



The *MELIA Observatory* Project

**Media Literacy Observatory for Active Citizenship and
Sustainable Democracy**

Output T3.4 Sustainability toolkit for MELIA Observatory

Document Reference

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|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Project Acronym | Melia Observatory | | | |
| Project Code | DTP3-657-4.1 | | | |
| Project URL | http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/melia-observatory | | | |
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| Output Name | Sustainability toolkit for MELIA Observatory | | | |
| Output Number | T3.4 | | | |
| Type | Output | Distribution Level | | public |
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| Contractual Date of Delivery | March 2022 | | | |
| Status | Final | | | |
| Quality assurance reader | Tamara Besednjak Valič | | | |

Change History

| Version | Date | Status | Author (Unit) | Description |
|---------|------------|--------|-------------------|-------------|
| 0.1 | June, 2022 | | Janez Kolar (FAM) | |
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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is compiled by triad of partial documents (Deliverable D.T3.4.1 - Tools for effective launch and operation of the MELIA Observatory, Deliverable D.T3.4.2 Cross-sectoral meet-ups (three events) and Management plan and operational plan for Sustainability of MELIA Observatory network).

On the basis of mapping of the situation regarding level of media literacy and active citizenship in the Danube Region, design of web platform with media audit instruments and development of training programs, we created formal sustainability toolkit for functioning of MELIA Observatory as institutional entity, aimed for exerting continuous and durable impact in terms of strengthening of media literacy skills, particularly among youth, and integrating them with other civil competences, contributing to increased political participation and thus more viable democracy in the Region. It consists of following elements, necessary for its sustainable functioning: - legal status and normative acts, - organisational structure, - management plan, - short-term, mid-term and long-term operational plan.

MELIA Observatory will gather variety of stakeholders from all different relevant sectors, dedicated to improve the situation in term of civic competences and skills in the Region. They will involve educators and researchers, media experts, practitioners in the field of media production, civil society activists and policy makers.

We will establish policy advisory body that will include officials and public administrators from relevant sectors which will work on legislation change in respected areas. Its institutional framework will determine the relations with this entity, division of tasks and responsibilities of each part of organisational structure. It will be set in a way that express

Transnational orientation, taking into account specifics of different parts of the Danube Region.

This output will directly contribute to SPO1 since it will represent the organisational and operational basis of functioning of the observatory. It will enable the observatory to have durable impact in supporting positive normative and practical change in the fields of media, education, civil society and democratic governance.

The main outputs will be used by:

- local public authority
- national public authority
- interest groups including NGOs
- higher education and research
- education/training centre and school
- General public

Project will involve target groups (and other shareholders) in the development of the project main outputs, as follows: Representatives of education/training centre and school will be invited to workshop, in which their experiences, information and ideas will co-create contents.

Educators from education/training centres, primary and secondary schools, educators providing informal forms of education, researchers and educators from higher education institutions, will contribute ideas on motivating factors and incentives of their participation in the framework of Media Literacy Training Network. They will participate in testing of capacity building tools, directly contributing to its implementation and improvements.

We aim to develop learning materials and training manuals for educators adjusted to real circumstances of the educational system in states of Danube region. We will develop draft cooperation agreements between members of the network, a comprehensive list of possible Services, protocols and procedures for cooperation.

This will ensure continued cooperation after finalization of the project. All stakeholders will participate in workshops on sustainability tools, where also policy-makers and support organizations will be invited to take an active role in supporting development and testing of capacity building tools. The ownership of the project results by the stakeholders will be assured in the following way: For local public authority and national public authority, the most important is the O.3.2 and o.3.3 since it provides information about success of learning interaction and is raising awareness in sense of demonstrating the need to improve media literacy.

For interest groups including NGOs, higher education and research and education/training centre and school the most important is O3.1 – training toolkits.

