

Voices of Youth Tackling Hate Speech  
Across Europe: Experiences from  
Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia,  
Lithuania, Estonia





LIEPĀJA

ZAGREB

TALLINN

RĪGA

RIJEKA

TARTU

## LOCAL EVENTS

SOFIA

BUCHAREST

VILNIUS

Veliko  
Tarnovo

CLUJ-NAPOCA

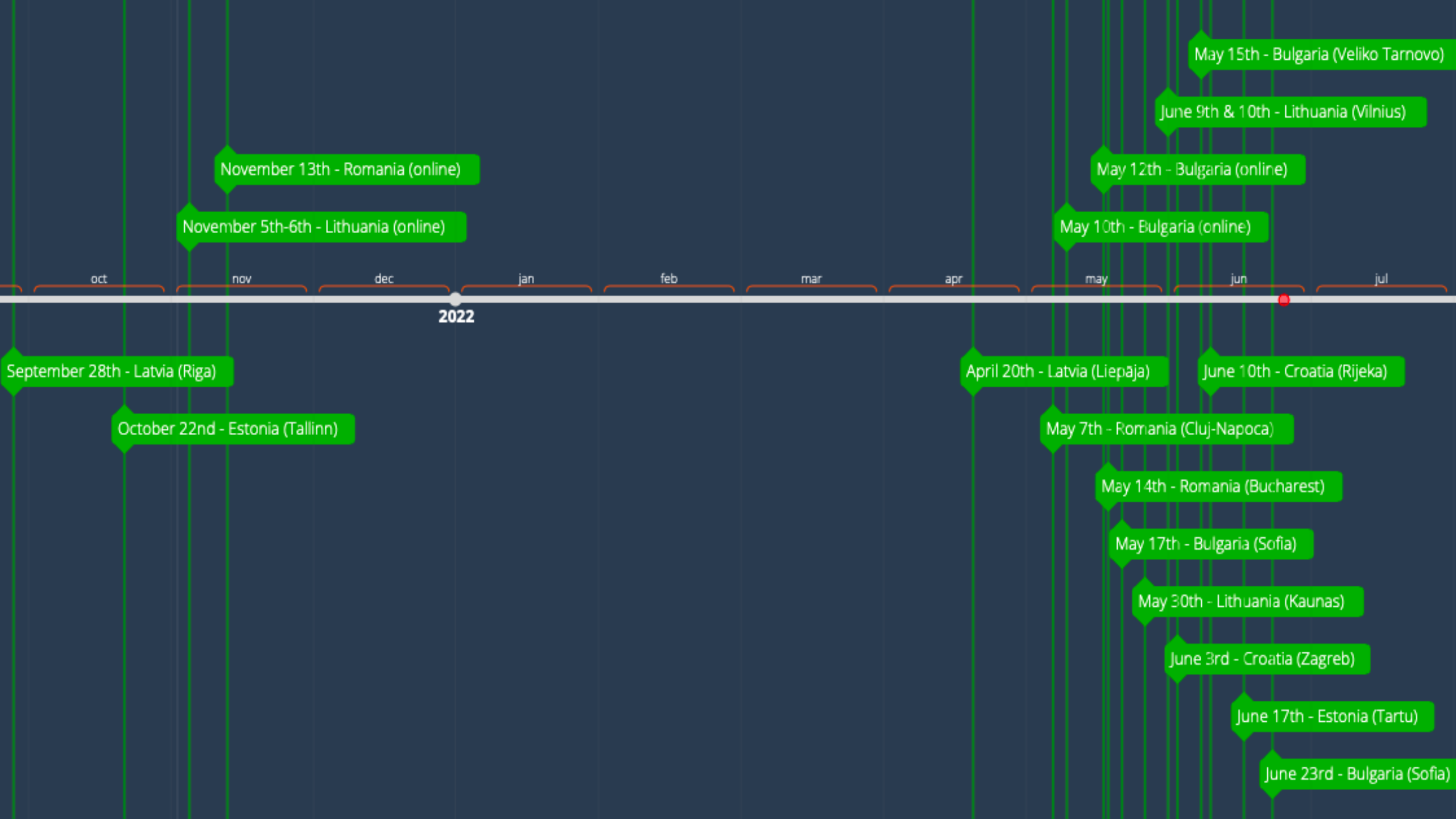
KAUNAS

# EUROPE

## EUROPEAN UNION

-  EU Member States
-  EU New Members since 2004
-  EU New Member 2013
-  EU Candidates
-  Possible EU Candidates 2022
-  EFTA Member States





