

DIGITAL GUIDE

5030REMEMBER

From WW2 to the end of communism



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PROJECT RATIONALE

In the resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, the European Parliament *"calls for a common culture of remembrance that rejects the crimes of fascist, Stalinist, and other totalitarian and authoritarian regimes of the past as a way of fostering resilience against modern threats to democracy, particularly among the younger generation."*

The '50+30' project refers to the remembrance of 80 years passing since the beginning of WW2; the end of WW2 has led to 50 years of authoritarian regimes in many central and eastern European countries, culminating with the revolutions of 1989. Contributing to the culture of remembrance, the "50+30: from WW2 to the end of communism" project aims to increase youth's knowledge on the implications of World War 2 and the period until the fall of communism in Europe on today's democracy, thus seeking to combat the populism and euroscepticism that are present in the European public space in the last years.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Over 30 years went on since the revolutions of 1989, and many citizens, especially youth, have a limited understanding of the implications of WW2 on Europe and in building a democratic EU. Also, European youth of less than 32, have never lived under authoritarianism, taking for granted the struggle that their close ascendants have faced. It's hence in our duty to pay tribute to those who sacrificed themselves for our well being, not only through education of youth, but also through remembrance. The latter is particularly important in acting against the rise of populism and hate speech, which could generate a climate comparable to the one that has preceded WW2.

The present Guide aims to analyze the knowledge of young people regarding WW2 and other key historical events, to identify, with the help of our participants, key challenges that complicate the creation and execution of informative campaigns and remembrance events in general, as well as approaches on how to overcome these burdens.



“

As I grow older I understand more and more that the most important thing in history is not the facts themselves and what happened, but why it happened and what has humanity learned from it. My world is shaped by beliefs - my religion, my culture, my lifestyle. All of them are gained in some shape or form from the remembrance of my ancestors. The way I look, the way I behave and think are part of ages long development. Remembering history and tradition form my vision on the world and my personality.

- survey respondent, Slovakia -

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Answering to the project objectives, the consortium has conducted an



