

**Developing Media Literacy to debunk gender-related media manipulation and fake news**

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# **Media Literacy and Violence in the Digital Environment**

Ieva Brence  
Zonta Club of Jelgava  
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**OBJECTIVE 1:** Provide media literacy tools to promote mindful and responsible media consumption and production

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Raise awareness and fighting Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)



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# Importance of the topic



## 1. Fake News Travels Faster Than Truth

A 2018 MIT study found that **false news spreads six times faster** than real news, especially on social media. Gender-based misinformation, including fake stories about feminist movements, LGBTQ+ rights, or prominent women, gains traction due to emotional appeal and biases

## 2. Deepfake Technology Targets Women Disproportionately

According to Deeptech Labs, **90% of deepfake videos involve non-consensual explicit content, and nearly all target women**

# Importance of the topic

## 3. Gender Bias in AI and Algorithms

Many social media algorithms amplify **and disseminate controversial and misleading content related to gender**. Studies show that AI-driven platforms prioritize engagement over truth, often **favoring sensationalized or biased narratives** about women and gender issues

## 4. The Power of Media Literacy: Fact-Checking Can Reduce Misinformation by 50%

Research indicates that when people are trained to fact-check sources and analyze media critically, they **reduce their susceptibility to misinformation by nearly half**. Teaching gender-focused media literacy can counter fake news about women and marginalized groups



# Importance of the topic

## 5. Misinformation and Online Harassment Are Connected

Fake news and gendered misinformation **fuel online harassment**, with studies showing that **women journalists and activists receive 20 % more hate messages** than their male counterparts. This intimidation discourages women's participation in public discourse.

## 6. Media Literacy Programs Are Effective in Fighting Gender-Based Fake News

Countries that have introduced media literacy into their **school curricula**, such as Finland, show significantly **lower susceptibility to misinformation**. Implementing gender-sensitive media education can help combat gender-related media manipulation.





# Definition of Media Literacy



**Media Literacy** is the ability to **access, analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate** information across various media platforms. It involves understanding how media messages are constructed, identifying biases, recognizing misinformation, and developing critical thinking skills to navigate the digital and media landscape effectively

## Key Aspects of Media Literacy:

- 1. Access** – Knowing how to find and utilize various forms of media
- 2. Analyze & Evaluate** – Assessing the credibility, purpose, and biases in media content
- 3. Create** – Producing responsible and ethical media content
- 4. Reflect** – Understanding the impact of media on society and individual perceptions
- 5. Act** – Engaging with media in a responsible and informed way