The Output is also important for general public. Ownership will be assured by public availability and intensive awareness raising. All target groups will be integrated in preparation and elaboration of O.3.4 to assure the sustainability of MELIA Observatory.

Participatory nature in developing outputs of the MELIA Observatory, where a big number of stakeholders working in the field of media, education and youth (including stakeholders from formal and informal education system, policy makers, educators, researcher, activists etc.) and persistent emphasis on effective networking, cooperation and relationship building will contribute to dissemination of the projects results as well as their exploitation and capitalisation outside of the current Partnership.

Our networking intensions and activities will be genuinely directed in providing benefits for relevant stakeholders and society. They will be proactive, prioritize quality and a long-term approach to relationship building. They will be guided by a Document on the strategic role the MELIA Observatory and Action plan for future development of MELIA Observatory developed in this work package.

When developing outputs of the WP T3 we put very strong emphasis on analysis of regional nuances in a very diversified Danube region, which unites some of the most and the least developed parts of Europe. However, they will be framed in line with general trends that guide media literacy developments in the EU. Templates will be developed which can be implemented by other interested organizations, regions, territories. Furthermore, we are going to implement open-source approach, where we will provide the possibility to freely exchange and distribute projects results and material to general public.

MELIA Observatory will support the development of media literacy training network. Network structures, tools and co-operative solutions will be developed that will last beyond the duration of the financing of the project.

Indeed, the DTP financing is only perceived as the opportunity to develop lasting institutional structure to support efficient media education and training of youth in the Danube region.

The measures to ensure durability and transferability are:

- to develop clear organizational and decision-making procedures and set up a permanent territorial network, which will make future cooperation transparent and predictable.

- To develop custom-made capacity building tools for media education of youth and youth educators, which will enable continuous interest for the trainings and learning materials provided by Media Literacy Training Network.
- To develop sustainability tools. This particular output will include elements and methodology for developing sustainability strategy, which will allow us to develop concrete steps that need to be taken after end of financing and will also be transferrable to other consortia, partnerships, sectors and territories.

To ensure that it is internalized by the stakeholders – that they assume symbolic “ownership” of project results, they were developed through a series of workshops, at which these stakeholders participated.

These workshops also contributed to Transnational Action Plan, enhancing the continued support of policy-makers.

On the basis of audit on media landscapes, cataloguing existing media literacy policies in states of Danube region and formulation of policy guidelines – all of these activities were conducted in the framework of the Melia Observatory project in 2021 and 2022 - this strategy aims to determine the future role that will be played by MELIA Observatory in training activities, in raising awareness campaigns and in supporting policy developments in the field of media literacy and active citizenship in Danube region. The document is also linked to some elements of the Strategic document in order to maintain strategic visionary combined with operational excellence:

- clear statement of MELIA Observatory’s’ vision, mission
- objectives that will be followed and challenges that will be addressed by the observatory
- SWOT analysis - defining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

- PEST analysis - assessing political, economic, socio-cultural and technological environment to support strategic planning
- activities that shall be launched in order to achieve MELIA Observatories' objectives ensuring sustainability beyond EU funding
- identification of possible obstacles to the strategy goals and possible ways to overcome them
- action plan for future development of MELIA Observatory as important regional influencer and generator of positive change that would strengthen media literacy and active citizenship, contributing to democratic development in the Region

As added parts of the this Output we are adding some of the tools to establish sustainable functioning of the Melia Observatory Project and also the Consortium's idea on next steps in order to achieve the sustainability of the project.

Relevant stakeholders from Danube Region were engagement is the strategic planning processes. The strategy covers sustainability and transferability mechanisms for long-term exploitation of the observatory. It includes action plan for future development of MELIA Observatory as important regional influencer and generator of positive change that would strengthen media literacy and active citizenship, contributing to democratic development in the Region. The strategy will contribute to SPO1 since it will represent the framework of transnational training network. It is planned for the observatory to have durable impact, providing support and advice to policy makers in the field of media literacy in Danube region and assistance for actual implementation of activities dedicated to foster media literacy and active citizenship among Youth in the Danube region.

