

Under Pressure talking points and communication



Why Under Pressure?

- Democratic values are increasingly targeted by the belief in theories that devalue authorities. In their 2020 European Democracy Action Plan, the European Parliament writes that ‘democracy in the EU is facing **great challenges** ranging from rising **extremism**, election interference to the spread of **manipulative information** and threats against journalists – offline and online.’
- Especially **young people**, who grow up finding most of their information online, are receptive of undemocratic messaging and often **unaware of the risks** of using social media as a news source.

*“Nowadays journalists only spread fake news. That is why **free speech should be forbidden**” – Student during Under Pressure*

*“If I don’t like someone’s opinion, I just **block that person**, so that I don’t have to deal with it anymore.” – Student during Under Pressure*

*“I can’t say that I believe it all, but I do **like to follow Qanon**”. – Student during Under Pressure*

*“Once you are **fed by emotions**, it’s difficult to put things in perspective. This makes people less eager to find out if something is true or not.” – Student during Under Pressure*

What is the added value of the Under Pressure method?

- In order to tackle the shortcomings of the standard media literacy approach, it is essential to relate to the frame of reference of young people. Many teachers do not use the same (social) media as their students and are therefore not able to do so.
- Under Pressure combines the best practices of peer education and gamification, to make young people resilient to the harmful effects of disinformation and strengthen their democratic citizenship.
- Peer educators, who are young themselves, share their own experiences to start the conversation with students. The Under Pressure Game challenges students to reveal the hidden mechanisms that make disinformation so effective.

*“My students share a lot of conspiracy theories or fake news. “COVID is just a flu.” or “the MH17 did not go down at all.” I can barely listen to it anymore, it worries me very much. **How do I respond to this?**” – Teacher while signing up for Under Pressure*

*“I think that my students have no clue when it comes to fake news - they can’t distinguish what is fake and what is real. **We don’t talk about it in the classroom.**” – Teacher while signing up for Under Pressure*

How do students and teachers review Under Pressure?

*“The Under Pressure game was **really fun!** was surprised by how many methods there are to make fabricated news look like trustworthy information” – Student about Under Pressure*

*“The added value of this programme is the **sincere conversations** that peer educators have with students. I can see students who are otherwise quite absent really open up to them about how disinformation and online isolation affect them.” – Teacher about Under Pressure*