



ASOCIAȚIA
TINERII3D

2023



MEET OUR NEIGHBOURS 2

Meet our Neighbours 2

IO 1 – THE IMAGE OF THE OTHER STUDY - ROMANIA

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The Image of the Other Study (Romania)

1. History Curriculum Overview

In Romania, the history curriculum covers both national and world history, with a balance between the two. The proportion of national history varies depending on the level of education, but it is generally taught alongside world history throughout the curriculum. The emphasis of the curriculum varies as well, with different periods of history receiving more attention at different levels of education.

At the primary and secondary levels, the focus is on the basics of Romanian history, including its geography, the ancient Dacian civilization, and the major events and figures of Romanian history. The emphasis here is on building a foundational understanding of Romanian history and culture. As students' progress to higher levels of education, the curriculum expands to include more in-depth analysis of the various periods of Romanian history and their place in the larger context of world history.

In terms of the balance between different periods of history, the emphasis in Romania is on ancient and medieval history, with a particular focus on the Dacian civilization and the period of Romanian history that spans from the 14th to the 17th century. The emphasis on these periods is due to their significance in shaping the Romanian identity and culture. However, modern history, including the 20th and 21st centuries, is also taught, with a focus on Romania's role in World War I and World War II, as well as the country's transition to democracy following the fall of communism in 1989.

When it comes to neighboring countries' history, Romania's history curriculum does include information about neighboring countries and their historical narratives, but the level of detail varies depending on the period and the relationship between Romania and the neighboring country. For example, Romania's history curriculum includes significant coverage of the Ottoman Empire's history, which played a major role in shaping Romanian history during the medieval period. The history of Hungary, which shares a long border with Romania, is also included in the curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the conflicts and political relationships between the two countries.

At the core of the Romanian history curriculum is a focus on the development of the Romanian state and nation, from its earliest origins to the present day. The curriculum is divided into various periods, each of which is given different levels of emphasis. The earliest period covered in the curriculum is the pre-Roman period, during which the Dacian people inhabited the region that



would later become Romania. This period is typically presented as the beginning of the Romanian people's long history, and as a period of resistance against foreign domination.

The next period covered in the curriculum is the Roman occupation, which lasted from 106 AD to 271 AD. This period is emphasized as the time when Romania first came into contact with Western civilization, and as a period of cultural and economic exchange. The subsequent period of migration and settlement by various tribes, including the Goths, Huns, and Avars, is often presented as a time of upheaval and uncertainty, but also as a period of resilience and adaptability.

The medieval period is given significant emphasis in the Romanian history curriculum, particularly the period from the 14th to the 16th centuries. This period is characterized by the rise of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which eventually became part of the modern Romanian state. The heroic figure of Vlad the Impaler, also known as Dracula, is often mentioned in this period, as he is seen as a symbol of resistance against foreign domination. Other notable figures from this period include Stephen the Great, who is regarded as one of Romania's greatest rulers, and Mircea the Elder, who is celebrated for his victories against the Ottoman Empire.

The modern period, from the 18th century to the present day, is also given significant emphasis in the Romanian history curriculum. This period is marked by the struggle for national independence and the establishment of the modern Romanian state. Key figures from this period include Alexandru Ioan Cuza, who unified the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, and Ion Antonescu, who served as Romania's prime minister during World War II. Antonescu is a controversial figure, as he collaborated with Nazi Germany and oversaw the deportation of Jews and Roma to concentration camps. Nevertheless, he is often presented in the curriculum as a figure who fought for Romanian independence and sovereignty.

Throughout the Romanian history curriculum, there is a clear emphasis on the concept of the nation and its role in shaping the course of Romanian history. The curriculum emphasizes the idea of the Romanian people as a unique and distinct entity, with a shared culture, language, and history. This is reinforced through the emphasis on key events and figures that are seen as central to the development of the Romanian nation.

In addition to the emphasis on key events and figures, the Romanian history curriculum also emphasizes certain "promised" places that are seen as important to the national narrative. These include places of battle glory, such as the battlefield of Marasti, where Romanian forces won a key victory against the Central Powers during World War I, and places of spirit, such as the monasteries of Moldavia, which are celebrated for their distinctive Byzantine architecture and rich history.

