists. Actions developed by networks of actors were also identified. "A media literacy network is a collaborative structure made up of various organizations and experts, united by the common goal of promoting literacy" (Paisana et al., 2024, p. 71). Six networks are highlighted:

a) IBERIFIER - Iberian Media Research & Fact-Checking is a digital media observatory operating in Portugal and Spain as a network, incorporating universities, fact-checking organizations, news agencies, multidisciplinary research centers, and other entities. Launched by the European Commission in 2021, it is linked to the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). Media literacy initiatives targeting journalists, trainers, youths, and the broader society are one of the five core focus areas.

b) Centro de Cidadania Digital (CCD) is a NGO committed to social and digital inclusion. It forms part of an international network, currently known as RECODE, and has been developing collaborative projects in Portugal since 2013, in partnership with various private entities and local authorities across different regions. The CCD in Valongo is noted as the most active. The CCD's initiatives aim to promote digital literacy and citizenship, with specific projects such as the School Support Centre (CAE) focusing on training within the school community regarding pedagogical innovation using digital media, including media literacy themes like misinformation.

c) Associação Literacia Para os Media e Jornalismo (ALPMJ) emerged from a project by the Journalists' Union and the Ministry of Education in 2017. Initially supported by CENJOR (Centre for the Training of Journalists), this project aimed to train hundreds of journalists and media professionals in media literacy. Following the project's expansion to various schools on the mainland and in the autonomous regions, the association was formally established in 2020. Currently, ALPMJ collaborates with IBERIFIER on media literacy training, exemplifying how networked actors can create and enhance collaborative frameworks.

d) GILM - Informal Group on Media Literacy, established in 2009, comprises a diverse assembly of organizations, predominantly public, linked to government, education, or media sectors. Through networking, the group's singular focus is on promoting literacy, and one of its most significant initiatives is organizing the "Literacy, Media, and Citizenship" congresses, with the sixth edition convening in 2023. These congresses bring together experts from academia, government, and private sector to discuss current states and future directions in media literacy.

e) LEMEL - Literacia e Educação para os media em Linha was initiated in 2021 under the government's auspices, networking various public organizations to facilitate its implementation. It serves as a digital resource platform dedicated to literacy and media, designed to support teachers and trainers in this field. Currently coordinated by the Directorate-General for Education (DGE), LEMEL aggregates contributions from partner organizations, aiming to consolidate scattered resources related to media literacy.



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f) Centro Internet Segura (CIS) : originated in 2004 from an European and national project addressing safety in internet use, primarily focusing on developing digital skills. Coordinated by the National Cybersecurity Centre, includes educational institutions, youth organizations, associations, and businesses. By raising awareness and conducting campaigns, the CIS enhances the levels of digital and media literacy among citizens.

All the organizations mentioned above have websites, through which they publicize their initiatives, and they also do so through their presence on digital social networks and traditional media. As an example, Lusa, the national news agency, has a media literacy program and regularly collaborates with the entities mentioned in this report to publicize initiatives, which means that the information is very likely to be disseminated via television, radio, newspapers, magazines and other traditional or digital media. In the case of public entities, the government supports this dissemination through the regular budget, but it also does so through Lusa news agency, since it holds a 95.9% stake in the organization. Collective networks have state support (e.g., Centro Internet Segura, Lemel, GILM), while others have European funding through calls for research projects (e.g. IBERIFIER) and third parties have this support and others from associated institutions (e.g., Associação Literacia Para os Media e Jornalismo).

### 2.6.2. Media literacy for senior citizens in Portugal

Although mainly focused on the schooling population, the Strategic Plan on Media Literacy (2024-2029) adopted by the previous government in 2023 (a new one is now in preparation by the current government) included courses on digital literacy for senior citizens, involving local libraries, senior universities and private institutions of social solidarity (IPSS). However the word “senior” is only mentioned one time in the whole plan. There are some relevant public policies to be mentioned the IN.CoDe.2030 is an integration initiative launched in 2017 aimed at improving digital competencies of the whole population, but has no specific measures for seniors (although there are several lines of actions directed to adults); the Plan of

Action for Digital Transition (Plano de Ação de Transição Digital) puts together the State (through Estrutura de Missão Portugal Digital), the bank Caixa Geral de Depósitos and the movement for an active digital use MUDA; the Qualifica Centers, promoted by several entities, public and private, which have as priority target audiences adults without completing secondary education; without basic education; illiterate or with very insufficient literacy levels; with incomplete qualification paths. In December 2023 there were 313 of these centers in continental Portugal and Madeira region. Literacies for the senior population have become a topic in the last decade for Portuguese social and educational institutions, such as banks (e.g., Fundação la Caixa) and solidarity institutions, like: 1. Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa (Portuguese Red Cross); 2. Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa; 3. Cáritas; 4. Fundação Aga Khan. However, they are mostly focused on skills and sensitization in the areas of: health literacy; digital literacy; social integration and support.

