

PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT

“Youth Participation in Digital Democracy: From Digital Skills to Digital Rights of Youth with Fewer Opportunities”

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the Field of Youth

Project No. 101131235

1 November 2023 – 31 October 2025

Leader: SCiDEV

TIRANË, ALBANIA, 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Digital transformation is reshaping how democracy functions. Civic participation, political debate, media consumption and public accountability increasingly unfold online. Yet while young people are among the most active digital users, they are rarely involved in shaping the governance frameworks that regulate digital spaces.

The project “Youth Participation in Digital Democracy: From digital skills to digital rights of youth with fewer opportunities (EYDR – Empowering Youth for Digital Rights)” was designed to address this gap. Implemented between November 2023 and October 2025 under the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the Field of Youth programme, the project strengthened youth participation in digital democracy across Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and Spain.

EYDR moved beyond traditional digital literacy approaches. It focused on digital rights, democratic safeguards and policy engagement, equipping young people—particularly those with fewer opportunities—with the knowledge, confidence and tools to contribute meaningfully to discussions on digital governance.

Over two years, the project combined research, capacity building, youth-led production and structured policy dialogue. It engaged young people, youth workers, civil society actors, media representatives and public institutions, generating measurable improvements in youth policy literacy, cross-border cooperation and evidence-informed dialogue on digital rights.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

Research and Evidence



The project began with a structured assessment of youth participation in digital democracy. Two national Mapping Reports were conducted in [Albania](#) and [Montenegro](#), analysing how young people engage in digital spaces and identifying systemic barriers to meaningful participation.

The research examined issues such as digital literacy gaps, limited structured dialogue between youth and institutions, challenges in online safety and cybersecurity awareness, and the absence of youth perspectives in debates on artificial intelligence and platform governance. The findings provided an evidence base for all subsequent activities and informed discussions with institutions and stakeholders.

By grounding the project in research, EYDR ensured that interventions responded to documented needs rather than assumptions.

Capacity Building and the Youth Digital Democracy Accelerator Programme

At the core of the project stood the [Youth Digital Democracy Accelerator Programme](#). This was not a conventional training series, but a structured pathway designed to strengthen youth understanding of digital rights and democratic participation.

The programme combined thematic workshops, mentoring, peer exchange and applied policy work. Participants developed competencies in understanding digital rights frameworks, analysing online harms and platform dynamics, and translating youth perspectives into policy-relevant outputs.

Sixteen youth workers contributed to the co-design of the programme, and thirty-seven young beneficiaries participated in the [Digital Democracy Workshop Series](#) at local and regional level. Twenty-five young people and youth workers took part in international mobilities in Belgrade and Oviedo, enabling comparative reflection between Western Balkan contexts and an EU Member State.



The Accelerator Programme resulted in four youth-led policy briefs addressing topics such as [media literacy](#), [online participation](#), [artificial intelligence](#) and [tech-facilitated gender-based violence](#). Participants also co-produced seven [podcasts](#) and seven [opinion articles](#), amplifying youth perspectives on digital democracy.

Two youth-designed national awareness campaigns reached more than 10,000 users through social media and multimedia content. Youth Digital Rights Talks and a [Final Conference](#) provided structured platforms for young participants to present their policy proposals to civil society actors and institutional stakeholders.

Public Engagement and Policy Dialogue



Beyond youth capacity building, EYDR fostered structured dialogue between young people and public institutions. Over 150 stakeholders from civil society organisations, media, universities and public institutions engaged in project-related discussions.

Dialogue involved institutions such as the State Minister for Youth and Children in Albania, the National Youth Agency and the National Authority for Cyber Security. Research findings and youth policy briefs informed these exchanges, positioning youth perspectives within broader national debates on digital governance.



The project also strengthened cooperation among partner organisations across the Western Balkans and Spain. Through joint methodology development, peer learning and coordinated implementation, the consortium built a durable framework for continued collaboration beyond the project's duration.

Youth Digital Democracy Accelerator Programme Outputs (1/2)



Youth Policy Brief: Vulnerability of Montegrin Youth to Disinformation



Youth Policy Brief: The use of AI for Fact-Checking - Challenges & Perspectives in the Albanian Context



Youth Policy Brief: Youth for Youth – A proposal to foster digital participation in Albania



Youth Policy Brief: Tech-Facilitated Gender Based Violence in Albania – An Exaustive List

Youth Digital Democracy Accelerator Programme Outputs (2/2)



"Rinia 1 0 1" Youth-Led
Podcast, Episode 3:
Cyberbullying



"Rinia 1 0 1" Youth-Led
Podcast, Episode 1: Artificial
Intelligence & Fact-Checking



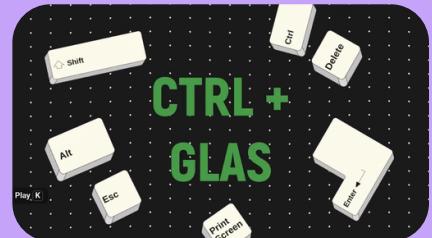
"Rinia 1 0 1" Youth-Led
Podcast, Episode 2: Platforms
that Promote Digital
Participation of Young People



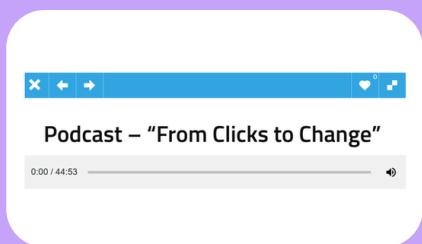
"CTRL+ GLAS" Youth-Led
Podcast, Episode 1: Youth
Participation in Digital
Democracy



"CTRL+ GLAS" Youth-Led
Podcast, Episode 2: Digital
Campaigns & Calls to Action



"CTRL+ GLAS" Youth-Led
Podcast, Episode 3: What
Influences Political Passivity
of Youth



"From Clicks to Change"
Youth-Led Podcast

IMPACT AND EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

The impact of EYDR can be observed at multiple levels.

