

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	CARDET CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY LIMITED (CARDET)
PIC Number:	PIC 999738552
Project Name and Acronym:	[An intergenerational active debate on how countering disinformation to empower citizens] – [MEDIWISE]

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event Number:	[WP3]		
Event Name:	ΜΜΕ & Δημόσια Σφαίρα: Πραγματικότητες και Προκλήσεις στην Κύπρο - Media & The Public Sphere: Realities and Challenges in Cyprus		
Type:	Open Discussion		
In Situ/Online:	In Situ		
Location:	Cyprus, Nicosia		
Date(s):	14.09.2023		
Website(s) (if any):	-		
Participants			
Female:	19		
Male:	13		
Non-Binary:	0		
From Country 1: Cyprus	31		
From Country 2: Greece	1		
Total Number of Participants:	32	From total number of countries:	2
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>CARDET (Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology) was responsible for the organisation and delivery of the National High Level Experts Meeting in Cyprus. The Meeting was delivered on September 14th 2023 in Nicosia, Cyprus. Participants were identified and approached mainly from the areas of media and democracy. In fact, a total of thirty-two (32) participants attended the National High Level Experts Meeting with professional identities including journalists, political scientists, CSO members and academics. There was adequate representation of the male (M) and female (F) populations, whereas there was no non-binary (NB) representation during this Meeting.</p> <p>The National High Level Experts Meeting took place in the form of an open discussion which explored</p>			

and shed light on key issues concerning the evolution of public debate and the media in Cyprus. The discussion centered around four (4) key thematic areas namely: I. Journalism, Media Pluralism and Democracy, II. The Facts and Challenges of Media and Journalists in the Modern Era, III. The Presentation of Migrants in the Media and the Public Sphere and IV. The Phenomenon and Examples of Disinformation Campaigns in Cyprus. Four (4) panellists-speakers who are experts in the abovementioned themes led the discussion through the presentation of their findings and analysis. More specifically the panellists were I. Nikolas Karides (Director of the Media Institute), II. Marina Economidou (Director of Kathimerini Cyprus), III. Dr. Nikos Peristianis (Sociologist, President of the Universitas Foundation) and IV. Andromache Sophocleous (Political Analyst). Participants had the opportunity to engage in a fruitful discussion with the panellists, exchanging perspectives and experiences from their own fields and unique areas of expertise. Through these discussions a set of recommendations and considerations was ultimately produced.

The overarching conclusion of the Meeting was that Cyprus is presently experiencing, maybe more profoundly than ever, the adverse effect(s) of disinformation and fake news on the democratic society and is in urgent need of reforming and reshaping this narrative. The debate - discussion ended on a rather pessimistic tone indicating that even if citizens are empowered on digital literacy and critical thinking, disinformation is rooted in deep political and structural issues.

Questions Explored During the Meeting:

1. What if fact checking for online media does become readily available to the public? Do actors responsible for disinformation face any consequences as a result of their practices? How will that be achieved in the absence of a legislative framework?
2. Is disinformation really the issue in the context of Cyprus? Oftentimes the public is being presented with the true narrative yet they choose to stick to false realities. Can disinformation be tackled or are we rather facing a more deeply rooted problem as a society?
3. There is talk about the responsibility of citizens to develop their critical thinking competencies in order to shield themselves from these waves of disinformation and fake news. Should this be the case? What about less intellectually privileged citizens who might not be able to gain that capacity? Shouldn't the media function as a protector of those people and as an advocate of the truth?
4. There has been a Bill proposed for the criminalisation of online fake news. This proposal came right from the President of the Cypriot House of Representatives after being herself a target of such practices. Does this proposal not entail any risks for the right of freedom of expression? Furthermore, why are political figures so prompt to act when their reputation is at stake and why is this not the case for instances of threats to public cohesion and public safety?
5. It was highlighted that there is a need for existing stakeholders to invest in investigative journalism instead of fostering a culture of fast news. Even so, can existing 'players' reverse their unreliability and ever regain people's trust? Is there rather a need for a different approach to information receiving?