There are also "promised" places that are significant in Romanian history and culture, such as battlefields, monasteries and churches, monuments, and natural landmarks such as the Balkans



and rivers. These places serve as symbols of Romanian identity and pride, and they are often featured prominently in the history curriculum.

In the Romanian history curriculum, a significant emphasis is placed on the country's historical figures and national heroes. These heroes are often mentioned in the classroom and in textbooks, providing a sense of national pride and identity to Romanian students. From the early days of the Roman Empire to the present day, the history of Romania is filled with legends, stories, and individuals whose heroic deeds have been immortalized in the pages of history.

One of the most revered heroes in Romanian history is none other than the legendary Vlad the Impaler, or Vlad Tepes, who is also known as Dracula. He was a 15th-century ruler who fiercely defended his land against foreign invaders, earning a reputation for his brutal tactics and ferocious fighting skills. Despite his ruthless reputation, Vlad Tepes is considered a hero in Romania because of his unwavering loyalty to his country and his people.

Another prominent figure in Romanian history is Michael the Brave, who was a prince of Wallachia and Moldavia in the late 16th century. He is known for his efforts to unify the two territories into a single state, a goal that he achieved through military might and political cunning. Although his reign was short-lived, Michael the Brave is remembered as a visionary leader who fought for the independence and unity of his people.

Another important figure in Romanian history is Stephen the Great, who was a prince of Moldavia in the late 15th century. He is remembered for his military campaigns against the Ottoman Empire, which were carried out with great determination and courage. Despite being vastly outnumbered, Stephen the Great was able to defend his land against foreign invaders, earning the respect and admiration of his people.

Another Romanian hero who is often mentioned in the history curriculum is Avram Iancu, who was a lawyer and political activist in the mid-19th century. He played a key role in the Transylvanian Revolution of 1848, which sought to overthrow the ruling Habsburg dynasty and establish an independent Romanian state. Although the revolution ultimately failed, Iancu is remembered as a symbol of resistance and a hero of the Romanian people.

In addition to these historical figures, there are also numerous Romanian leaders and heroes from more recent times who are often mentioned in the history curriculum. One such figure is Nicolae Ceaușescu, who was the leader of Romania from 1965 until 1989. Although his reign was marked by corruption and human rights abuses, Ceaușescu is remembered for his efforts to modernize the country and promote Romanian culture on the world stage.

We can say that Romania's history curriculum includes a balance of national and world history, with an emphasis on ancient and medieval periods, as well as key events, "promised" places, and heroes that have played a significant role in shaping Romania.



2. Workshops “Imagine the Europe”

We had workshops about “Imagine the Europe” with youngsters from the community and students from the National Collegium „Elena Cuza” Craiova and School “Nicolae Bălcescu” Craiova. In these workshops the youngsters had the chance to imagine Europe as they want using the 15 pictures from Europe that the partners of the project chose and one picture from each partner of the project and five pictures related to Romania and Romanian culture.

During the workshops, we noticed that most of the participants were familiar with Romanian and European images that we chose for the activity, but not so familiar with the Balkan ones. This is one of the reason that most of the “images” created were connecting Romanian symbols together and European ones and the Balkan ones were put on the edge of the “image”.

Also we notices that some youngsters chose to create images based on topics like culture, personalities and buildings and even we had a group that decided to create an “image” where the “good” characters and the “bad” ones were separated.





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3. Rewriting History

During the workshops that we had with youngsters and students from schools we had different opinions from them, but as a summary most of the participants, didn't matter if they were youngsters or students, they mentioned that they will change it in the ways that the war will not happen or the war will end very soon after it started. We can mention that we had even some students that said that they would like that Romania was more active in the war and take more territories from the neighboring countries, mentioning territories that in today's date are under Ukraine and Republic of Moldova's administration.