# Some interesting facts ...

- **17 youth events:** 4 in online and 13 in face-to-face format
- All together **357** participant
- Age of participants: **16 – 30**
- **Nationalities/countries - 30**, including Lithuania, Germany, Brasilia, Portugal, Georgia, Ukraine, Latvia, Czech Republic, USA, France, Bulgaria, Sweden, Italy, Romania, Belgium, Spain, Slovenia, Serbia, Egypt, Tunisia , Germany, India, Turkey, Moldova, Albania, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Nigeria, Croatia, Estonia
- **Participants:** NGO leaders, international students, members of local communities and initiatives, LGBTQ+ community members, people with disabilities, migrants, activists, people with varying knowledge on the topic and different political views, students in communication, law, social studies, political studies, graphic design and IT, European Solidarity Corp volunteers, journalists etc.



# Topics discussed by youth

- hate speech phenomena
- its impact and consequences
- debated about the freedom of speech, its role and possible restrictions,
- important cultural, social, political issues on local and European level related to hate speech,
- various local and EU initiatives for combating hate speech
- The role of young person in promotion of tolerance and human rights
- recommendations or message for prevention of hate speech addressed to other young people, local authorities and the EU

WITH GREAT  
POWER  
COMES GREAT  
RESPONSIBILITY

*More funding  
for anti-hate  
Speech!*

LOVE  
NOT WAR



Latvia





# Latvia



- Hot Topics: migrants through Belarus and Covid-19/ War in Ukraine and freedom of speech





Why hate hurts?  
Consequences

## The story of one participant ...



In December 2010 at the New Jewish cemetery in Riga, about 90 graves were painted with swastika, and 8 overturned. The desecration of the cemetery happened on a special time – day of Jewish celebration.

How far is hate speech from each of us?

## **Message to the EU:**

**“With great power comes  
great responsibility”**

**Support education and give  
more funding for anti-hate  
speech activities!**

## **Message to national authorities:**

**In unity we believe!**

**It starts with us. We lead by example. We are all humans and  
those in charge, are here to protect: Always!**

**Make love not war!**

**Knowledge is power!**

**We are the future, but we are looking up to those in power.**

**This world needs to get better. I am in support of human  
rights.**

**Thought we have failed some times, in life we have chances  
to fix our mistakes. We support all humans no matter who or  
where you may be come from.**



## **Message to other young people:**

**Your action matters!**

**Think before you say!**

**Identify it & report it!**

**Stand up for your close ones**

**Don't fall into peer pressure**

**Practice empathy**

**Spread awareness**

# Estonia



# Estonia



# Messages to young people

- Dear young people, when you see hatred towards somebody, do not be afraid, stand up, speak out.
- Make love not war! Don't overlook minorities, think about consequences, listen and be open!
- Know the difference between hate and freedom of speech!
- Don't let your hatred make another person out of you!
- Don't hate, communicate!
- Speak up for minorities!
- Do not let the hate speech problem be forgotten!
- Don't generalize, be more attentive and go more in depth!
- Do not just walk away. See it, fight it, report it!
- Remember: totalitarianism starts with hate speech.



# Guide to tackling hate speech

- Check your facts – not everything you read is true.
- Your words have power – use them carefully!
- Ideas matter - express yourself thoughtfully!

