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G-LENS

The Role of Education in Countering Gender-based Disinformation International Conference

Event Dates: 19-21 January 2026

Location: Bucharest, Romania

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About the conference

In the framework of the European project G-LENS Gender-inclusive, Long-lasting, and Empowered Networks and Societies, ANAIS Association (Romania) invites **stakeholders from academia/ research, civil society, education, including youth organisations, as well as journalists, and social media content creators** from Europe to actively participate and contribute to a three-day event conference, including round table discussions and networking opportunities.

Background and Thematic Overview

Gender based disinformation – false, misleading or manipulated and harmful information – is a specific form of disinformation that disproportionately targets women and members of the LGBTQ+ community by exploiting patriarchal gender stereotypes. Although the phenomenon has existed for years, it became increasingly visible during the 2024 election cycle for the European Parliament, when it was observed a notable spread of gendered disinformation targeting current EU leaders and candidates. The trend is widespread globally, targeting high-profile women politicians, activists, journalists, and public figures. Tactics often include coordinated harassment campaigns, cyberbullying, trolling, doxing, privacy violations and AI-enabled image abuse to undermine women's credibility, silence them and discourage their social, civic and political participation.

Gender based disinformation, therefore, contributes to deterring the representation of women and minority groups in political and public life. It obstructs citizens' access to information and erodes several pillars of functional democratic systems. The impact goes far beyond individual victims: it amplifies harmful patriarchal gender roles, affects bodily autonomy, and the role of women and girls in society. Additionally, it normalises misogynistic language against women and minorities and perpetuates a culture of violence towards women. Ultimately, it fuels anti-gender, anti-women sentiments and extremist behaviours, which serve to roll back progress in gender equality.

Education, both formal and non-formal, has the potential to build long-term resilience against gender-based disinformation by equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to recognise, question, and resist manipulative narratives. Educators have an essential role in helping young people gain the competencies they need to become lifelong learners in an increasingly digital world. They also have a clearer insight; they can potentially recognise the causes and impacts of gendered disinformation

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quickly due to their daily access and engagement with groups, and should be considered key stakeholders not only in prevention but also in addressing the issue. On the other side of the sword, the issue of misogyny in schools and other educational settings has been consistently documented by feminist scholars for more than three decades. Their research shows not only how gender-based discrimination shapes everyday interactions in classrooms, but also how gender-based disinformation increasingly permeates educational spaces - whether by targeting educators, influencing students, or spreading through the social media infrastructure connected to schools and learning communities.

Conference Aims:

- Foster an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of gender-based disinformation and its multi-layered effects on youths and educators;
- Understand the national contexts regarding the connections between education and gender-based disinformation;
- Explore the role of formal and non-formal education in countering gender-based disinformation;
- Provide an opportunity to share tools, curricula, pedagogical approaches, and lessons learned from educational practices focused on gender equality and/or digital literacy;
- Facilitate cross-national and cross-disciplinary exchange.

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Programme

19th of January 2026 | Pre-conference Workshops with Educators & Networking Event

09:30 – 14:00 *Pre-conference workshops with teachers & educators*

Location: ANAIS Hub, Str. Marcel Iancu 11 Bucharest

Language: Romanian

Trainers: Bianca Rus | Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent & Irina Ilisei | ANAIS Association

18:00 Networking Event. Getting to know each other and our work

Location: British Council Bucharest (Calea Dorobanți 14)

Language: English

Facilitator: Irina Ilisei | ANAIS Association

20th of January 2026 | Conference – Panel Discussions & Keynote speeches

Location: Goethe Institute Bucharest (Calea Dorobanți 32)

Language: English. English-Romanian simultaneous translation available

09:00 – 09:30 Welcoming participants & registration

09:30 – 10:00 Opening Speeches

- Carmen Nemeș | President of ANAIS Association
- Valentin Popescu | Ministry of Education and Research
- Diana Neaga | National Agency for Equal and Men (Romania Opportunities between Women)
- Abdi Hassan | Country Director of British Council Romania
- Tudorina Mihai | Programme Coordinator Friedrich Ebert Foundation

10:00 – 11:30 Keynote speech

- Paula-Charlotte Matlach | The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (Germany)

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break

12:00 – 13:00 Panel 1: Understanding Gender based Disinformation and its Impact on Society

- *Mapping Gendered Disinformation and G-LENS Findings: Comparative Trends from Poland, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Romania*
 - Daphne Demetriou | Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (Cyprus)
 - Małgorzata Kopka-Piątek | Institute of Public Affairs (Poland)
 - Irina Ilisei, PhD | ANAIS Association (Romania)
 - Pepa Peneva Veleva | OPEN SPACE Foundation (Bulgaria)