Here we have summaries of some of the essays:

- I think that if I could change something about WW1, I would try to prevent it from happening altogether. So much suffering and destruction could have been avoided if people had found a way to resolve their conflicts peacefully. I would try to bring together the leaders of the countries involved and encourage them to talk things out and find a way to compromise;
- If I could go back in time and change something about WW1, I would try to make sure that women played a more active role in the peace negotiations. I think that if women had been



given more of a say, the negotiations might have been more focused on building a more peaceful and just world. I would try to encourage more women to become involved in politics and diplomacy;

- If I could change something about WW1, I would try to prevent the use of chemical weapons;
- I would have prevented the Serbian person from assassinating Franz Ferdinand;
- I wish that the leaders of the warring nations had taken more seriously the peace overtures that were made throughout the war;
- I believe that the First World War was caused by the rise of nationalism in Europe, so I will make faster European Union.

4. Questionnaire “Me and Europe”

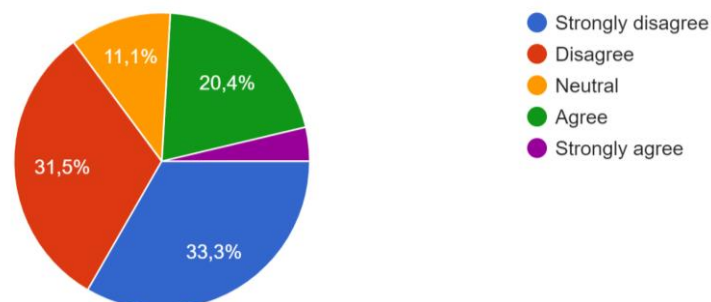
We had two questionnaires that we used to collect the opinions of the two categories “Students” and “Youth”. They were addressed generally to the people from Craiova and Dolj country that fit in the age range, but we also collected answers from the youngsters that are in our network on the national level in order to try to make it relevant on the Romanian level, not just the local one.

In total we collected 116 answers, 54 from Youth and 62 from Students. The gender distribution of the collected answers was Male – 36, Female – 78, Prefer not to say – 1.

The set of the questions and the collected answers are as following:

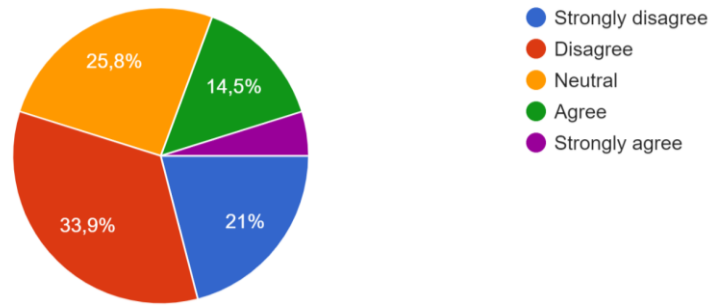
- Cultural differences between my own and European cultures are unimportant, and everyone should conform to one set of cultural norms and values.

Youth



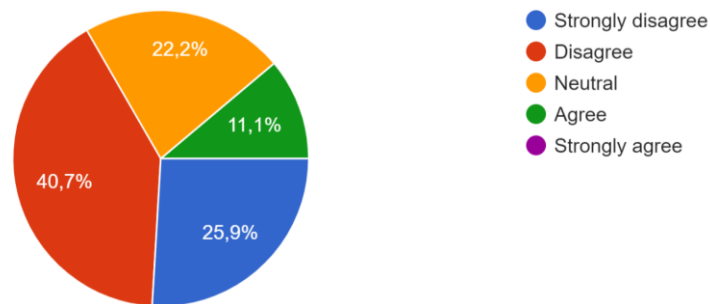


Students

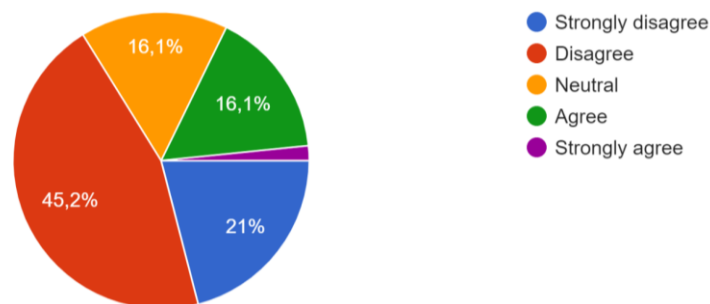


- There are no significant differences between Bulgarian/ Greek/ Macedonian/ Romanian/ Serbian/ Turkish cultures.