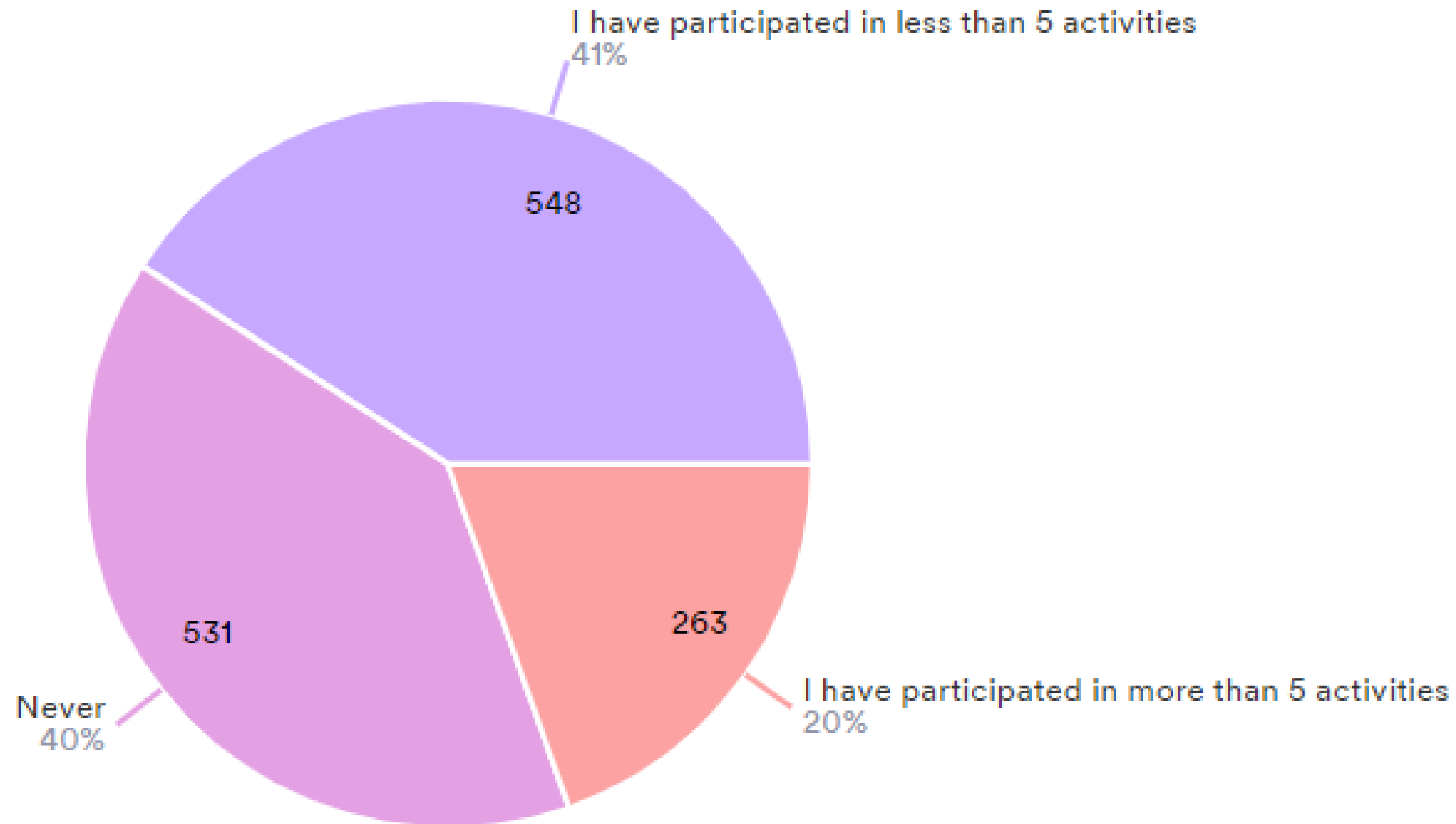
extensive online survey, with the aim of measuring the knowledge of young people on the implications of WW2 and other key historical events.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1511 responses;
- 71.34% of the respondents belong to the age group 18-30;
- 48.84% live in areas of less than 100k people, 27% in areas with a population of 100k - 500k, and 24.16% live in areas with a population of more than 500k;