## Recommendations to policy makers:

- Hire minorities to help make policies
- Accept conventions about women and LGBT+ rights
- Even though hate speech can be removed on the surface, it still stays on the inside – consider the consequences.
- Improve education on the topic of human rights and hate speech







Romania

*PATRIR*



\* Offensive and intimidating against gays on a group.  
 \* It makes people feel unsafe in group.  
 \* It makes one hesitant to express.  
 \* It can trigger trauma.  
 \* It can make one feel like they always have to defend themselves.  
 \* The bully will be kicked out of the group.  
 \* The security for the group should improve (rules, joining the group: you can only join on recommendation).  
 → Other cases:  
 \* joining dating apps with hate crime intentions.  
 \* People making groups specifically for spreading hate speech.  
 \* Referendum for traditional family (facebook propaganda).  
 → MAP OF ACTIONS  
 ① EDUCATING PEOPLE ON THIS TOPIC;  
 ② CENSORING HATE SPEECH;  
 ③ CHANGING CERTAIN LAWS;  
 ④ TEACHING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SCHOOLS (INCREASING EMPATHY).  
 ♡ ♡ ♡  
 HOW DO WE COMBAT THIS

# Romania

# Romania



- Quote from youth: “I learnt that there are different types of hate speech, I hope after a lot of introspection I will be able to improve my skills to combat hate speech or at least to raise awareness about it”
- Quote from youth: “When you leave hate behind you find the real love”
- Quote from youth: “The training was an amazing opportunity to meet other young people who are interested in acting against hate speech and making the world a more friendly, open and safe space for all people.”



Croatia

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# Croatia

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# 4 ideas of community events

- **Festival of cultural appreciation between Serbs and Croats** – Problem of hatred between the two nations would be tackled by a travelling cultural festival with food, beverages, theatre plays, watching movies from Yugoslavia and educational activities. The premise of the festival is to just call it: FESTIVAL, so there is no assumption what the festival is about, but once you are at the festival, you see that the two nations are very similar and have a chance to get to know each other better.
- **My Roma friend** – the problem they are tackling is hate speech among children, especially hate speech targeting Roma kids in schools. The premise is to develop an educational program within a summer camp where children interact with each other, play and learn, but also have fun learning activities for integration of Roma children with their parents.