Youth



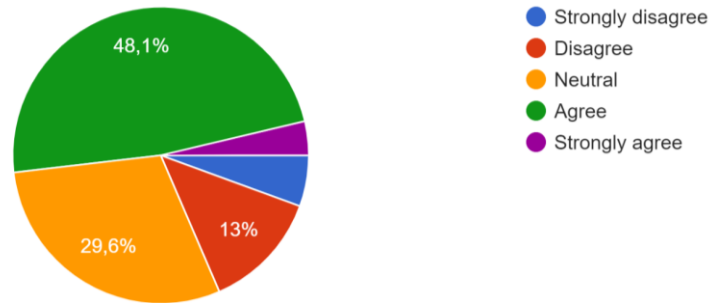
Students



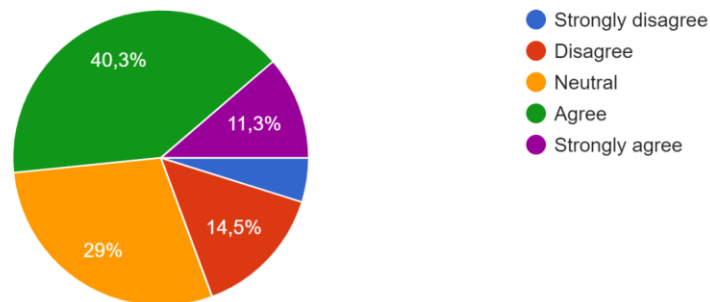


- It is essential to defend and preserve my cultural values and beliefs when interacting with people from European cultures.

Youth

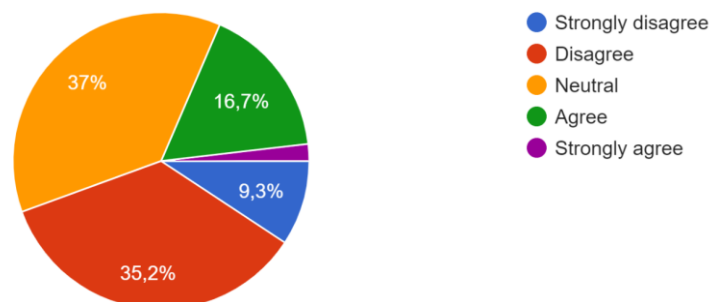


Students



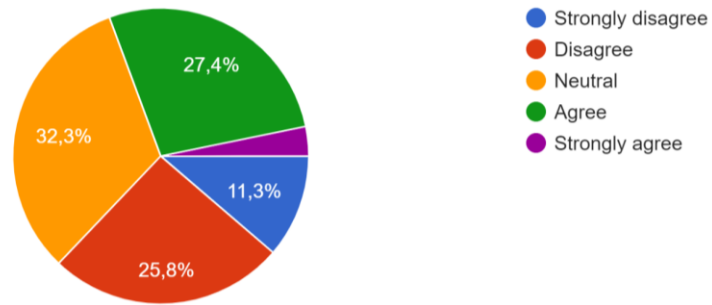
- I need to defend my cultural practices and traditions when I meet with a person from Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian, and Turkish cultures.