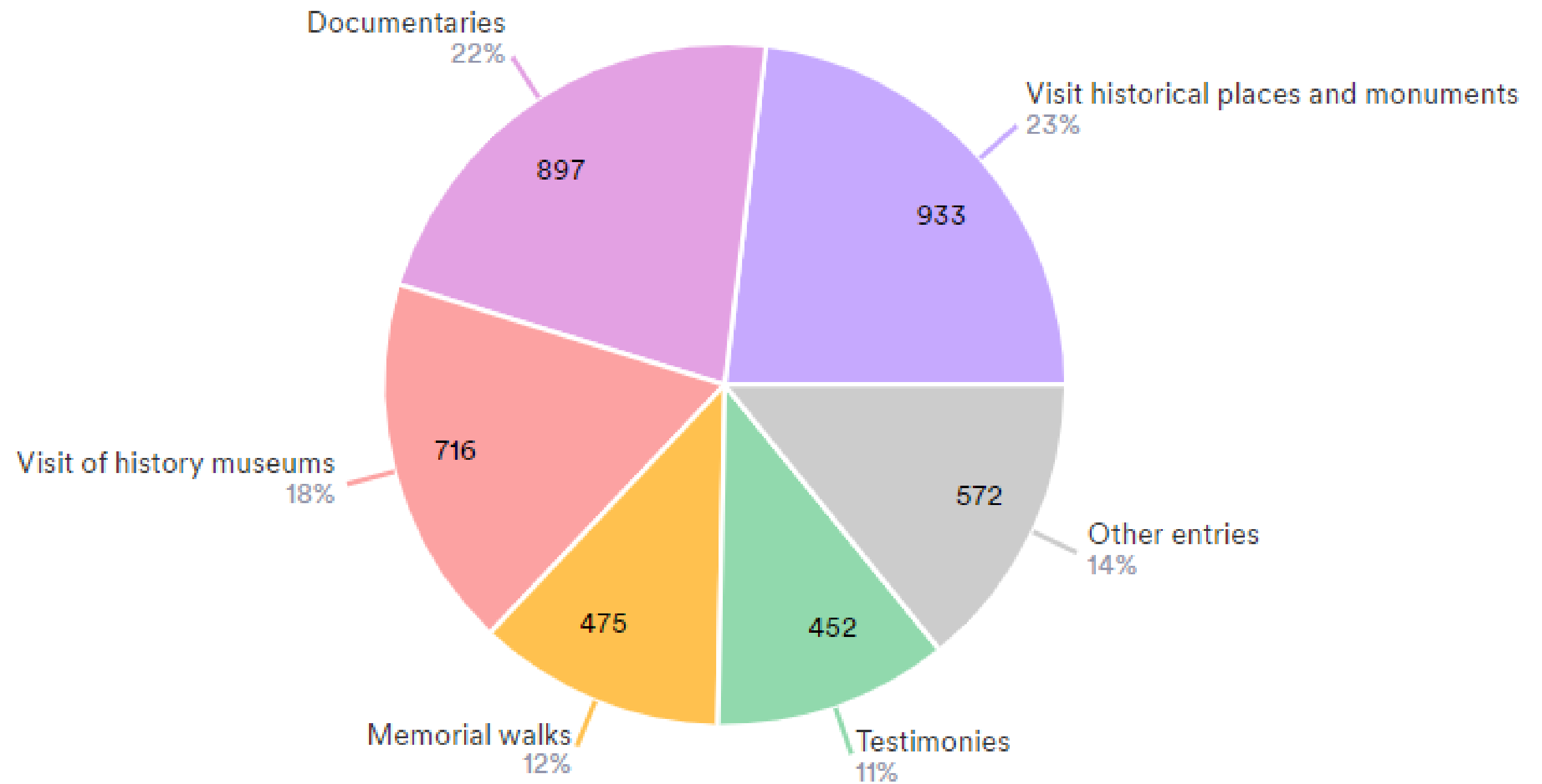
- 56.78% of the respondents are female, 42.42% are male and the remaining respondents preferred not to disclose their gender;
- 47.19% are people who have a university degree, 43.94% have finished high school, 4.77% have finished a vocational school and 4.1% haven't completed any of the above-mentioned levels of education.