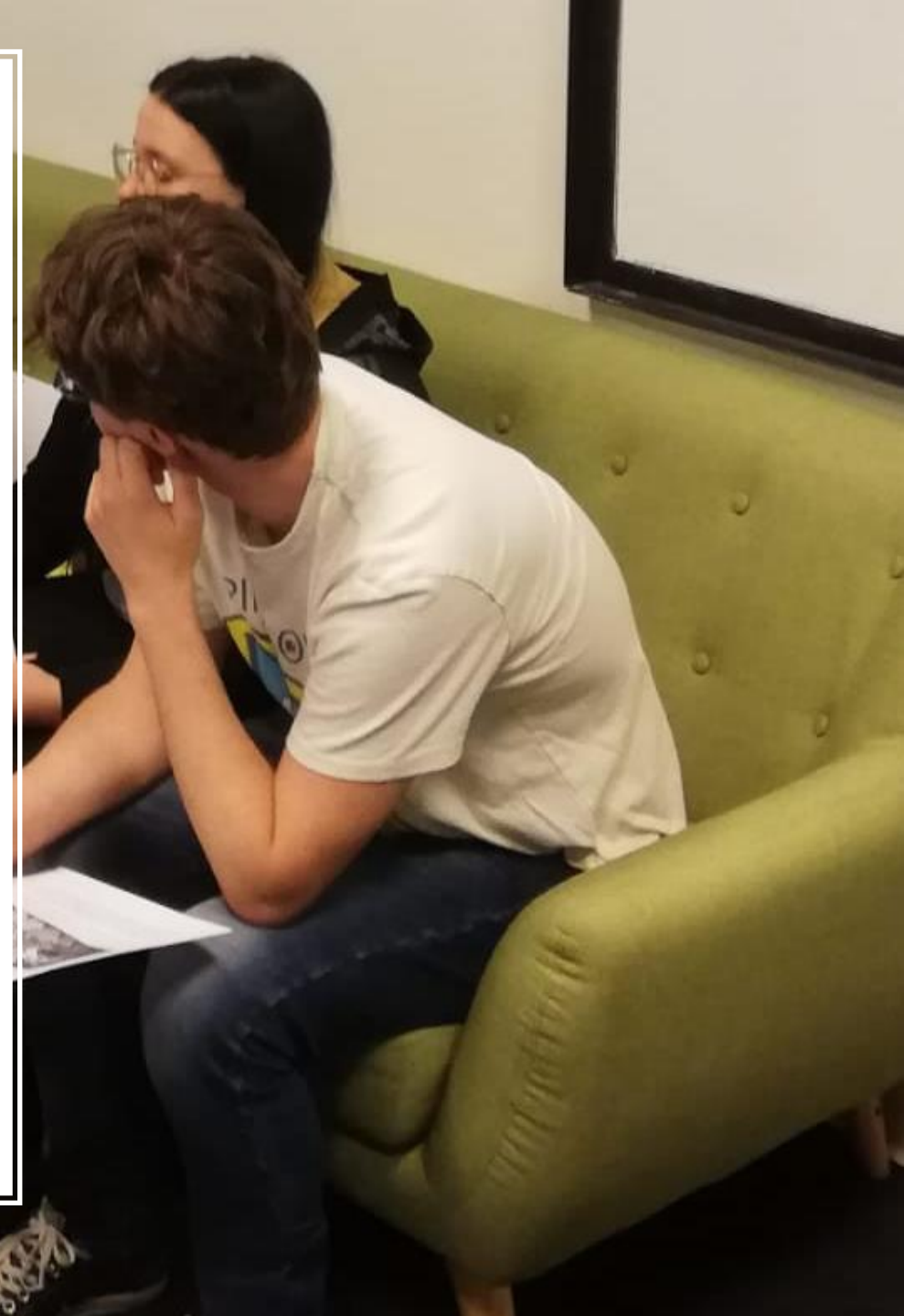


# 4 ideas of community events

- **Campaign „Love goes through the stomach“**– In partnership with the biggest ice cream company in Croatia, there would be a summer campaign, starting with Pride month, with the slogan „This summer we are coming out of the cool box“, ice cream would be in rainbow colours, with special flavours. This is part of a bigger strategy where different colour ice cream would promote an inclusive and tolerant society.