Based on analysis of national and regional contexts and situations regarding the media landscape, media literacy, and media education we prepared an action plan for the future development of MELIA Observatory MELIA Observatory as a platform that will serve to improve

media literacy and thus strengthen citizen's competence in the Danube Region. The plan must be seen as a schematic approach that should cope with the region's social, political, and economic realities and Europe-wide. Namely, the action plan provides for the MELIA Observatory network expansion and the use of its outputs, findings, and results in other European regions.

The action plan offers a comprehensive approach to the exploitation of MELIA Observatory via future actions of the partnership.

2. TOOLS

All kind of tools will be either used from different aspects of known practice, either developed in order to launch the Melia Observatory and also assure the operations.

As project is already living quite for some time with, subjectively assessing, the relations among consortium members are on quite high professional level, with effective pursuing towards results and also taking into account the aspects and needs of an individual inside the project team or consortium as whole.

Main focus during developing the Activity A.T3.4 (Development of institutional platform of the MELIA Observatory) has been put into establishing common vision of the Melia Observatory project in the near future and also the way how to establish it.

Therefore, in following section we will expose some of tools used, or available, or imagined in order to initiate continuing operations of the Melia observatory project.

Knowledge base establishing and building

As the consortium is built of different groups of stakeholders (main groups are education institutions, companies, active in media and NGO's, beside others, the main ingredient of the survival of the Melia Project is continuing maintain high professional standards, and knowledge building.

Teaching

Next logical step would be disseminating knowledge of the Consortium through different forms of education, tailored for specific end-user groups.

As one of main objectives when initiating the Project was awareness raising on hate-speech and (further) developing Media literacy, achieving this goal through “train the trainer approach could also be one of effective tools of the Melia Observatory Project.

Learning tools

Through pilots, benchmarking and also production and testing the learning materials for pupils, students, and youth educators, a growing library of wide variety of different materials will be prepared through time, what will also benefit the overall and particular purposes of the Melia Project.

Monitored feedback

Monitored feedback will be used for enhancement of media literacy competences in Elementary Schools. All learning tools will be tested with the aim to receive feedback about their usability and applicability.

Quality assurance

Closely monitoring activities and results will assure the expected level of quality

3. CONSORTIUM'S IDEA ON NEXT STEPS TOWARD THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MELIA OBSERVATORY PROJECT.

The Consortium did agree, following the inputs, tools for effective launch and operation of the Melia Observatory, on Cross-sectoral meet-ups on this basis for the sustainability of the Melia Observatory Project:

Approved material by the Consortium on ZOOM meeting,
23.6.2022

Understanding the »sustainability«

The concept »MELIA Sustainability«

Sustainability is the quality of social systems and social actions in the fields of environmental management, technological development, economy, politics and culture to reproduce themselves in a constructive way with minimum use of energy, and minimum waste and without disturbing the sustainability of other social systems and actions.

The sustainability of the Melia Observatory Project means that the project outputs are going to be used long after the project ends. It will contribute to the enhancement of active citizenship among the Danube regions.

Project outputs will be used by citizens of the Danube region in the educational process. The web platform will be a place for networking of media literacy educators and experts, for the gathering of recent literature, methodological advances, materials and advice for their use for personal and professional education. Sentiment analysis will be in use by the general public and specifically educators to examine media and social media texts.

The consortium had many ideas of representation or imagination of the MELIA Sustainability, as follows:

- Use the observatory as a starting point for media literacy future activities
 - Sustain and extend the network
 - Maintain/sustain the outputs for long-term usage
 - Generate new external funding and proposals
- *That project results inform debate on media literacy and democracy in member countries (policy development/creation, civil society development, education)*

- *That MELIA project influences public decisions and projects on continuous training of teachers – through dissemination/workshops*
- *Each partner contributes to creating/promoting debate on media literacy importance in different stakeholders' contexts (teachers, school boards, etc.)*
- *Participating/initiating dissemination events/debate*
- *MELIA project results go beyond stakeholders and can be promoted within segments of the general population*

Maintaining the project website and project results available to the public

Continue using the deliverables and outputs after the project ends for research and educational purposes.