It is important to state that in Portugal the protection and promotion of senior's rights is safeguarded by Constitution's article 72.º Media literacy is fundamental for senior citizens' participation in society, promoting active aging and lifelong learning, and to reduce their vulnerability to disinformation and misinformation. Potential stakeholders in media literacy include older adults themselves, government agencies and departments, educational institutions, NGOs and other civic associations, and private companies - all of them fundamental to design and provide programs that capacitate senior citizens. According to official data from the national statistics institute (INE), Portugal is the 2nd country in the European Union (only behind Italy) with the highest rate of elderly population and the 4th country in the world. Portugal has almost twice as many elderly people compared to young people - there are 185,6 elderly people per every 100 young people - and this demographic aging has been increasing. The database Pordata (managed by private foundation Francisco Manuel dos Santos), which regularly portrays the population, states that Portugal has outnumbered 3 thousand people aged 100. Portugal has more than 2.5 million people aged 65 or over, and, since 2019, the elderly population has grown more than 2% per year.

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According to the national health institute, the Portuguese elderly population is particularly vulnerable to some social and economic aspects (such as education) and has lower social participation than the European average. Among all of them, women are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. On the other hand, regular studies on internet uses and habits reveal that the age digital gap persists in Portugal (although decreasing), therefore tailored training for senior citizens would be important so as to address their specific needs and challenges. There is an innovative pilot field project conducted by ALPMJ aimed at improving media literacy and journalism among seniors. It was executed in collaboration with both public and private institutions, and was well-received by participants, though sometimes there was initial resistance due to the challenges of learning new skills. The institutions responded positively to the project as long as they didn't have to do any spending - which challenges future expansion to more sustainable programs.

### 2.6.3. Institutions for media literacy initiatives for senior citizens

Universities (both public and private, although mostly public) are an important hub, with several thesis and research on the topic of digital literacy being published, namely Universidade da Beira Interior: active aging and senior media literacy for elderly; Escola Superior de Enfermagem: health literacy for institutionalized elderly; Lisbon University: empowering through digital, pointing out how digital literacy helps elderly in terms of autonomy and social integration. Public-backed initiatives include digital inclusion plans such as IN.CoDe.2030 or "Eu sou digital", aimed to help people over 45 years of age to acquire introductory skills related to using the internet and to create digital training actions in local communities; INCoDe 2030 Program: «Nós e (A)vós». Digital Literacy sessions for seniors over 65 years old. It is an intergenerational project, an Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation Initiative (IIES) designed by Sicó Formação S.A. This initiative was created to combat the isolation of the elderly. There is a large group of elderly people whose economic income is generally very low. Besides, the elderly

population faces an increasingly technological gap and feels excluded; INCoDe 2030 Program: «We are all Digital». It aims to help one million Portuguese people take their first steps on the internet through a national network with thousands of Volunteers and with the support of more than 1,500 centers that should be created throughout the country; Programs conducted by Santa Casa da Misericórdia (a private institution with public utility statute, rooted all over the country, with liaisons to the Catholic Church); Initiatives proposed by universities (such as “Projetos Age 2.0!: Seniores em rede, engagement e literacia digital”, conducted by Higher School of Social Communication between June 2019 and June 2020). These examples stand out how digital and health literacy has been a concern in both private and public institutions, as well as academic studies, in contrast to media literacy, much poorly worked. But some examples are worth looking at:

Within the scope of IBERIFIER, ALPMJ developed media literacy skills with vulnerable publics, being that age, social status or regional periphery. The association has worked with people from 6 to 96 years old, completely illiterate or highly differentiated, in very poor neighborhoods or the most privileged. In 2023, ALPMJ focused in elderly, regarding citizenship education, democracy and civic literacy, contemporary political history, digital narratives, audiences and media consumption. This meant going to vulnerable territories, where elderly have little education and material means, some of them, like in Madeira and Azores, with geographical vulnerabilities on top of all the others. With the support of Madeira Regional Assembly, ALPMJ underwent the pilot project ‘Media Literacy and Journalism’ in Senior Universities of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, developed in the seven Senior Universities of the Region (Funchal - Santa Maria Maior, Escola Básica e Secundária Gonçalves Zarco, U.S. Funchal, Machico, Câmara de Lobos, São Vicente and Porto Santo), as part of their actions on active aging. Around one hundred ‘students’, aged over 55, participated.

MCRE project - Media literacy, critical thinking and creative thinking - as a learning approach for people with fewer opportunities, aimed to improve media literacy and critical thinking skills among disadvantaged people and adult educators from European partner countries within Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership

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Project (Romania, Poland, Cyprus, Spain, Italy and Portugal), to help analyze news and information through different communication channels. Citizen spaces and digital training centers in municipalities have promoted digital and media literacy programs, including actions aimed at seniors, teaching them how to use new technologies. Senior Universities develop various activities and courses that integrate media literacy into their curriculum for seniors. The Repórter no Mundo app invites students to create a story, following the rules for writing news story. The story is not published on the Repórter no Mundo app and website without being reviewed by the newspaper Região de Leiria editorial team, who approve or reject the publication. If rejected, the user is notified and informed of the reasons why this happened. Braga Municipality is a program that includes a brief introduction to the definition of “Media Literacy”, identification of reliable sources of information to identify misinformation (fake news), examples and practical cases disseminated in the media. Created to ensure digital literacy and inclusion for the exercise of citizenship, encouraging the participation of people aged 55+. The Literacy and Media Education Online platform is an aggregator of resources (e.g. video, audio, games, activity proposals), available online and ready to use in pedagogical activities.