- Various activities for transitional justice, rather than one project, under the name **„I am also human“**: **Educational activities, school exchange projects, the aim is to create a common history book and Instagram page where topics are:** Flashbacks to Yugoslavia, victims support, cultural exchange project with artists, and a pen-pal activity where students write each other letters or emails.

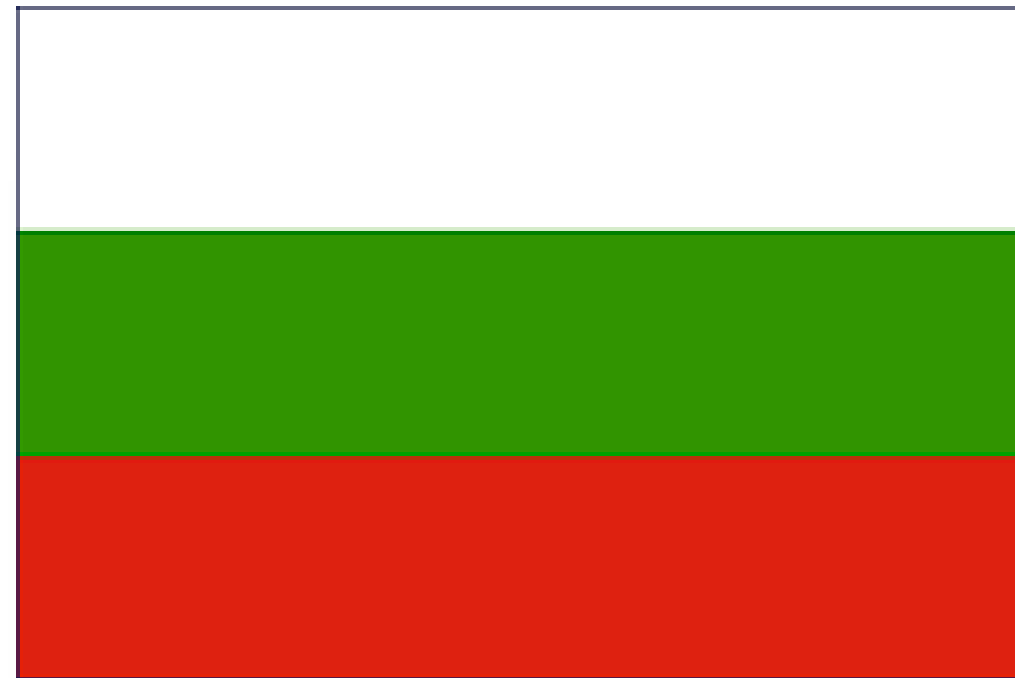
# A set of rules for using online platforms