Continue disseminating the deliverables and outputs within our organization and to our partners after the project ends

Publishing project results (e.g., WPT1 Handbook according to previous discussions)

Adapting the project deliverables and outputs for further educational workshops about Media Literacy

Incorporate the project deliverables and outputs (Media platform interface tool from WPT2, WPT1 Handbook, WPT3 Curricula and Handbooks, WPT4 Workshop) into workshops and events with compatible topics

Establishing transnational training and dissemination network for upgrading the media literacy skills of young citizens in the project countries (and the Danube region)

What would be the purpose of »MELIA Sustainability«?

There were many purposes of Melia Sustainability recognized, such as follows:

- Education in media literacy
- To support positive attitudes to the idea and practices of sustainability and counteract destructive propaganda and practices of limitless consumption, ethnic and religious intolerance, spreading of false news, etc.
- To expand the activity geographically as well as regarding the impact.
- To ensure the functioning of the platform also after the official end of the project
- Include/focus on other generations – elder people, new target groups, include them, protect their social contacts
- long-life learning, new knowledge, U3V
- To establish conditions for the function and development of the observatory after the end of the project.

- Maintain the MELIA network to capitalize and sustain MELIA Observatory outputs.
- Further dissemination of project results (on the project website, Facebook, and LinkedIn) - Participating in transnational training and dissemination network for upgrading media literacy skills

What could be the *possible* goals of »MELIA Sustainability«?

- To make the concept of sustainability known and respected by broad groups of the population.
- To facilitate the communication and cooperation of various groups of specialists in their search for the best solutions to problems related to sustainability.
- To support constructive examples of dealing with problems by respecting the principles of sustainability.
- To organize or support counteractions to the propaganda and practices undermining the principle and practices of sustainability.
- Visibility of project results
- Continuity of topic/debate on the topic
- Network preservation
- Network formation in member countries/transnational: coalition for media education: synergy creation
- Capacity building (for applying to other projects)
- Broad/increased use of project outputs/instruments/tools
- Spark debate at different levels (local, regional, national, transnational) and with various actors
- Promote the coupling of media literacy with democratic values – create a new context
- To be a kind of Europe-wide referential point in the fields of media literacy, and civic participation, like a kind of Centre of Excellence. Technology as a layer that brings transparency. To improve the level of democracy, especially the deliberative aspect of democracy ...
- To recognize checking points ...
- support education and training
- Support research
- Support awareness-raising of media literacy and culture
- Generate policy impacts on different regional and national levels
- Long-term use of project outputs
- Networking of educators
- Platform for the inception of new projects on this topic
- Reach outside of the project-specific area
- Single media literacy strategy/ materials/ platform for European use
- A newly funded project
- Stronger and broader networks
- Legislative initiative on media literacy (monitor progress); two-pronged, at European and at national level; complementarity
- Increased visibility of media literacy even in disadvantaged areas/school

- Further using the developed tools by many participants
- Establishing of training and dissemination network for media literacy skills

How are the »MELIA Sustainability« goals achievable?

The crucial issue is the strong operating network with ongoing, sustainable partnership relations and fruitful collaboration among project partners – by maintaining the MELIA network alive.

The second most important issue is the appropriate platform (Idea: to become a south-east European information hub on sustainability which is rich in easily accessible information, open for placing a variety of views, working with a broad audience of specialists and ordinary people interested in the issues of sustainability).