Learning technologies like Learning Management Systems (LMS) are used to deliver media and digital literacy courses, particularly for older adults. Platforms like Moodle are popular, within institutions like IEFP (institute for employment and professional training) and Cenjor (training center for journalists). Other tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Meets are also used for virtual sessions. Universities also use e-learning methods (e.g. Universidade Aberta, exclusively online, has a virtual pedagogical model). In Portugal there are some specific programs and modules on the acquisition of media literacy competences in higher education. In addition to research, which highlights institutions such as the University of Minho, the University of Beira Interior, the University of Aveiro, the Lusófona University, the University of Algarve, the Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal, and ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, among others, media literacy is

both a research focus and a curricular unit, particularly in Communication Sciences courses. However, there is a need for updated assessments, as the last significant review occurred over 13 years ago (Pinto, Pereira S., Pereira, & Ferreira, 2011). Most of what is being done with the support of European funding. One example is the Iberifier project, funded by the European Commission and linked to the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). Also, in Portugal the United Nations World Press Freedom Day is celebrated with several initiatives, such as “7 days with the media”, a wide national operation involving schools, the Ministry of Education and media outlets. The purpose is to sensitize citizens about the importance of media and its role in democratic societies. In October 2024, the Global Media and Information Literacy Week, led by UNESCO, has been celebrated in Portugal.

#### 2.6.4. Media literacy competencies and validation in Portugal

The measurement of media literacy competences in Portugal does not differ significantly from that in other countries. Although studies have been developed, primarily focusing on young people in compulsory education, the results are interpreted with some caution, largely due to the low average performance of students (Pereira and Moura, 2019), particularly in terms of content creation and participation through media. This reveals a pressing need for training related to critical thinking, production, and even cybersecurity (Fernandes, 2022). In Portugal, the aspects that have been measured - predominantly through self-reporting - include the competencies for accessing and using digital devices and tools. This has also involved self-assessment supported by online tools, as was recently the case in Portugal within the framework of the Digital Action Plan. Teachers were invited to self-evaluate their digital competencies (particularly access and use) through the Selfie for Teachers tool , after which they participated in training offered by the Ministry of Education at levels 1, 2, or 3, depending on the results obtained during their self-assessment.

Research in Portugal reveals that the country is in a very early stage regarding the measurement of media literacy competencies, particularly those extending beyond access and use. It is clear that some competencies associated with media literacy are directly or indirectly referenced in the SPECS (Ministério da Educação,

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2017a). By the end of compulsory education, young people should be able to master "multiple literacies so that they can critically analyze and question reality, evaluate and select information", becoming individuals who "recognise the importance and challenges presented by the Arts, Humanities, Science, and Technology for social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability" (idem, p. 10). However, there is no measurement system with validated instruments accepted by the scientific community to assess media literacy competencies, whether in compulsory education, higher education, or among adult citizens, including seniors. Therefore, although various courses and initiatives exist targeting different audiences and assessing competencies, this evaluation is context-specific rather than universally applicable. In other words, there is significant progress yet to be made in this area, which is why the MeLiSe project is particularly important in relation to seniors. In addition to the Selfie for Teachers, there are currently no online competency assessment systems in Portugal that are publicly accessible and allow users to obtain results quickly and free of charge. The data available indicate that, although taxonomies exist, including those developed within research projects (Pereira, Fillol & Moura, 2019), they do not appear to be adapted to any IT tools for competency validation to the best of our knowledge.

Validation of competencies is conducted within the formal education system, overseen by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The Ministry of Labour validates professional competencies at various levels through the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training. For informal competency validation, whether for academic or professional purposes, this is carried out by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP), which outlines various qualification pathways that allow adults to obtain basic school certifications (from the 4th, 6th, or 9th grades), secondary-level certifications (12th grade), or postsecondary non-higher qualifications, and professional certifications. These include the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVCC),

Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA), Certified Modular Training (FMC), or the Secondary Education Completion Pathways.

## 2.7 Spain

The desk research done for Spain was conducted by Octaedro Editorial, Cosicosa and Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia the consortium partners from Spain.

### 2.7.1. Media Literacy in Spain

Media literacy programs in Spain are provided through a combination of government initiatives, educational institutions, and private organizations. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training plays a central role by integrating media literacy into the school curriculum through programs like "Programa Prensa y Escuela" and "Televisión Educativa: la Aventura del Saber." Autonomous Communities, provincial councils, and educational centers also promote media literacy through various campaigns and training programs. Additionally, the National Strategy for Digital Skills 2021-2025 and the Action Plan for Digital Education 2021-2027 aim to enhance media literacy across the population. The National Institute of Educational Technologies and Teacher Training (INTEF) offers resources and training for teachers through initiatives like "MediaEd" and "Recursos Educativos Abiertos" (REA), integrating media education into classrooms at different educational levels. Universities also contribute significantly, with institutions like the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Zaragoza leading research and offering courses in media literacy. Media and technology companies, such as the Vodafone Spain Foundation and Fundación Cibervoluntarios, support these efforts by providing programs like "EducaInternet" and "Media Literacy for All," focusing on the safe and responsible use of digital media. Media literacy programs in Spain are delivered through a coordinated effort involving government policies, educational programs, academic research, and private sector initiatives, all aimed at equipping citizens with the skills to critically engage with media.