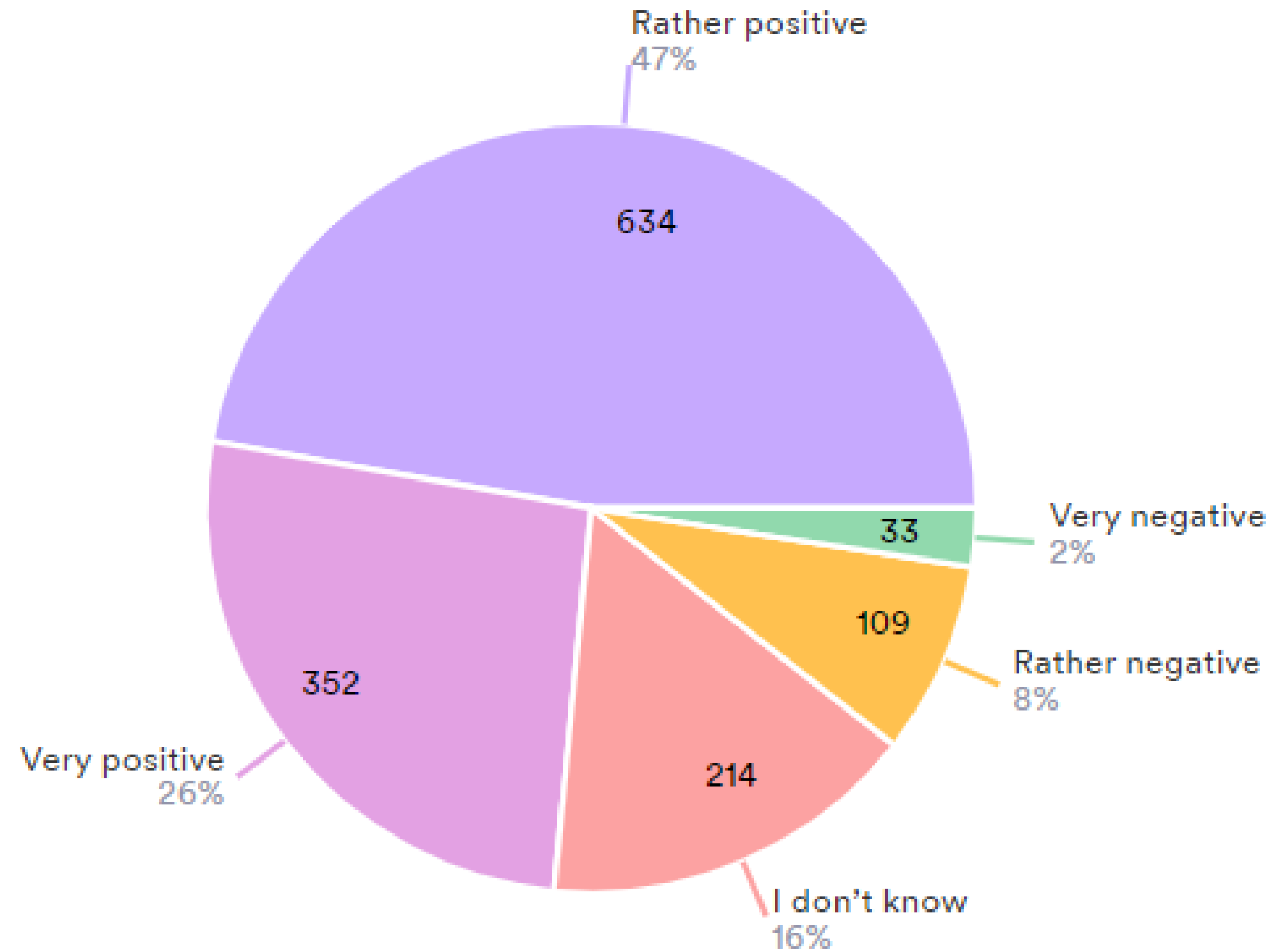


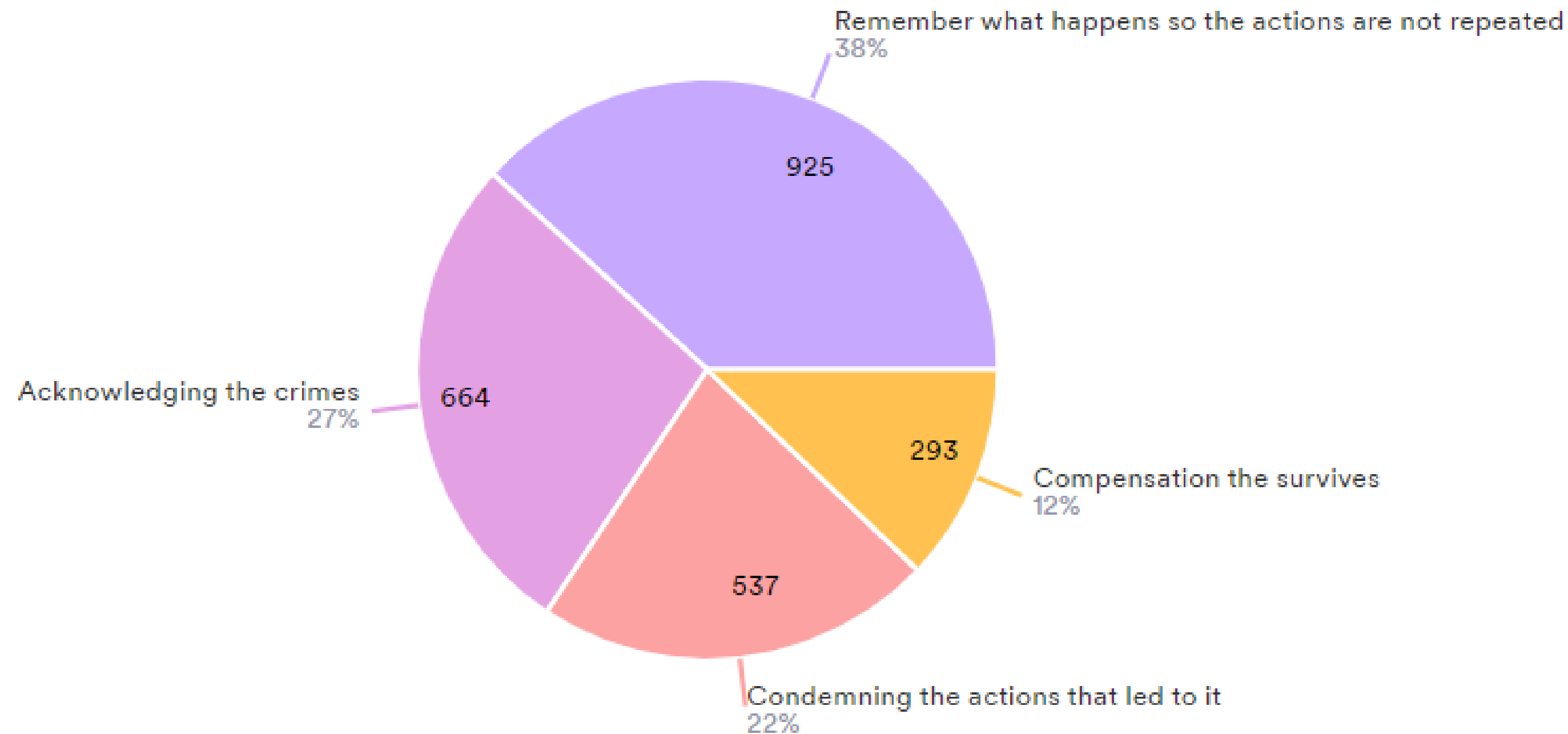
**HAVE YOU EVER
PARTICIPATED IN
REMEMBRANCE
AND
COMMEMORATION
ACTIVITIES?**

WHAT ARE THE MOST
RELEVANT REMEMBRANCE
WAYS FOR YOU?



WHAT DO YOU THINK
ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE
EU IN THE REMEMBRANCE
EVENTS RELATED TO YOUR
COUNTRY?





**WHICH OF THE
FOLLOWING YOU THINK
ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE
ACTIONS IN RESTORING
JUSTICE TO THE VICTIMS
OF THE HOLOCAUST, ROMA
GENOCIDE & TERRORISM?**

HOW IMPORTANT IS REMEMBRANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S IDENTITY?

Knowing history is crucial for understanding how the world works now. Not only because it had been different back then, but because we don't pay enough attention to the privileges we have now. Remembrance is not only about our relatives being part of a war or a movement, it's about carrying the identity of a descendant of the past and not repeating the same mistakes.

Remembrance is about learning, educating others and growing as responsible, active citizens.

Even though the vast majority of the respondents agreed that remembrance is very important because we have to know our roots and origins in order to build a better future, some respondents mentioned that, **in some countries, the way historical events are remembered is outdated with little to no perspective.**

Building on this conclusion of the survey, we will further look at ways in which remembrance can become more "attractive" for young people and what stakeholders can do.

#5030REMEMBER SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS – REMEMBRANCE CHALLENGES

The main challenge identified is the lack of attractiveness of remembrance activities to young people. This problem has various causes such as, for instance, **repetitiveness and similarity of the remembrance events**, **lack of interactive dialogue**, or **inability to harness new tools** for communication and engagement with the audience.