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# What About Latvia

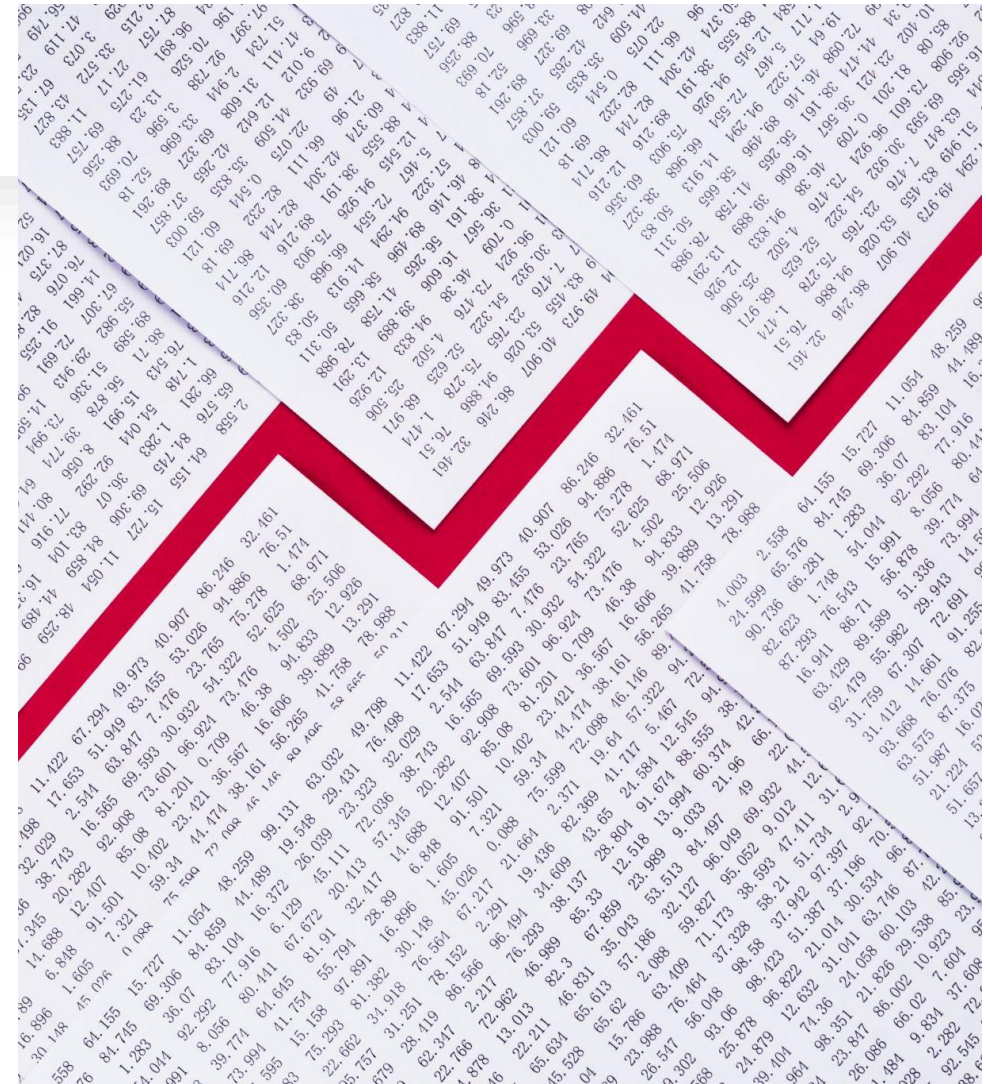
## Challenges in Identifying Misinformation

- **Self-Assessment of Skills:** In 2020 study, **18% of respondents doubted their ability to distinguish reliable information from misleading content**, an increase of 7% compared to 2017. Additionally, **29% acknowledged having been misled by false information**, a 7% increase from 2017

[LSM Eng](#)

## Role of Parents and Trusted Sources

- **Parental Influence:** Parents play a crucial role in guiding children through the digital landscape. The 2021 survey found that **64% of Latvian youths rely on their parents' opinions when evaluating online information**
- [Better Internet for Kids](#)



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# What is TFGBV

**Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)** refers to **any form of gender-based violence enabled by digital technologies**

This includes online harassment, cyberstalking, doxxing, deepfake pornography, non-consensual image sharing, and AI-generated disinformation targeting women and marginalized genders



# TFGBV can manifest in various forms, including:



- **Cyber Harassment & Hate Speech:** Threats, misogynistic comments, or derogatory remarks aimed at women online
- **Cyberstalking & Doxxing:** Tracking someone's location or personal information without consent to intimidate or harm them
- **Non-Consensual Intimate Image Sharing (NCII):** The spread of intimate photos/videos without permission, often as a form of revenge or coercion
- **Deepfake & AI Manipulation:** The use of AI to create fake explicit images or videos of women, damaging their reputation
- **Misinformation & Disinformation:** False narratives targeting women in politics, activism, or leadership to discredit them
- Red flags to watch for:
  - ✓ Unwanted persistent messages, threats, or blackmail
  - ✓ Private information leaked online
  - ✓ Fake accounts impersonating someone to spread harmful content

# Impact of TFGBV on Women



- **Psychological & Emotional Trauma:** Victims often suffer from anxiety, depression, and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) due to online abuse
- **Silencing Effect:** Women, particularly activists, journalists, and politicians, may withdraw from public spaces out of fear
- **Career & Reputation Damage:** Disinformation, deepfake content, and harassment can severely damage professional reputations
- **Physical Threats & Real-World Violence:** Online threats often escalate into real-life stalking or violence