Youth



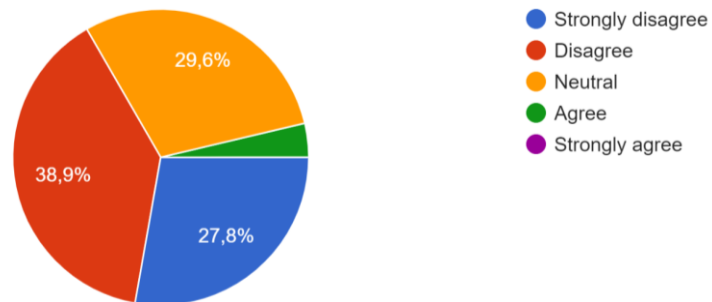


Students

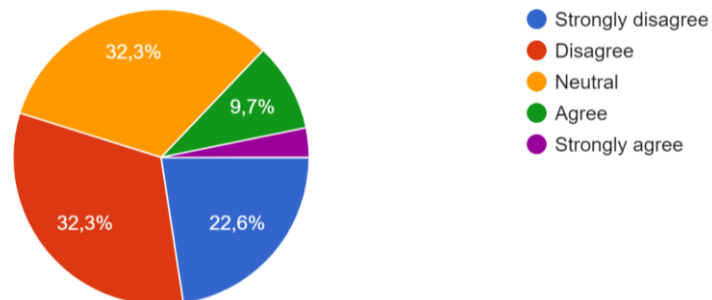


- It is better to be Romanian than to be European.

Youth



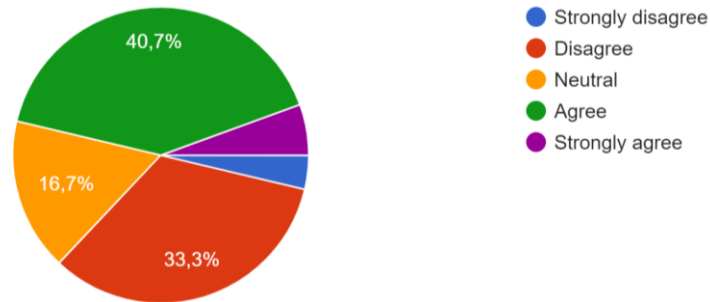
Students



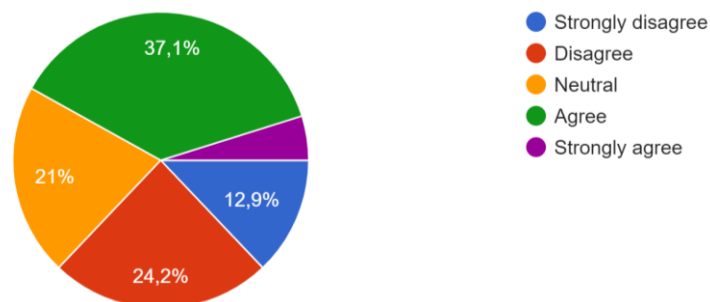


- Cultural differences between my own and European cultures are minimal and can be ignored or overlooked in communication and interactions.

Youth

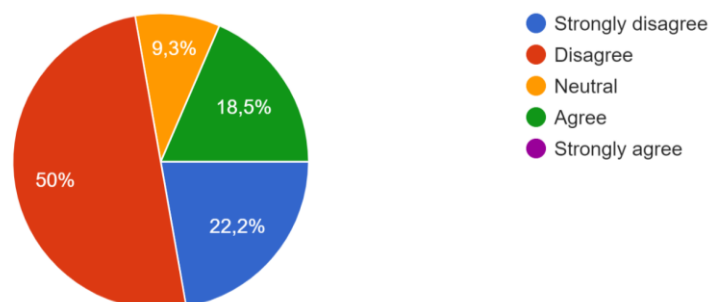


Students



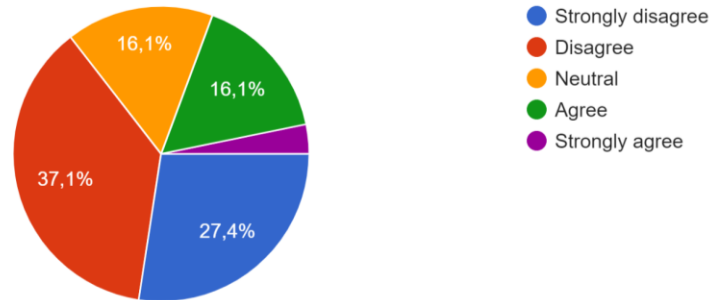
- Values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and practices between Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Serbian, and Turkish cultures are minor and insignificant.