New communication tools and methods are both a challenge and a good practice to overcome some of the challenges. In terms of challenge, it is mostly the inability to seize the power of social media and interactive teaching tools to educate. Firstly, there are many such tools and it might be difficult to choose the right ones and, secondly, it is the lack of people who are skilled enough to employ such tools in education.

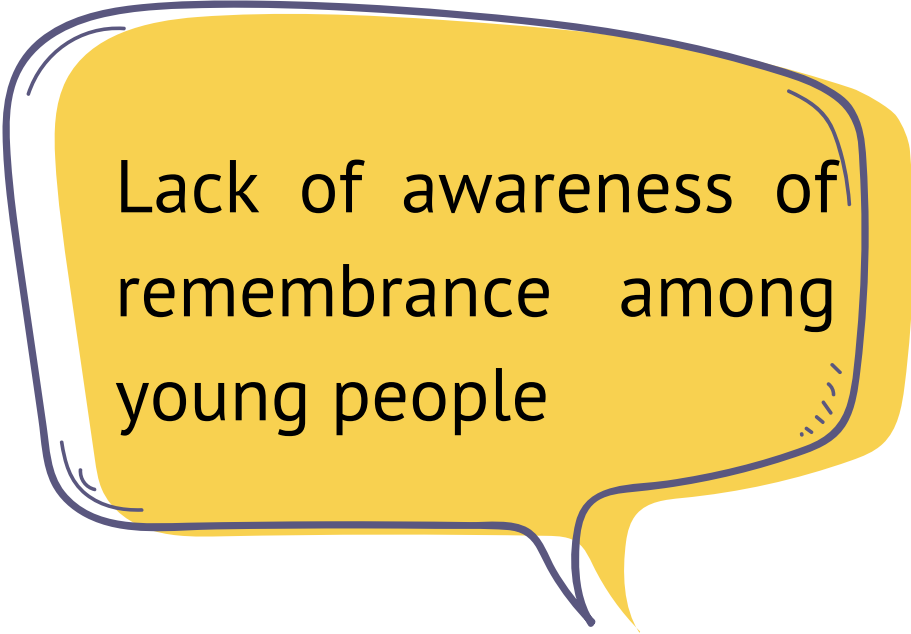
Disinformation negatively impacts carrying out the informative campaigns and remembrance events. The availability of new communication channels, including social media, has made it easier for disinformation to be spread and to polarize societies.

#5030REMEMBER SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS – REMEMBRANCE CHALLENGES

Other challenges can have deeper roots and are related to the **concept of national identity**. These include conflicts of memory and local sensitivities.

Some challenges stem from the system setting, such as lack of educational strategy, especially in primary schools and high schools. If the educational system does not focus on increasing the skill of critical thinking, it will be impossible to combat spread and conservation of stereotypes or even racism. Creation of a comprehensive educational strategy is necessary.

When educating youth, one of the major challenges is also a **limited attention span**. The young people can be easily distracted and, therefore, they only perceive a limited amount of information. Therefore, youngsters need an active method to be stimulated and to learn.