 **Fact:** A UN Women report states that **73% of women worldwide have experienced some form of online violence**



# How to Prevent and Fight TFGBV

## A. Individual Actions

- ◆ **Strengthen Digital Security:** Use strong passwords, enable two-factor authentication, and manage privacy settings
  - ◆ **Be Critical of Online Content:** Verify sources before sharing information that may target women
  - ◆ **Report and Block Abusers:** Use platform tools to report gender-based harassment
  - ◆ **Support Victims:** Believe and amplify the voices of those affected

<https://drossinternets.lv/lv/questions/listall/atbildiba-un-parkapumi-interneta>



# Tools & Resources

## 🔧 Fact-Checking Tools:

**Snopes** ([www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)) – Debunks viral misinformation

**FactCheck.org** ([www.factcheck.org](http://www.factcheck.org)) – Verifies political claims





**Google Reverse Image Search** – Helps detect fake or edited images





# How to Prevent and Fight TFGBV

## B. Community & Organizational Efforts

-  **Advocate for Stronger Laws:** Push for legislation that criminalizes online gender-based violence
-  **Tech Platforms' Responsibility:** Social media companies must enhance policies to prevent and quickly address TFGBV
-  **Education & Awareness:** Promote digital literacy, particularly for young women, to recognize and combat TFGBV
-  **Example:** The UK's **Online Safety Act** criminalizes cyberflashing and deepfake abuse, setting a precedent for stronger global protections



# What Means Violence

## Economic Impact

- **Cost of Gender-Based Violence:** A 2021 estimate by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) highlighted that gender-based violence costs Latvia approximately **€1.6 billion annually**. [LSM Eng](#)

## Reporting and Awareness

- **Underreporting:** In 2021, among violence victims aged 18–74 in Latvia, **76.5% of women** and **38.4% of men** reported the violence episode to someone. Notably, only **26.4% of women** reported intimate partner violence to the police, indicating potential underreporting issues. [Statistikas portāls](#)



# What About the Digital Skills in Latvia

<https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/actions/national-initiatives/national-strategies/latvia-digital-decade-strategic-roadmap-2030>



51% of the population aged 16-74 have at least basic digital skills and 24 % have digital skills above basic levels compared to the corresponding EU average of 54% and 26%.



Latvia, where 64% of the population has at least basic skills to create digital content, is close to the EU average of 66%



However, is it enough to reduce the TFGBV?



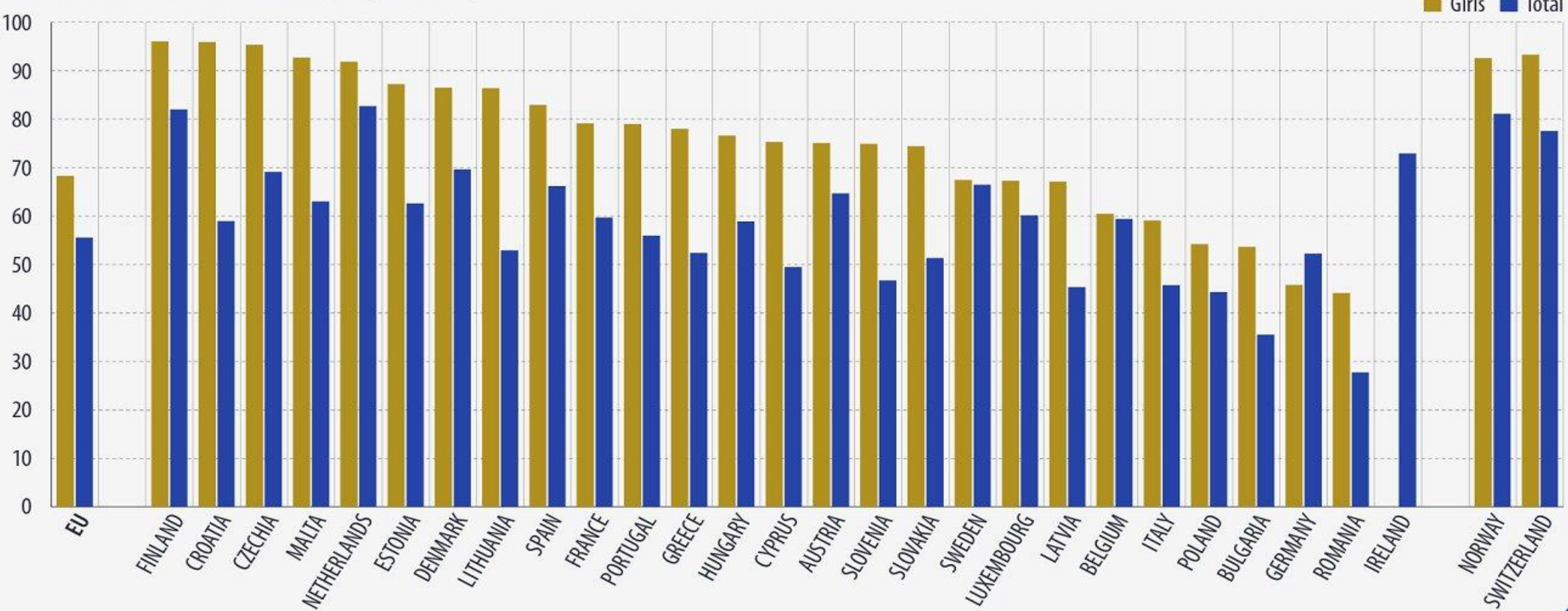
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# Girls with basic or above basic overall digital skills, 2023