- Users should avoid all use of the following words or face repercussions from admins
- Admins can review users' activities and give out proportional punishments
- Both admins and users have freedom of speech, which they don't misuse or abuse
- Just remember we are all human
- Don't leave a comment you don't want on your feed
- Remember that you're talking to a real person
- Social networks should have people in charge of reviewing reported content for hate speech
- Warning for the first offense, the second one and your account is banned
- Informing the users about seriousness of hate speech and hate crime





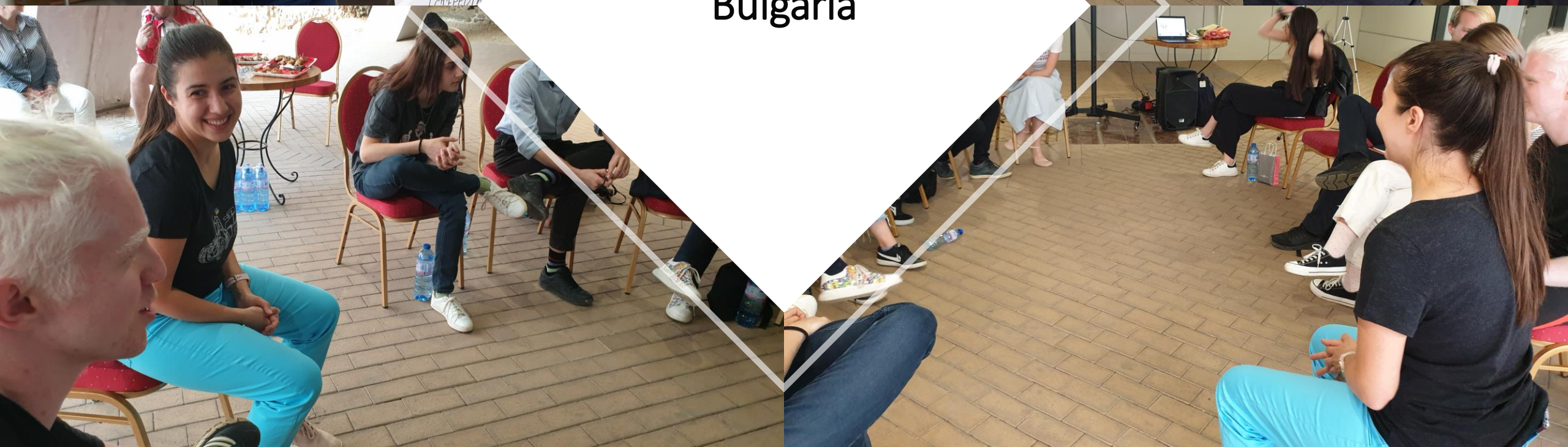
**Multiiitluk**  
Collective

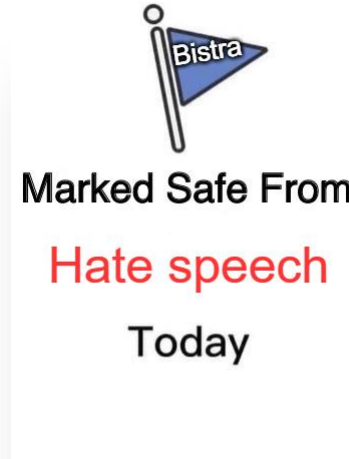


Bulgaria



# Bulgaria





## Creative posters developed by youth

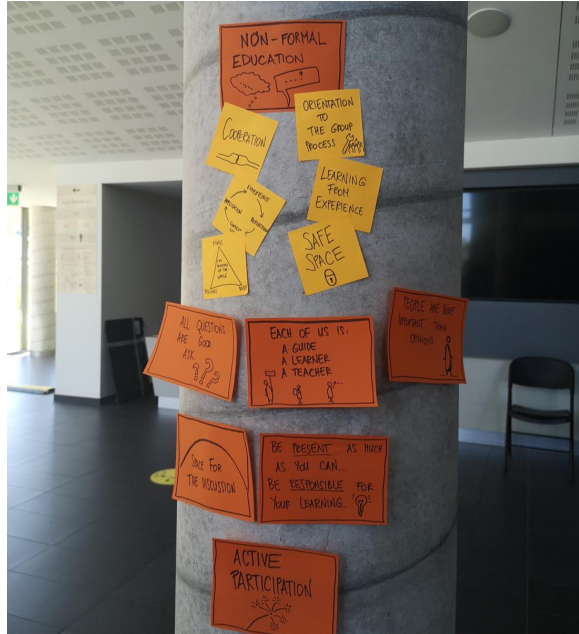
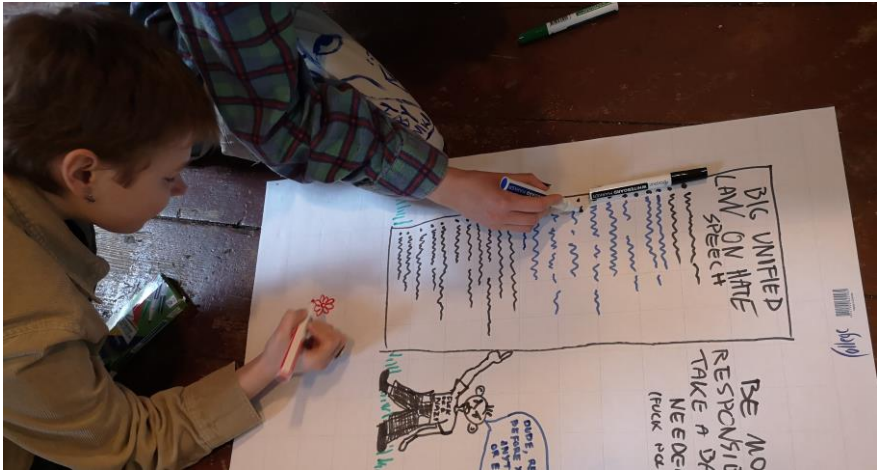


Cooperation with partners such as Sofia University, UNHCR, IOM, Association of European Journalists, Center for Media Development, National Center for Innovation and Digital Arts.

One event was part of the Smart Solutions Week in Sofia, organized in the context of European Year of Youth 2022.

# Lithuania





# Lithuania

# Lithuania

**Hot topics:**  
LGBTQ+ minors  
challenges to  
report the  
incidents to  
police

**Message:** Focus  
on ways to help  
marginalized  
groups and  
people who  
experience  
hatred

## Europe without Hate Manifesto for Change

On 5-6 November 2021, 10 May 2022, 30 May 2022 and 9 June 2022, the Human Rights Monitoring Institute brought together young people aged 16-30 to explore the problem of hate speech and what can be done to tackle it.