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- *Creating alternative narratives in the fight against anti-gender movements and gender disinformation*
 - Lana Bobic | independent feminist theologian, activist and author (Croatia)

13:00 – 13:15 Interactive Reflection Session

- Zabya Abo Aljadayel | Centre for the Humanities, Nova University Lisbon (Portugal)

13:15 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 Panel 2: Context and Landscapes for Understanding Gender-based Disinformation. European and national Legislation, Gender biases, anti-Gender Movements and Amplification of Disinformation through Social Media and AI

Moderator: Andra Mureşan | Journalist at Scena9

- *Natalia Gruepenter* | Disinformation Analysis Centre, Research and Academic Computer Network (NASK, Poland)
Blurred Lines: How Disinformation Shapes Gender-Based Discriminatory Narratives
- Xhenis Shehu, PhD. | National University of Political and Administrative Sciences (Romania)
Disinformation, Polarization, and Democratic Erosion: Intersectional Monitoring of Romania's 2024–2025 Elections
- Emilia Slavova, PhD | Sofia University (Bulgaria)
Institutionalized Genderphobia and Disinformation: The Case of Bulgaria
- Mihaela Siritanu | Comunity WatchDog.md
Gender Disinformation Tactics and Democratic Impact. Insights from Republic of Moldova

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:30 Panel 3: Tackling Gender-based Disinformation from an Educational Standpoint

Moderator: Laura Popa | Journalist at PressOne

- Edward Lister | British Embassy Bucharest
- Anna Tsiarta | Educational Technology Department of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute
Learning through Story-Making
- Katarzyna Bąkiewicz | Central European Digital Media Observatory; Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland
- Ivan Radev | Association of European Journalists (Bulgaria)
A Case Study: Gender-Based Disinformation in Bulgaria
Countering disinformation targeting women. Proposed systemic and social solutions

17:30 – 18:00 Closing Remarks & Discussions

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- Joanna Chodecka | British Council Poland
- Irina Ilisei | ANAIS Association (Romania)

21st of January 2026 | Round Table Discussion

Language: English

Location: Goethe Institute Bucharest

09:00 – 09:30 Welcome Coffee

09:15 – 09:30 Participant's introduction

09:30 – 11:00 Session 1: Experiences of implementing an Educational Concept on Gender-based Disinformation. Success, challenges and lessons learned in G-LENS project

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:30 Session 2: Education for Gender Equality and Media Literacy. Sharing Experiences and Challenges

13:30 - 14:30 Lunch & Departure

About the Project

The two-year (2024-2026) European Project [G-LENS \(Gender-Inclusive, Long-lasting and Empowered Networks and Societies\)](#), co-funded by the EU, takes 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. The project is run in four European countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland and Romania.

Key objectives

- **Understanding the problem:** Mapping the prevalence and impact of gendered disinformation across Europe to identify actionable solutions.
- **Raising awareness:** Conducting public campaigns to highlight the societal harm caused by gendered disinformation.
- **Empowering youth:** Equipping young leaders, journalists and content creators with the tools to recognise and counter disinformation.
- **Sharing best practices:** Facilitating international collaboration to exchange strategies and insights.
- **Driving policy change:** Advocating for systemic change through dialogue with policymakers, media and civil society organisations.

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About the Host

ANAIIS Association is a well-recognised Romanian civil society organisation founded in 2011, dedicated to preventing and countering gender-based violence and supporting survivors through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach. Its work spans across four main sectors:

1. Direct Support Services for Survivors

ANAIIS provides free psychological counselling, legal assistance, social support, and case management for women and children affected by domestic violence, sexual violence, and other forms of GBV. We have directly supported over 11,000 beneficiaries, including women refugees.

2. Advocacy and Legislative Reform

ANAIIS played a key role in advocating for improvements to Romania's domestic violence legislation, including the recognition of cyberviolence as a form of domestic abuse.

3. Education and Awareness-Raising

ANAIIS conducts training programs, public campaigns, and educational workshops for both the general public (youth and adults) and professionals (social workers, police officers, judges). These initiatives aim to shift harmful gender norms, raise awareness about gender based violence, and promote early intervention.

4. Research and Capacity-Building

Through its research initiatives, ANAIIS generates data and knowledge on GBV trends, institutional responses, and victim needs in Romania. It also contributes to national and regional networks, supporting capacity-building among peer organisations and public institutions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Irina Ilisei at irina.ilisei@asociatia-anais.ro

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