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A range of organizations across the public, academic, and private sectors provide media literacy programs in Spain. Government and Public Institutions include Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, which offers programs like "Programa Prensa y Escuela" and "Televisión Educativa: la Aventura del Saber." It also supports media literacy through the National Strategy for Digital Skills 2021-2025 and the Action Plan for Digital Education 2021-2027. National Institute of Educational Technologies and Teacher Training (INTEF): Provides resources and training for teachers with initiatives like "MediaEd" and "Recursos Educativos Abiertos" (REA). MediaLab Prado: A public institution involved in media literacy efforts. Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (CAC): Launches campaigns and educational materials promoting critical understanding of media. Academic Institutions include Grupo Comunicar, a non-profit association focused on media literacy and communication research, Autonomous University of Barcelona (GREDI), which develops projects like "MediaScool" for training in media skills, National University of Distance Education (SMEMIU), an international benchmark for media literacy research and projects, University of Zaragoza which is known for its Research Group in Digital Communication and Information, University of Design, Innovation, and Technology (GITDCom) which is recently established in the field of media literacy and Media Literacy and Digital Cultures Programme (AMCD), a collaborative academic initiative across several Spanish universities. Private sector and NGOs who provide media literacy are Vodafone Spain Foundation which runs the "EducaInternet" program to train teachers and students in safe online practices and Fundación Cibervoluntarios which promotes media literacy through programs like "Media Literacy for All" and "Cibermedia," targeting vulnerable communities and enhancing digital skills. These organizations work together to provide comprehensive media literacy education across different segments of the Spanish population.

In Spain, communication strategies for media literacy programs differ across various organizations, utilizing both traditional and digital media to reach a wide audience. The Spanish government, particularly through the Ministry of Education

and Vocational Training, communicates its media literacy initiatives via official websites, press releases, and partnerships with educational institutions. Key programs like the National Strategy for Digital Skills and the Action Plan for Digital Education are publicized through government portals and policy documents, ensuring transparency and broad outreach. These initiatives align with EU directives, backed by government funding and policies.

Universities and research groups, such as Grupo Comunicar and the Autonomous University of Barcelona's GREDI, use academic publications, conferences, and seminars to promote their media literacy programs. These platforms not only disseminate information but also foster academic exchange and the development of media literacy frameworks. NGOs like Fundación Cibervoluntarios promote media literacy through their websites, social media, and community engagement. They provide accessible resources like tutorials, workshops, and online courses, often highlighted in newsletters and through partnerships aimed at digital inclusion. Corporate-sponsored programs, such as Vodafone Spain Foundation's "EducaInternet," are promoted through collaborations with schools and educational bodies, using online platforms and direct training sessions. These initiatives gain visibility through extensive media coverage, supported by the sponsor's marketing efforts. Media literacy initiatives frequently involve collaborations among educational institutions, government bodies, NGOs, and private sector participants. These partnerships enhance communication through events, joint press releases, and co-hosted workshops, effectively reaching diverse audiences. Government support is both financial and strategic, ensuring that media literacy programs align with national educational and digital transformation goals. This alignment aims to boost citizen participation in the digital world and strengthen democratic processes.

### 2.7.2. Media Literacy for Senior Citizens in Spain

In Spain, media literacy programs for seniors are provided by various organizations and institutions, including government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and private companies. Government-backed initiatives include digital inclusion plans from the Secretary of State for Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence.

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NGOs such as Fundación Cibervoluntarios and Fundación Splai also offer programs like "Mayores Movilizados" and "Red Conecta" to improve seniors' media literacy. Educational institutions, like Adult Education Centres, provide programs such as "Aulas Mentor," while the National Police offers the "Plan Mayor de Seguridad" to address digital safety for seniors.

Cultural institutions, public and private universities, and private companies like the Vodafone Foundation and "La Caixa " Foundation also contribute by providing resources, training, and software designed to enhance seniors' digital skills. Additionally, social media platforms, including Facebook and Google, run initiatives like the "Google News Initiative" to foster critical thinking among older audiences. Local and community efforts, supported by provincial and town councils, further disseminate these programs through initiatives like "Aulas de mayores." The Spanish government also provides funding and support, recognizing the importance of digital inclusion for seniors. Despite these efforts, the availability of published experiences in media literacy programs for seniors in Spain is limited, prompting a broader search for international courses and resources. Some notable programs include "Renacer Digital," "Cuídate+," and "Somos Digital," which have had significant impact.