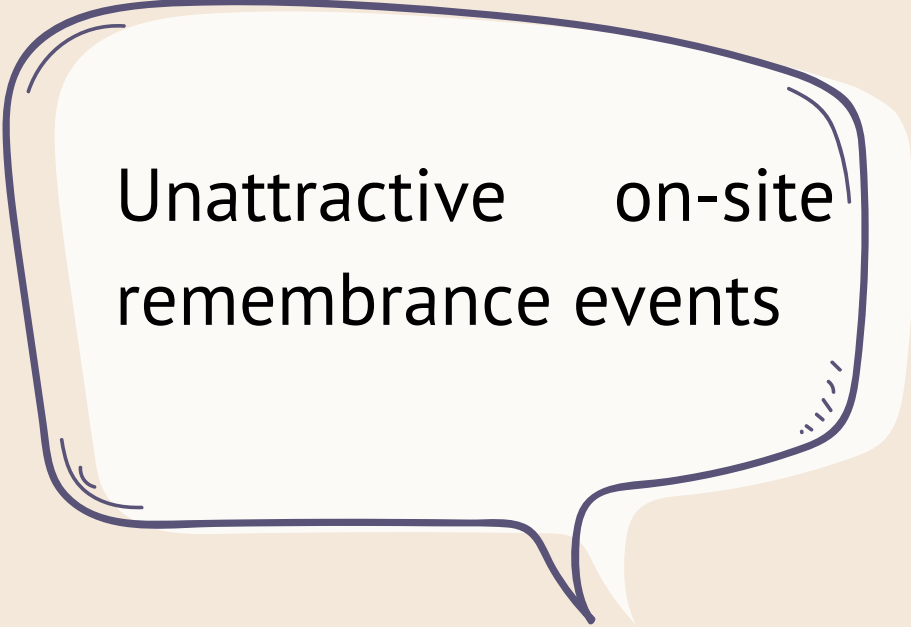
Lack of awareness of
remembrance among
young people

CAUSES

- methods & tools not fit for young people;
- the superficial approach that the educational system has regarding this subject;
- the conflicting local mentalities regarding historical events;
- the way history is portrayed in the news/ social media;

EFFECTS

- a vicious circle of non-education;
- more stereotypes;
- learning history from a subjective perspective which could eventually lead to misinterpretation of the historical events;
- end up making the same mistakes we've done in the past.



Unattractive on-site
remembrance events

CAUSES

- too much unnecessary information;
- unattractive visuals;
- on-line feels like a passive activity, not as interesting as physical activities;
- wrong targeted audience.

EFFECTS

- lack of participants;
- lack of interest.

CAUSES

- the lack of interest from teachers and forcing students to learn a lesson and not letting them to discover;
- lack of interactive activities, overwhelming the students with tests and homework and a part of the teachers who refuse to be open minded with technology.

EFFECTS

- slowly degrading motivation from the students' side;
- not knowing important historical events that changed the world;
- students avoiding subjects related to history even later on in life.



Unattractive history
classes



Lack of/ Poor digital
remembrance
activities

CAUSES

- lack of/ poor interest from teachers to make learning or remembrance interesting for students and young people;
- low literacy and income levels, , lack of physical access to technology, and digital illiteracy, geographical restrictions;
- most people who work in the digital field don't consider history to be an interesting cause.

EFFECTS

- Due to the lack of creativity in the field of technology, young people find history to be a boring subject. If taught correctly, history doesn't have to be boring. There are many ways to teach history to make it interesting and exciting. Students also tend to learn better when classes are more interactive;
- It causes stress for the student, lead to negative mental health. College students are expected to have regular access to technology. If they don't, it is likely their education will suffer;
- Youth can lose interest in history. Since our generation uses technology on a daily basis, there is a risk that the majority of the students will lose interest in history if it is not taught using digital tools;
- By losing the help from this field, we would also lose a way of connecting with each other, which is really important in today's world;
- Because of this, a lot of important knowledge which is not shared conveniently is kept away from the youth.

CAUSES

- the organisers can be subjective on the matter sometimes, which reduces the quality of the communication;
- the organisers cannot harness the power of new advertisement tools such as social media and only advertise the events through traditional media, such as small local newspapers;
- during the pandemic, there are other events and causes considered more important and urgent than remembrance;
- the potential audience of the advertisement does not care, because there is a lack of conversation. The older ones do not want to talk about it and the younger ones do not want to listen about it.
- the style of communication is obsolete, uninteresting for young people.

EFFECTS

- lack of attention of the people about the subjects, especially from the younger generation;
- internationally feeding the stereotypes in societies (e.g. Hungarians and Romanians) and also the racism;
- the lack of conversation and knowledge about the events, decreasing participation;
- budget allocation to different areas.



Poor advertisement of
remembrance
activities

CAUSES

- young people today are not attracted to such activities;
- the educational institutions don't pay attention to this;
- these activities aren't promoted and visible;
- lack of interactive programs; young people don't realise the importance of remembrance activities.