Youth



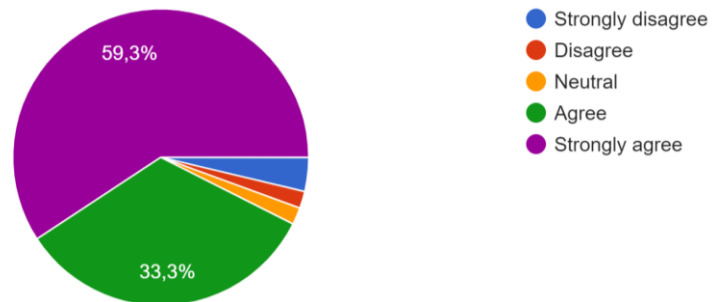


Students

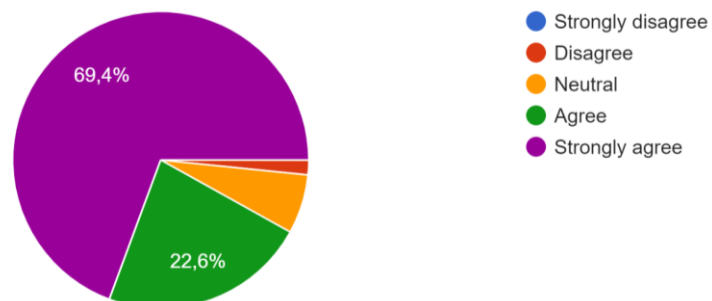


- When interacting with people from European cultures, I try to understand and respect their values, beliefs, and behaviours, even if they differ from my own.

Youth



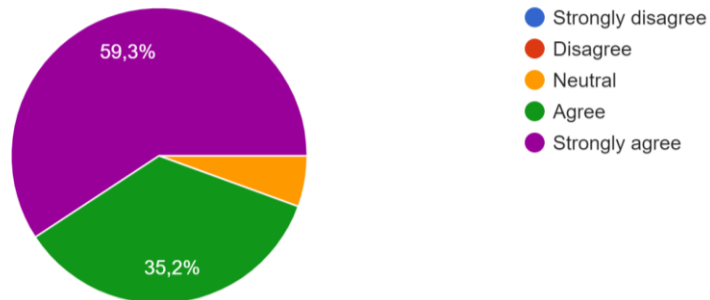
Students



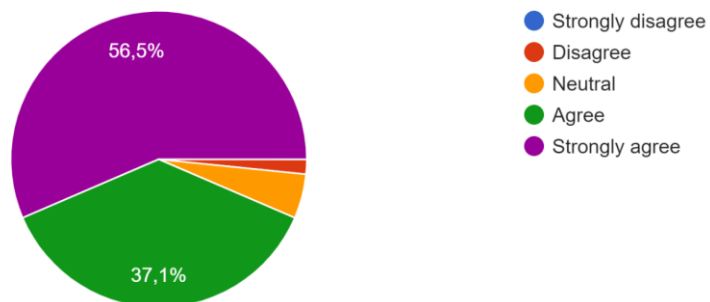


- When confronted with cultural differences between Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Serbian, and Turkish cultures, I try to find common ground and appreciate diversity.

Youth

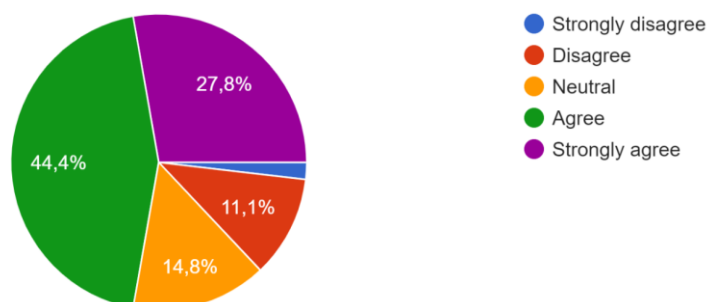


Students



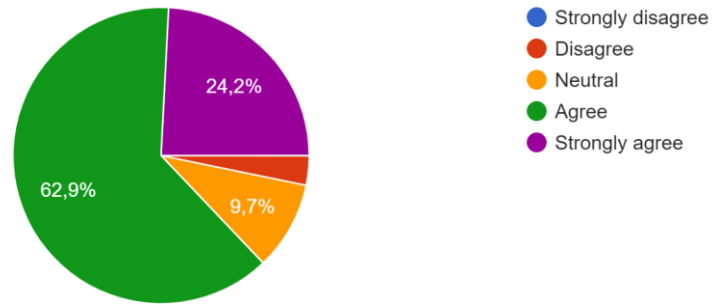
- It is essential to adapt and adjust my communication and behaviour when interacting with people from European cultures to communicate and collaborate with them effectively.