Older people benefit greatly from media literacy, which helps them navigate the digital world, reduces their vulnerability to fake news, and enhances their participation in society. Media literacy promotes active aging, lifelong learning, and civic engagement while combating loneliness by connecting seniors to social networks and online communities . However, the digital divide persists, making tailored training essential to address seniors' specific needs and experiences with technology.

Potential stakeholders in media literacy include older adults themselves, government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and private companies. These stakeholders are crucial in providing programs that empower seniors, promote social well-being, and strengthen democracy. Statistics in Spain show that, according to the INE (2022) , 54.3% of seniors aged 65-74 read news online,

43% use online banking, and 23.7% shop online. Internet use among those aged 65–74 is 76.4%, but drops to 35.9% for those 75 and older. Social media use is also notable, with 41.8% of users aged 25–44, and an increasing percentage over 44. A 2024 INE study indicates that 80% of people aged 65–74 used the Internet in the last three months, and 76.1% used messaging services like WhatsApp. Media consumption remains high, with 90% of those over 74 watching television regularly. However, trust in Internet use is mixed, with 38.5% of seniors lacking confidence in their online activities.

The report highlights various innovative training programs aimed at improving media literacy among seniors, which have been well-received by public and private institutions, NGOs, and other organizations. Participants generally responded with enthusiasm and gratitude, though initial resistance was common due to the challenges of learning new skills. However, with supportive teaching methods and the involvement of educational and social actors, seniors' confidence and autonomy grew, allowing them to navigate the digital world more effectively. The report also identifies challenges in expanding these programs, such as the need for continued provision of devices and internet access for seniors, and the importance of using simple language and practical examples in training. The study raises the question of whether all institutions are fully committed to addressing this social challenge. Currently, the SMEMIU Research Group at UNED is working on the "Media Literacy for Senior European Citizens (MELISSE)" project, which includes an innovative online course (sMOOC) designed to build media skills among seniors. This course, supported by various institutions, will address issues like media distrust, artificial intelligence, and combating fake news, and will be available in multiple languages through the [eco-learning.eu](https://eco-learning.eu) platform.

### 2.7.3. Institutions for media literacy initiatives for senior citizens

In Spain, media literacy for older adults is offered by Adult Education and Civic Centres, such as the Adult Education Centres (CEPA) in the Community of Madrid, provide digital training tailored to seniors. These courses help older adults interact autonomously with digital technologies and are part of broader personal development and participation programs. Many libraries offer digital and media

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literacy training specifically for older adults, helping them navigate the internet safely and effectively. Organizations focused on the welfare of seniors or educational advancement, like the Pere Tarrés Foundation, run workshops on digital literacy. These programs often cover basic computer use, internet safety, and social integration through technology. Sponsored by municipalities or autonomous communities, these programs aim to increase digital skills among older populations, particularly in rural areas where access to technology is more limited. Foundations dedicated to education and technology, such as La Compañía in Aragon, Cibervoluntarios in Asturias, and EAPN in Canarias, offer structured training sessions. These programs focus on helping seniors use smartphones, computers, and digital applications like WhatsApp and email, enabling them to perform administrative tasks and access services independently. In addition to these, universities like UNED also provide media literacy courses, but the broader network of adult education centres, libraries, NGOs, and community programs play a significant role in bridging the digital divide for seniors across Spain.

Learning technologies like Learning Management Systems (LMS) are used in Spain to deliver media and digital literacy courses, particularly for older adults. Platforms like Moodle are popular, with institutions like UNED and UAB using them to organize materials and facilitate interaction, allowing seniors to learn from home. Other tools like Microsoft Teams are also used for virtual sessions, as seen with Cibernarium. During the pandemic, workshops like "Senior TIC" and "Conquista la era Digital" used video conferencing and slides, though many workshops now focus on in-person learning to support socialization. Additionally, a 10-day course by Poynter-MediaWise and others was delivered via WhatsApp<sup>1</sup>, showcasing the variety of technologies employed in Spain for senior education.

There is substantial public and private support in Spain for promoting media literacy among seniors. The Spanish government, through initiatives like the

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<sup>1</sup> Sádaba, C., Salaverría, R., and Bringué-Sala, X. (2023). How to teach the elderly to detect disinformation: a training experiment with WhatsApp in *Profesional De La información*, 32(5). <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.sep.04>

National Strategy for Digital Skills 2021-2025 and projects funded by the National R&D&I Plan, emphasizes enhancing digital competencies for all, including older adults. Regional programs, such as those by the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia, also offer tailored media literacy campaigns and educational programs. Additionally, universities like UNED and non-profits like Fundación Cibervoluntarios provide courses and workshops focused on improving digital skills for seniors. Community and cultural centers, such as MediaLab Prado and Citilab-Cornellà, offer hands-on learning experiences and specific programs like “SeniorLab” to promote active participation in the digital society.