The third vitally important issue, which would also be the testing stone for Sustainability in general is the clarification of the possibility of modest but long-term financial support for the platform. There are also financial funds needed for the maintenance of the platform and for the remuneration of the part-time position of a high-level specialist for providing technical assistance.

Additional funds are also needed to further expand and maintain the network, including new sets of stakeholders and widen the arsenal of languages

Managing the »MELIA Sustainability«

What would the organizational organigram look like?

Although some of the Consortium members would describe the future organization as “the same”, and one could easily conclude that the organisation is optimal, there is most probably a space for a more specific description of the idea.

1. Clear organizational affiliation to the School of advanced Social studies in Nova Gorica.
2. Funding through the organization of SASS.
3. The part-time specialist dealing with the hub of MELIA should belong to the staff of SASS.
4. Technical assistance should be regarded as part of the SASS personnel.
5. There should be a governing body of the Platform for reports, discussion about the prospects of the MELIA platform, and discussion of critical comments and suggestions by all sources.

How do you imagine the leadership of the »MELIA Sustainability«?

Managing board (executive board), supervisory board, advisory board, assembly

- Two members per country (one academic, one activist, one corporate – according to country profile in MELIA) who engage in periodic dialogue
- National level media literacy coalition initiated and coordinated by MELIA partners
- Vote for a steering committee (one member per country)

The leadership will have to have continued technical support and maintenance of the platform. They will have to encourage other partners to continue work. They will have to administrate the establishment and functioning of the platform.

How would »MELIA Sustainability« influence your work?

How will you be able to contribute to the »MELIA Sustainability«

As for less active consortium and Project members/stakeholders, there should always be open doors for sharing their ideas and wisdom, the Consortium members evaluate the significant influence of the MELIA Sustainability on their professional endeavours.

From the results of the project, there would be more knowledge included in the curricula, workshops, research cooperation, and dialogue with stakeholders (media companies, media services, professional bodies, associations, regulatory bodies)

Further, the Consortium partners expect to Improve the quality in the searching area of media literacy, establish synergies with other projects and internal organisational tasks and activities, new thematic for the teaching Process, integrate training materials into the service/product portfolio and improve cooperation with colleagues and other institutions

The continuing of the Melia Project would help stakeholders to remain in touch with the matter and capitalize on MELIA when applying for other projects, as well it could open new research areas to be explored and new networks to be accessed, supporting advocacy work in member countries.

Shared common goals shall motivate and inspire partners to continue to work together (joint publications, new project applications, transnational projects, etc.).

Continuous dissemination of the results would raise awareness and contribute to the higher level of knowledge in the countries participated and also in the region as whole.

4. FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES

As the above material is intentionally offering some additional room for creativity and adjustment, the main focus was intended to maintain and further strengthen the Network of different stakeholders which could further elaborate on the objectives and activities of the Melia Observatory project as is already established during the preparation of this document.

First activity is, as agreed, definitely assuring stable financing through different options like Applications for EU projects, selling training materials, consultancy, educating/training, to name at least some of possible revenue generators

Second step, if not already during the solving of the finances related question, would be the establishing the functioning organisational structure.

As for the third step, there was shared opinion that the consortium, or one of its structures should elaborate in details what exactly will the consortium “produce”, what would actually be the outputs.

Only then, by an elaborate list of services and products, accompanied with planned price, one could develop the first draft of the sales plan, which would, combined with expenses, bring us to the (financial) idea of the Melia Observatory project, as least, in the near future.

As mentioned above and in some other documents, beside knowledge, expertise and regional presence in the field, one of main strengths of the current consortium would clearly be relations among consortium members, established paths for co-operation and high levels of trust and this is most definitely the foundation to further build on.

5. CONCLUSION

To assure the full functioning in the post-project period the document elaborates a series of actions to follow and measures to undertake to achieve the full exploitation of results obtained through the MELIA Observatory project. A list of feasible interregional actions will serve as a roadmap to monitor the path to the best exploitation of the results of the MELIA Observatory.