Youth



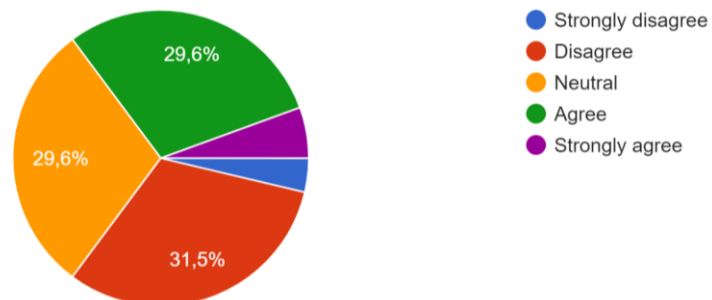


Students

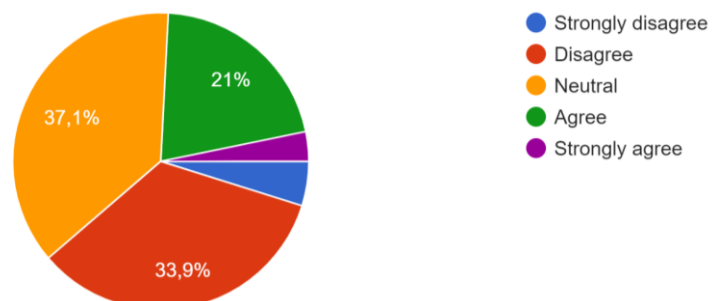


- In my interactions with people from Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian, and Turkish cultures, I tend to adapt my behaviour or communication style to fit in with these cultures by avoiding my cultural practices and expectations.

Youth



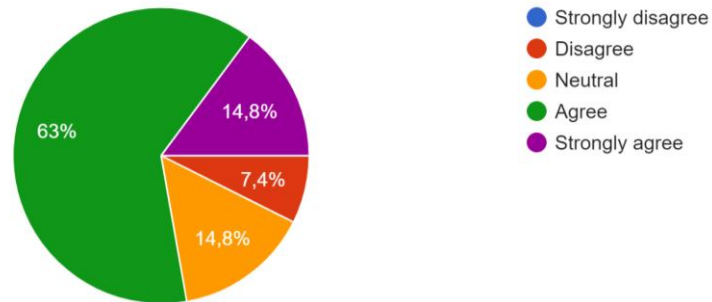
Students



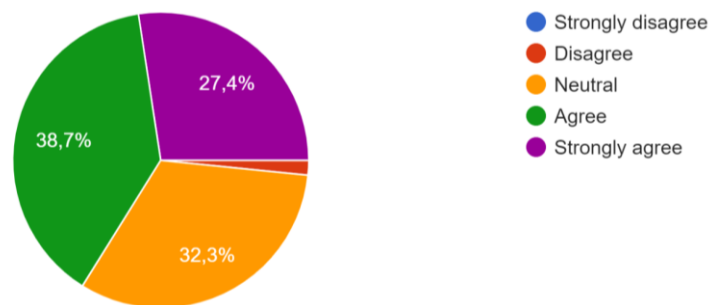


- Integrating and incorporating elements from European cultures into my own is crucial to building a more inclusive and diverse community or society.