EFFECTS

- young people are superficial about these activities;
- the youth will not appreciate their country's past;
- increasing intolerance and aversion to diversity;
- young people do not know their past and are victims of misinformation/fake news.



Lack of youth participation in remembrance activities

Generally, to popularize remembrance activities, it is inherent to actively engage young people in experiential learning. On-site experiences, as well as active participation through artistic performance, to increase the attractiveness of learning about history, as well as giving youngsters an opportunity to meet with professionals and experts from other countries can be helpful, too.

Interdisciplinary approach is crucial in explaining the historical events and applying the knowledge in preventing such events from happening again. Remembering the past may not be enough. It is also needed to understand what can be done to prevent the past from repeating.

“As we remember those who died in the Holocaust and honor the survivors, our best tribute is the creation of a world of equality, justice and dignity for all.”

A. Guterres, UN Secretary General

It is strongly recommended combining cognitive and emotional elements, as well as reflection and action to achieve the most effective method of teaching about **democratic values and human rights**. Generally, the campaigns should engage with as many senses as possible.

Employment of innovative methods and tools is crucial for increasing the attractiveness of remembering the past and combating the limited attention span. There are many channels available to increase the visibility of remembrance events, which could be also beneficial.

The stereotypes we are carrying should not be passed to other generations. It should be aimed at increasing the skill of critical thinking within society and speak about the local history and national identity to diminish the stereotypes.

#5030REMEMBER SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH WORKERS & NGOs

Youth workers and NGOs should bring more creativity to the remembrance activities for young people, making them more attractive. Depending on the age of the target group, it is recommended to include gamification in the activities and to make them as interactive as possible. They should also refrain from obsolete language in the communication and use interactive methods of engagement and promotion.

Last, but not least, NGOs should focus on applying for grants to fund impactful activities and avoid being "project factories".

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities should be more present in this area and offer more support and funding for NGOs and education institutions. They should have a clear strategy and policy which includes remembrance activities.

The recognition of the role of youth work at local level has also been mentioned.

#5030REMEMBER SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS

The role of governments is crucial, because they should invite political parties not to show extremist positions about recent history, but to be opened to dialogue and debate and invest more in youth, as they are the future.

It is recommended that government actively engage in remembrance activities, support the organizers, acknowledge the events, in order to spread awareness.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Educational institutions should be more non-formal, use innovative methods and tools for teaching, make lessons more interactive and connect the past with the present. (What would the past events mean for our present lives? What if something like that happened today? How would it influence our lives?).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU should support more projects that are spreading awareness about remembrance activities, take into consideration people's memories, because every country has different ones and co-create the funding programmes with the stakeholders, not taking unilateral decisions.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of remembrance as a tool to prevent populism, euroscepticism and radicalization has been widely recognized, but there is still a long way to go when it comes to making it relevant, adapting it to the reality of the 21st century and re-branding it in order for it to be "attractive" for young people.

Apart from analyzing the knowledge of young people regarding WW2 and other key historical events, we identified, with the help of our participants, key challenges that complicate the creation and execution of informative campaigns and remembrance events in general, as well as approaches on how to overcome these burdens. Educators, teachers and youth workers could use the insights to open up a reflection on how remembrance is addressed during their classes and adjust their approach and methods to the current needs. Authorities might build on these key points and organize public consultations on the issue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present Guide has been created as a result of the activities implemented under the framework of the Europe for Citizens project "50+30: from WW2 to the end of communism" and aims to bring added value to the topic and lay one more brick to the foundation of a strong European Union.

The creation of this Guide would not have been possible without the contribution of all the participants of the seminar, memorial walks, and respondents of the online survey. Special recognition goes to the rapporteurs of the roundtable with human rights education practitioners: Elisa Bălinișteanu, Lucia Gavenčiaková, Viktorija Pociūtė, Fürtös Patricia, Balici Alexandra, Chițan Denisa, Alexia Gabriela.

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#5030Remember



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