At the individual level, participating young people reported increased knowledge and confidence in understanding digital rights and engaging critically with digital systems. Several participants engaged for the first time in policy-oriented advocacy processes, including consultations related to legislation on technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Youth involvement shifted from passive digital engagement to structured contribution.

At the organisational level, partner organisations strengthened their capacity to design and implement participatory programmes on digital democracy. The collaboration deepened regional networks and enhanced methodological expertise in youth research, mentoring and policy dialogue facilitation.

At the dialogue level, the project contributed to a more evidence-informed national conversation on digital rights. Research findings and youth-produced policy briefs provided structured input into discussions on digital governance, cybersecurity and online participation.





The European added value of EYDR lies in its transnational design. By connecting organisations from Western Balkan accession countries with an EU Member State, the project enabled comparative reflection, cross-border learning and transfer of practices. The mobilities and peer exchange activities facilitated a shared understanding of democratic standards in digital governance across diverse political contexts.

These exchanges strengthened regional solidarity and embedded youth digital participation within a broader European framework of democratic values and fundamental rights.

BEYOND THE PROJECT: EMBEDDING THE RESULTS

Although the formal implementation period concluded in October 2025, the project's outcomes continue to shape partner activities and regional cooperation.

The research findings and resources developed during EYDR remain publicly accessible through partner platforms and continue to inform ongoing youth and digital rights initiatives. Youth participants remain engaged through informal ambassador networks and continued collaboration with partner organisations.



Advocacy linked to two of the youth policy briefs continues beyond the project duration, supported by sustained cooperation between young participants and organisations. The experience and methodologies developed through EYDR have already informed new project proposals and initiatives under Erasmus+, CERV and other European frameworks.

The project demonstrated that strengthening youth participation in digital democracy requires an integrated approach combining research, structured mentoring, cross-border cooperation and institutional dialogue. By embedding youth voices within digital governance discussions, EYDR contributed to building foundations for more inclusive and resilient democratic systems.



As digital transformation continues to redefine public life, equipping young people to shape the norms and safeguards of digital space remains a shared responsibility. EYDR represents a significant step in that direction.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Implementing a two-year transnational project across four countries required continuous coordination, flexibility and adaptation. While all core objectives were achieved within the project timeframe, the process revealed important operational and strategic lessons that strengthen the model for future initiatives.

One of the **first challenges** emerged during the research phase. The data collection process for the Mapping Reports in Albania and Montenegro coincided with academic examination periods and summer holidays. This affected participation rates and required timeline adjustments to preserve research quality and inclusiveness. The experience highlighted the importance of aligning youth-focused research activities with educational calendars and local rhythms, particularly when working with students and young people balancing multiple commitments.

Transnational mobility activities also required flexibility. Administrative procedures and unforeseen travel disruptions affected participation in one of the international exchanges. While these challenges were resolved without compromising overall objectives, they underscored the necessity of contingency planning in cross-border youth cooperation and reinforced the importance of institutional responsiveness when working across different logistical and regulatory environments.

The **development of youth-led** policy briefs offered another key learning moment. Drafting policy-oriented outputs requires sustained mentoring, iterative feedback and space for reflection. Academic calendars and seasonal breaks extended the drafting timeline, but the additional time invested strengthened the analytical depth and ownership of the final documents. The process confirmed that meaningful youth participation in policy dialogue cannot be compressed into short cycles; it requires structured accompaniment and trust-building.

At **consortium level**, coordinating organisations with different internal structures, administrative systems and working cultures required robust communication mechanisms. A structured monitoring and quality assurance framework played a central role in maintaining coherence, accountability and shared standards across partners. The experience demonstrated that clear governance structures and transparent coordination processes are essential in multi-country initiatives.

Overall, the **project reaffirmed several core principles**. Youth engagement must be paced realistically and aligned with participants' contexts. Cross-border cooperation demands flexibility and contingency planning. Policy-oriented youth work benefits from evidence-based design and sustained mentorship. When these elements are integrated thoughtfully, challenges become opportunities for institutional strengthening and long-term impact.



Youth Participation in Digital Democracy: From Digital Skills to Digital Rights of Youth with Fewer Opportunities (EYDR) project aims to strengthen the capacities of Albanian and Montenegrin youth to meaningfully engage in digital activism through an approach that balances protection and digital participation.

EYDR is funded by the Erasmus Capacity Building in the Field of Youth of the European Union and is implemented under the leadership of SCiDEV in partnership with **UZOR, Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, Asociación Youropia, Centre for Comparative International Studies, Erasmus Student Network in Albania, National Youth Agency in Albania, and SHARE Foundation.**



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