In Spain there are several specific programmes and modules on the acquisition of media literacy competences in higher education. They are usually integrated both in university curricula and in special initiatives. For example, the University Carlos III of Madrid offers free and open resources on media literacy through its research group Alfamedeso. These resources are designed to broaden the knowledge of teachers and researchers interested in this field of study (UC3M). Another example is the multidisciplinary Master’s program in International Studies on Media, Power, and Difference at Universidad Pompeu Fabra (UPF), which includes courses that critically examine media’s role in shaping societal power structures and public perception, equipping students with advanced media analysis skills. In addition, various academic and practical proposals have been developed to integrate media education in higher education. Initiatives such as the creation of specific curricula for teacher training in ICT and media stand out, thus supporting the incorporation of media competences in teacher training.

There are several international initiatives, especially in collaboration with Latin American countries and also UNESCO.

Some examples of collaboration are:

- Iberifier Project, is funded by the European Commission and linked to the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO).

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- World Media Literacy Week is led by UNESCO, in cooperation with the Media and Information Literacy Partnership (GAPMIL), the Media and Information and Intercultural Dialogue University Network (MILID) and other partners.
- AUPEX promotes media literacy with UNESCO. One of UNESCO's priorities is to promote the ability to identify reliable information in all areas of life. To this end, it has delegations all over the world and AUPEX (Association of Popular Universities of Extremadura) participates in the group of the European subdivision of Mediterranean countries, which includes organizations that work to raise awareness and train citizens in media and information literacy (AMI).
- Seniors United Against Misinformation: A European Initiative for Media Literacy (SUM): Verificat leads this media education project for the elderly with the collaboration of the University of Lapland and Housatonic SL.
- European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), aims to act as a reference point on data and policies on disinformation, public trust, media literacy and quality information. Count on a network with more than 90 institutions (19 institutions from Spain).

Sometimes collaboration between the business sector and HE regarding media literacy for citizens happen like the case of Telefónica: through partnerships with associations and banking institutions, it promotes digital literacy so that the elderly can use technologies that facilitate their daily lives, such as ATMs and other online banking services, helping to reduce the digital divide in this segment of the population (Telefónica). Meta: "How to detect false information online?" WhatsApp course, aimed specifically at people over 50 explained before.

There are some examples of integrating practice related to media literacy topics even though they are not focused on the elderly. Some integrative initiatives that have been found are:

- MFP (Madrid For Refugees): Programa Media Literacy for refugees
- SAMU Foundation : It has carried out a programme on digital and language literacy commissioned by the State Public Employment Service (SEPE) which has enabled 21 unemployed women from Ceuta to acquire key skills for their educational and professional integration and, above all, for their personal development.
- Conecta Joven: The project uses ApS (learning and service) methodology to educate young people in digital skills so that they can train older people in the use of technology and thus contribute to breaking the existing generational digital gap.
- EDYTA: digital training project aimed at women in a situation of vulnerability and social exclusion to contribute to improving their employability.
- Clic contra la soledad no deseada: Project to promote the creation and maintenance of informal support networks through ICT as a tool to prevent unwanted loneliness in the elderly.
- Inclusión 2.0: Promote training and the acquisition of skills in adults with cognitive disabilities and users of day care centers, through the use of emerging technologies.

#### 2.7.4. Media literacy competencies and validation

Media literacy competencies in Spain are increasingly recognized within both educational and professional frameworks. Assessment systems for these competencies often combine formal evaluations, such as exams and projects within university programs, with informal assessments through workshops and activities organized by NGOs or public institutions. Validation is carried out using various assessment tools designed to measure specific skills and knowledge. These include tests that evaluate critical thinking, problem-solving in digital environments, ICT knowledge, and digital competence. Examples of such assessments are the iSkills Assessment, the International Computer Driving License (ICDL), and the Online Digital Literacy Test (ADO). These systems help ensure that acquired skills are



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formally recognized, contributing to ongoing education and professional development. However, detailed information on standardized assessment systems specifically for media literacy across Spain is limited.

The validation of informally acquired competencies is crucial for educational institutions (both higher education and vocational training) and businesses. It supports lifelong learning and career development by recognizing skills acquired outside traditional educational settings. This process helps bridge the gap between formal education and the evolving needs of the labor market, benefiting both individuals and employers by formally acknowledging and utilizing relevant competencies. IT-based tools are typically used in Spain to support the validation of competencies. Examples include digital portfolios and online assessment platforms that enable individuals to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. These tools often align with European frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which standardizes the validation process across various competency levels.

Various institutions in Spain are involved in the validation of informal and non-formal learning. Universities may recognize prior learning and competencies for academic credit, while professional certification bodies validate skills for specific industries. Governmental organizations and NGOs also play significant roles in facilitating access to these validation processes, often providing resources and support for individuals seeking recognition of their informal learning.

