YOUTH EXCHANGE: Traditional media and regional identities representation

 R.H.Y.M.E. – **R**egional **H**orizons of **Y**outh in **M**edia **E**nvironment

TOPICS:

1. Work with information, critical thinking – how to search for information, how to assess them critically, how to recognize manipulative / lying articles
2. Hate speech, propaganda – how hate speech and propaganda are used by some media, its goals and techniques
3. Intercultural learning and dialogue
4. Socialization of youth – comparison of methods of socialization in the past, present and future
5. Brain drain, youth unemployment and role of media in combating them – perspectives about the life of young people in their countries, comparison of practices, problems and possible solutions; active citizenship, youth participation in democratic process, suggestions to decision makers

 Why Youth Consume Media?

In contemporary Europe, societies become more divided thanks to the phenomenon of populism. Some of the European societies are sharply divided into two groups that do not discuss much with each other; people tend to live inside their own “social bubbles”. This fact is typical for the information age we are currently living in. It is not a problem, in one second, to find information that confirms our point of view and denounces the opponents’ one. Most of the people only read the information, but do not bother themselves with critical assessment and critical thought. Our youth exchange would like to change it, because we believe that balanced, moderate and respectful dialogue is essential for a preservation of European values based on dialogue, tolerance and respect. Second problem that we would like to cover is the issue of youth unemployment and brain drain. We believe that young people are the future leaders of their countries, and that the more platforms they have for expressing their interests and opinions, the more opportunities to go abroad and exchange their experience, the better. Thus, we would like to provide the option to discuss the problems they face in their home countries with their peers from all around Europe, but also to come up with solutions and suggestions that the decision-makers may implement, thus involving the young generation more in the democratic processes.

As follows from above, through the R.H.Y.M.E youth exchange, we would like to foster the critical thinking of the young people, we intend to teach them how to sort information, how to recognize manipulation, hate speech, propaganda, or articles based on lies. We would also like to address the problems stemming from the expansion of the new social media, such as the difference of the ways young people were socializing in the past (direct face-to-face experience), and how they are socializing now (through social media). Moreover, we would like to cover the issues connected to youth unemployment and brain drain and the role of media in tackling it, for instance by stronger emphasis of opportunities young people have thanks to the Erasmus+ program. In addition, we believe in the power of intercultural dialogue, so we would like to attract young people from the whole Europe, in order to have a diverse group and to exchange the best practices, problems and solutions youngsters face in their respective countries. Last but not least, a visit to the local media is planned for the participants, in order to get them familiar with day-to-day work in the media environment.

To sum up, the RHYME youth exchange program design is based on the five main topics: 1. Work with information and critical thinking, 2. Hate speech, propaganda, manipulations, 3. Intercultural learning and dialogue, 4. Brain drain, youth unemployment and role of media in combating them, 5. Socialization of youth. The main methods of work the program includes are workshops, role-plays, meetings with responsible professionals from the biggest and most influential regional TV, radio and journals across national borders, debate and exchange of experience among the youth from the whole Europe.

We aim to include 4 young people plus a group leader from 4 European countries, regardless if from the European Union or from the EU neighborhood for 7 days in the village of Brtonigla, situated in the cross-border of Istria, Croatia.