Through the discussions during these events, the participants, together with facilitators of the events, identified the following as Actions Points:

### For myself and my peers:

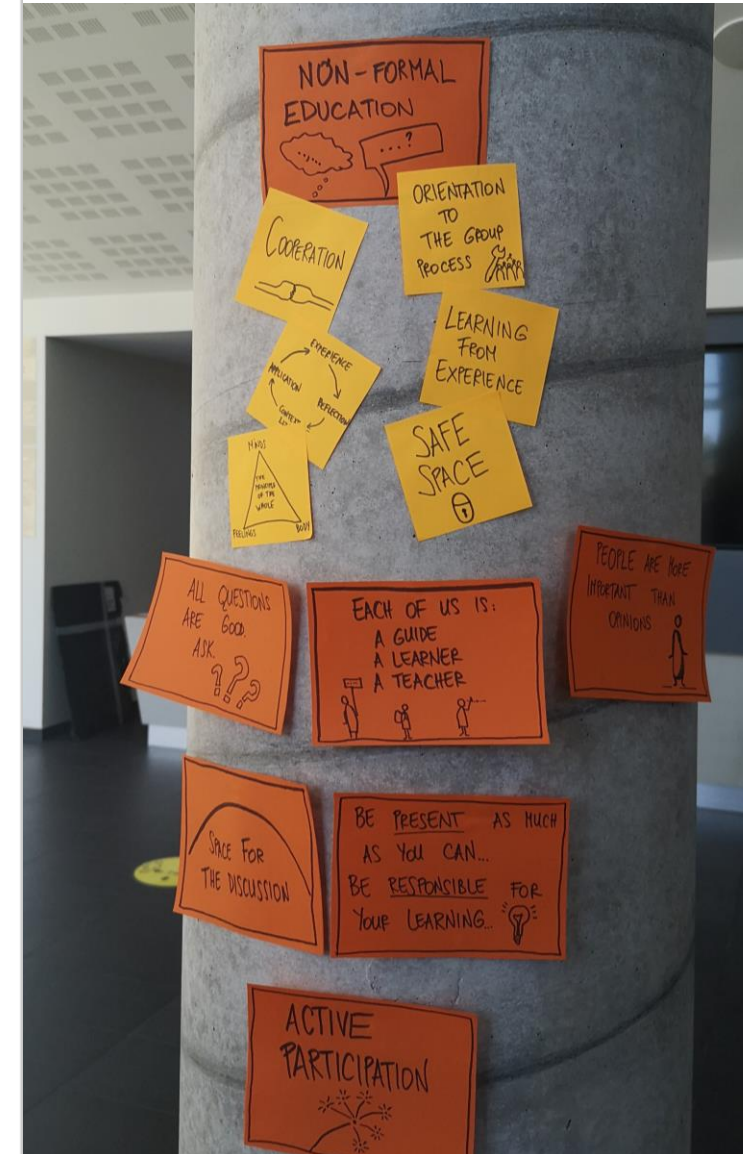
- Educate yourself about hate speech and its harm.
- Educate yourself and other people (friends, family, society) about the struggles minorities face, the ways to help and prevent minorities from struggling, how certain privileges affect someone's access to rights.
- Do not stay indifferent: if you see hate speech, do not ignore it (politely engage with the "hater", report the comment to the administrators of the social media platform, media websites' administrators responsible for the comment section, alternative report platforms (for example, in Lithuania – manoteises.lt/pranesk, and, in cases of incitement to hatred, report to the police);
- Everything you do, be open and inclusive!
- Think before you speak.
- Allyship/solidarity: participate in pro-human rights events (protests, gatherings, etc.) that do not necessarily involve you personally (Black Lives Matter, Pride events, pro-refugee protests, etc.)
- Focus on ways to help marginalized groups and people who experience hatred.

### For NGOs:

- More NGOs involved with the EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online as a "trusted flagger".
- Make trainings on human rights topics accessible for different groups of people, use simple language.
- Provide support for marginalized groups and victims of hate crimes/hate speech, cooperate with communities affected by hate speech.

### For local / national authorities:

- Mainstreaming human rights education:
  - Include human rights education in schools, consistently through all the years.
  - Sensibilisation of society regarding topics such as discrimination and hate speech, oppression and marginalization; including older people who are no longer in the formal education system.





Your questions/reactions