### 3. EU insights

Media literacy programs in most European's Union's (EU) countries are typically provided through a combination of governmental bodies, educational institutions (schools, universities), NGOs, libraries, and private organizations. These programs aim to enhance digital and media skills among different age groups, including youth, adults, and senior citizens. Programs can be offered via online platforms, in-person workshops, and as part of formal educational curricula in schools or

community centers. Ministries of Education and Communications often lead media literacy programs. Organizations like European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), All Digital, and national-level NGOs work extensively in media literacy promotion. Universities, vocational schools, and even private digital education providers often host media literacy training. Programs are typically communicated through government campaigns, social media, educational portals, and NGO initiatives. National governments often provide support in the form of funding or partnerships, aligning with EU-wide goals for digital literacy. The European Commission has been a significant supporter of media literacy, offering grants and creating platforms for collaboration. NGOs play a significant role in reaching out to seniors, often offering free or subsidized courses aimed at helping older citizens navigate the internet, spot fake news, and use digital tools. Stakeholders related to media literacy are governments, local authorities, and educational institutions, companies offering technological products for seniors (e.g., smartphones for elderly citizens), telecommunications companies, and social media platforms. NGOs like Telecentre Europe and other senior citizen advocacy groups. Generally, there is a positive reception among stakeholders, as improving media literacy for seniors is seen as crucial in ensuring that older generations remain integrated into digital society. However, seniors may face challenges due to fear of technology or a lack of confidence in using digital tools.

Media literacy courses for seniors are offered by community centers, libraries, non-profit organizations, and adult educational centers. For instance, in Sweden, local libraries offer courses tailored for seniors. In some EU countries, learning management systems (LMS) such as Moodle are used, particularly in university-affiliated programs. However, for senior citizens, more user-friendly platforms or in-person training tend to be the preferred method of instruction. Public and private institutions, along with the EU's Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp), offer support for the development and recognition of digital literacy skills, including media literacy for seniors. Local government bodies also promote these initiatives. Many universities incorporate digital media literacy modules into broader ICT or social science programs. The European Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework guides some of these efforts. EU-wide

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collaborations such as EDMO, European Schoolnet, and Erasmus+ facilitate cross-border partnerships on media literacy, allowing knowledge exchange between institutions. In many cases, tech companies collaborate with universities to deliver media literacy workshops or provide access to resources for teaching digital skills, including for seniors.

In many EU countries, media literacy competencies are now recognized through official frameworks such as DigComp, where individuals can validate their skills through assessments and certifications. Validation is becoming more important, particularly in vocational education and training (VET). IT-based validation tools are increasingly being used in countries like Estonia and Finland. Platforms such as Europass and Open Badges are utilized to validate and document media literacy skills.

### 3.1. Specific initiatives across European Union

The European Commission developed Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp), a key framework that outlines essential digital skills for all citizens, including media literacy. It provides a reference model used across the EU for defining and assessing digital competence, with particular emphasis on empowering senior citizens to navigate the digital world safely and effectively. European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) is an EU-funded initiative aimed at combating disinformation and promoting media literacy. While its focus is broad, it works closely with member states to target senior citizens who are often more vulnerable to digital misinformation. EDMO funds media literacy projects across Europe that support seniors in becoming more critical consumers of media content. All Digital Weeks is a pan-European campaign, supported by the European Commission, aims to promote digital skills and media literacy. It includes specific activities aimed at seniors, offering workshops on topics like online safety, identifying fake news, and using digital communication tools. Local organizations in different EU member states participate in these campaigns, targeting seniors specifically through public libraries, community centers, and NGOs. Some EU

countries, such as Germany and France, have launched the Silver Surfers initiative, which is aimed at teaching older adults basic internet navigation and media literacy skills. The program helps seniors use the internet safely, access news, and develop critical thinking regarding online content. Media Literacy for All, is an initiative, funded under the Creative Europe program, supports projects that promote media literacy across all demographics, including senior citizens. It fosters cross-border cooperation in developing tools and resources for media literacy education, with many projects directly addressing the needs of seniors in an increasingly digital media landscape. e-Engagement Against Disinformation (eEAD), is a European project focused on equipping senior citizens with the tools to recognize and counter online disinformation. It includes workshops and digital campaigns specifically tailored to older audiences, helping them improve their digital literacy and become more critical of the information they encounter online. AAL Programme (Active and Assisted Living) promotes the use of digital technologies to support the aging population. While its primary focus is on health and independent living, it includes components that aim to improve seniors' digital and media literacy, enabling them to interact with digital services, news, and social platforms safely. SeniorNet is a Swedish initiative that promotes digital literacy among older citizens, including media literacy. It offers workshops and peer-to-peer training that helps seniors become more confident in using digital tools and accessing trustworthy online media sources.

## 4. Main results

In this section we are going to analyze the data from the reports collected from all of the countries and provide a comparative analysis so as to highlight the existing programs on media literacy for senior citizens, the best practices, methods and existing gaps.

Austria has implemented extensive media literacy programs for seniors, including initiatives like Digi4Family and Digitalesenioren.at, focusing on digital participation. Adult education centers offer special courses for older adults, emphasizing digital competence development. There is a strong emphasis on inclusive learning environments and peer mentorship. Germany offers media literacy programs for

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seniors via a mix of public and non-governmental organizations. Programs like the Senior Media Mentor Program and Wissensdurstig.de aim to reduce digital isolation. They focus on peer-based learning, where experienced seniors mentor others, which has proven effective. Greece has seen initiatives like the Greek Safer Internet Center and programs offered by the University of Athens designed to enhance digital literacy among older adults. However, training for educators and the integration of media literacy into formal education lacks standardization and consistency. Italy lags behind other EU countries in media literacy, especially for seniors. Initiatives like Pane e Internet focus on reducing digital inequality, and projects like Repubblica Digitale support older adults in accessing digital tools. However, a lack of national strategy and consistent implementation across regions is a notable gap. Ireland provides focused initiatives such as Age Action's Getting Started and EU-funded projects like DISERA, which aim to improve digital skills in rural senior populations. However, there's limited focus on older adults compared to other age groups.