(% of girls 16-19 years, and % of people 16-74 years)



Ireland: data not available for girls. Low reliability data for girls for Malta and Slovakia.  
Data ranked based on girls, highest to lowest value.

eurostat

<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/26.04.2024-girls-outperform-boys-for-digital-skills-in-latvia.a551945/>



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# Research from Latvia, 2024

- 84% of social media users know how to delete a user from their social media contact list and can easily find previously visited pages
- 20% completely agree that they know how to distinguish a fake page from a real one, and 42% somewhat agree with this statement
- A similar share can recognize safe apps - 18% and 41%, respectively
- 44% do not know how to report fake profiles to social media
- 31% agree that they find it difficult to assess whether the information they share can have negative consequences

<https://www.neplp.lv/lv/media/8775/download?attachment>



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# Research from Europe

## 1. Over 85% of EU Citizens See Fake News as a Threat

A **2022 European Commission survey** found that **85% of Europeans** believe fake news poses a threat to democracy. Many citizens struggle to distinguish between true and false content, leading to confusion and misinformation

## 2. Gender-Based Fake News and Online Attacks

- Studies show that **female politicians and activists in the EU receive 27% more online harassment** than their male counterparts.
- **Deepfake technology** has been used to create fake explicit videos of prominent women in politics, such as in France and Germany.
- A **European Parliament study** found that gender-related fake news is often used to **discourage women from running for office**



# Research from Europe



## 3. Social Media's Role in Fake News Spread

- Research by the **European Commission** found that **70% of fake news spreads through social media**, with platforms like Facebook, X, and TikTok playing a significant role
- The Digital Services Act (2023) now requires tech companies to remove harmful disinformation more quickly or face substantial fines

## 4. The Rise of AI-Generated Misinformation

- AI tools, such as deepfakes and chatbots, are increasingly used to **generate misleading content**
- The EU is pushing for **stronger AI regulations** to combat AI-generated fake news that could manipulate elections and public debates

## 5. EU's Fight Against Fake News

- **Fact-checking networks**, such as EUvsDisinfo and EDMO, track and debunk fake stories
- **Media literacy programs have been introduced in schools to teach young people how to identify and counter** misinformation
- **Big tech regulations** (Digital Services Act, AI Act) are forcing platforms to be more transparent about content moderation



# What Can You Do?

- ◆ Think before you share – verify information from multiple sources
- Educate your community about media literacy
- Support policies that protect against online gender-based violence
- If you receive or see any suspicious information, send it to the respective authorities, don't spread it further (even to your family members, etc.)
- **Final Thought:**  
Misinformation isn't just an online issue—it has real-world consequences
- Strengthening media literacy can empower individuals to push back against false narratives and gender-based harm





Thank you!  
[ieva.brence3@gmail.com](mailto:ieva.brence3@gmail.com)

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