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# G-LENS

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### *Digital Citizens: Rights, Responsibilities, and Critical Thinking in the Digital Age*

**Sofia (Bulgaria), 10 October 2025**

We warmly invite stakeholders from education, media, academia, politics, civil society – including youth organizations, journalists, and social media content creators across Europe – **to join us online** for the international conference: “Digital Citizens: Rights, Responsibilities, and Critical Thinking in the Digital Age.”

This event will explore the challenges and opportunities of digital citizenship in today’s world. It aims to facilitate the exchange of international ideas, experiences, and best practices – not only in countering gendered disinformation but, more importantly, in strengthening critical thinking, media literacy, and civic engagement. Discussions will focus on prevention strategies, including education and collaboration with the public sector, civil society, and the media.

The conference will feature guest speakers and experts who will share their insights and engage with the audience **on three key topics**:

#### **1. Fundamentals of Digital Citizenship and Rights in the Digital Age**

We will explore how technology shapes digital citizenship and examine its connection to fundamental rights and responsibilities in the **online** space.

#### **2. Navigating the Information Landscape: Media Literacy and Disinformation**

This session focuses on critical media literacy and combating disinformation, with a particular emphasis on harmful narratives. We will also discuss the role of the media and entertainment industries in addressing disinformation and how they can be part of the solution.

#### **3. Psychological Impact of the Digital World: The Heat of Social Media**

This session will delve into the psychological aspects of digital citizenship, including cyberbullying and the effects of social media on young people.

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## AGENDA

**09:30 – 09:45\*** – Opening Remarks and Greetings (\*EEST time)

**09:45 – 11:00 – Panel 1: Digital Citizenship and Rights in the Digital Age**

- Adv. Julieta Mandazhieva – Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Bulgaria)  
*Digital rights in Bulgaria and analysis to the 2024 annual report "Human Rights in Bulgaria in 2024" of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee*
- George Petrov – Citizen Participation Forum (Bulgaria)  
*Empowering digital citizenship: online tools for civic participation and inclusive, transparent governance*
- Dr Sonia Horonziak – Institute of Public Affairs (Poland)  
*The role of disinformation in influencing public opinion, its impact on democratic processes and polarization of public opinion.*
- Dr Elisa Rapetti – Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe Network (Italy)  
*The participation of young people in digital governance issues: pedagogical aspects of digital transformation, especially as it relates to citizenship and democratic education.*

**11:30 – 13:00 – Panel 2: Media Literacy and Disinformation**

- Dr. Maria Youroukova and Adriana Dikancheva – Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria)  
*Presenting DisInfoHack 2025, part of the Academy for Countering Disinformation in Bulgaria*
- Prof. Olga Jurash – Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Women's Online Advocacy (UK)  
*Responses to Online Violence Against Women, Harms of Online Violence Against Women in Politics and Online Misogyny*
- Mina Kurteva – Sofia Development Association (Bulgaria)  
*Hate Speech and Disinformation, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on the topic: Gender-Based Disinformation, available to educators and civic activists*
- Anjali Avatapalli, Disinformation Analyst and Presidential Fellow, Center for Information, Democracy and Citizenship (CIDC) at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG)  
*Critical assessment, research and educational initiatives cultivate ethically grounded leaders who are adept at navigating the digital landscape.*
- Iskra Dzhanabetska – educational platform Knigovishte (Bulgaria)  
*Vijte.bg – the first Bulgarian media that addresses children aged 7 to 14 and gamified methods for working with young people*

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### **14:00 – 15:30 – Panel 3: The Heat of Social Media**

- Parents Association, Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association (BFPA), and National Network for  
*Activities of the National Center for Safer Internet (NCSI), Challenges on the Internet, and Promoting Safe Behavior in the Digital World*
- Kamila Lenczewska – Centre for Intercultural Initiatives "Horizons" Association (Poland)  
*The "Body Liberation" Campaign, which challenges harmful narratives about body shapes, sizes and appearance and addresses the ways in which women are marginalized because of their bodies.*
- Prof. Małgorzata Wójcik – SWPS University (Poland)  
*Represents the Bullying Research Center (BRC) at SWPS University, where she leads a team of researchers who develop projects and systems that promote a positive school climate and prevent bullying.*
- National center for Safe Internet  
*Problems and challenges that are faced in the hot phone line in Bulgaria*
- Victoria Mirinska and Gergana Dimitrova – Students of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"  
*They will answer questions about what participation in DisInfoHack 2025, part of the Academy for Countering Disinformation (CoDE Academy) in Bulgaria, gives them*

***Register today using the registration form!***

*Participation in the event is free of charge.*

### **About the Event**

The conference is organized by the OPEN SPACE Foundation in Bulgaria as part of the international G-LENS project (Gender-Inclusive, Long-lasting, and Empowered Networks and Societies). This two-year (2024-2026) European project, co-funded by the European Union, adopts a comprehensive approach to countering gendered disinformation. By combining research, education, and advocacy, G-LENS empowers young people to create a more inclusive and democratic digital environment.

### **About the host**

OPEN SPACE foundation: non-governmental organization dedicated to building a better future through education and active civic participation. We believe that young people are the driving force for change, and our core mission is to empower them to be responsible and engaged citizens.

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