The European Union supports many cross-country collaborations, like the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) and Erasmus+ programs, encouraging shared resources and knowledge across borders. However, the lack of standardization in media literacy training, particularly for seniors, and uneven distribution of programs across EU countries reveal significant gaps.

The methods and tactics used are peer-to-peer mentoring programs, especially in Germany and Austria, where senior citizens help each other develop digital skills, have been highly effective. Some countries, including Austria and Germany, have integrated both face-to-face and online learning platforms like Moodle to accommodate different learning paces and preferences. Initiatives like Pane e Internet in Italy and Digi4Family in Austria promote learning within community spaces, helping reduce seniors' fear of technology and encouraging social participation.

Although the developments, gaps exist like in Italy and Greece that do not have well-defined national strategies for senior-focused media literacy, leading to

inconsistent program quality and availability. There is a lack of standardized training for educators in media literacy, particularly in Greece, limiting the effective teaching of digital skills to seniors. Rural senior populations, as seen in programs like DISERA, face more challenges in accessing media literacy programs due to geographic isolation and less technological infrastructure. In many countries, programs primarily focus on teaching seniors' basic digital skills such as using smartphones, email, and internet browsing. While important, this often neglects critical aspects of media literacy, such as understanding misinformation, digital ethics, privacy, and safe online behavior. Programs like Pane e Internet in Italy and Digi4Family in Austria emphasize basic competence, but there is little content addressing advanced media literacy skills like recognizing disinformation or evaluating sources. Many existing programs are adapted from general media literacy education and do not specifically cater to the unique needs of older adults. Seniors often face cognitive, sensory, and psychological barriers, such as fear of scams, memory retention challenges, or lack of confidence in using digital technologies. Programs like Hi Digital in Ireland, which offers step-by-step guidance, are exceptions, but most initiatives do not sufficiently adapt content for this demographic's specific needs. While some countries like Austria and Germany offer courses on digital citizenship, there is often a gap in integrating social and ethical aspects of media use for seniors. Many programs do not cover the ethical implications of online behavior, such as digital footprints, data protection, and ethical sharing practices, which are critical as seniors engage more with social media and online communities. Most programs for seniors still rely on traditional lecture-based formats, which are less effective for older adults who benefit more from interactive, practical, and hands-on learning experiences. Programs like Senior Media Mentor in Germany are moving towards peer learning, but many initiatives continue to lack interactive or engaging approaches tailored to seniors' learning preferences.

A significant issue is the lack of adequate training for educators and mentors who teach media literacy to seniors. In countries like Greece, educators often lack formal media literacy training, leading to inconsistent teaching quality. This affects how well programs can address the needs of senior learners, who often require

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more patience and adaptive teaching methods. Without properly trained educators, programs are less effective in helping seniors develop critical digital skills. In an age of increasing disinformation, seniors are particularly vulnerable to online scams and fake news. However, many existing media literacy programs fail to focus sufficiently on teaching seniors how to critically evaluate online information, discern between credible and false sources, and recognize manipulation. Programs like SUM in Italy are exceptions, but generally, there is a lack of targeted efforts to teach seniors about online disinformation, a gap that poses significant risks to this demographic. Media literacy programs are more readily available in urban areas where there is better access to digital tools, educators, and infrastructure. Another notable gap is the availability of free or affordable programs for seniors. While some government-supported programs exist, many are region-specific or dependent on temporary funding, such as Italy's \*Pane e Internet\* and various initiatives in Austria and Germany. Seniors in economically disadvantaged areas may not have access to such programs, which deepens digital inequality. There is a general gap in evaluating the effectiveness of media literacy programs for seniors. Many initiatives lack structured feedback mechanisms to measure how well seniors are learning and applying the skills taught. For instance, while Austria and Germany are relatively advanced in media literacy for seniors, there is limited data on how well these programs are bridging the digital divide. Program evaluations are crucial to understand the impact of these interventions and make necessary adjustments to curricula and teaching methodologies. Although EU-wide initiatives like EDMO promote sharing of resources across countries, the cross-national collaboration on senior-focused media literacy is still underdeveloped. Many countries work in isolation, leading to redundant efforts and a slower dissemination of best practices. A coordinated EU-level strategy could foster better cooperation and improve access to high-quality media literacy resources for seniors across Europe. In summary, while there are several media literacy programs aimed at senior citizens across Europe, there are critical gaps in the content, accessibility, and delivery of these programs. Addressing these gaps requires more focused

curricula that include advanced media literacy skills, better national and EU-level coordination, targeted efforts to include rural and marginalized populations, and improved evaluation mechanisms to ensure these programs effectively meet seniors' needs.

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