Youth

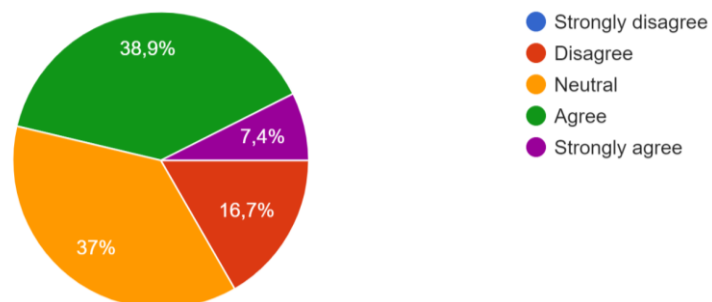


Students



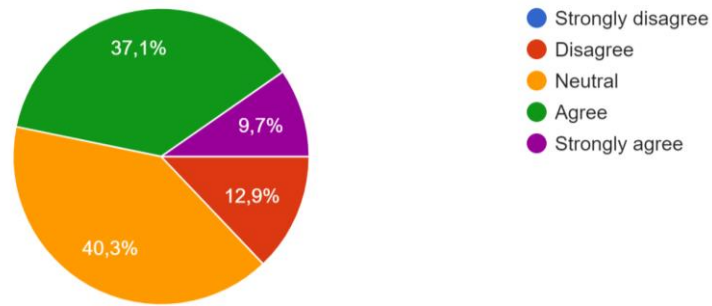
- Since Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Serbian, and Turkish cultures intersect and influence each other in terms of language, customs, traditions, and values, I try to integrate aspects of these cultures into my own.

Youth



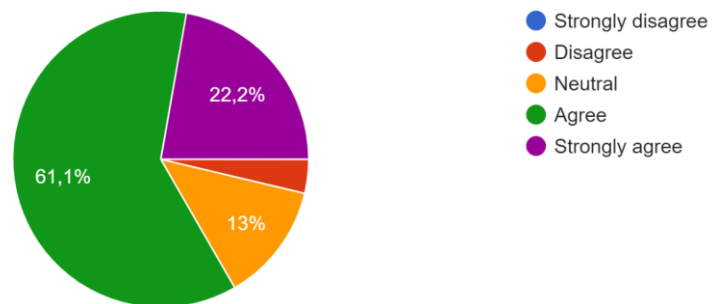


Students

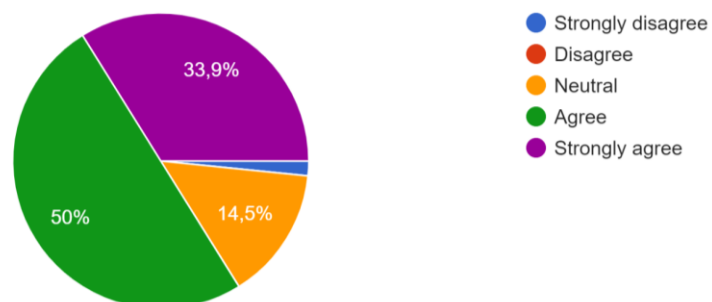


- I want the EU to expand by accepting new countries from the Balkan Peninsula.

Youth



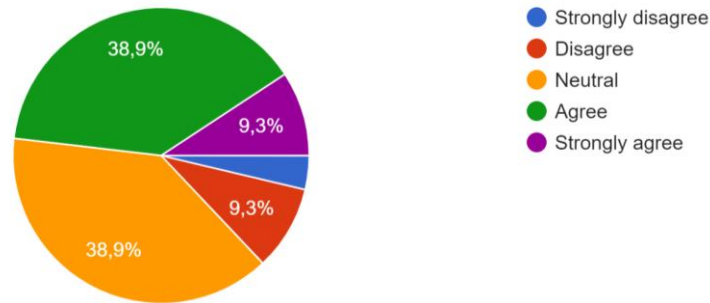
Students



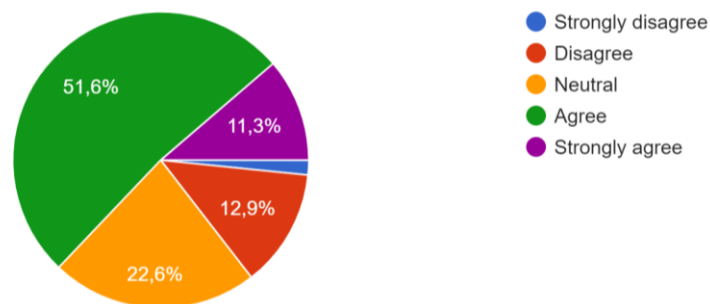


- The differences in religion between Balkan nations have contributed to conflicts or divisions between Balkan societies.

Youth

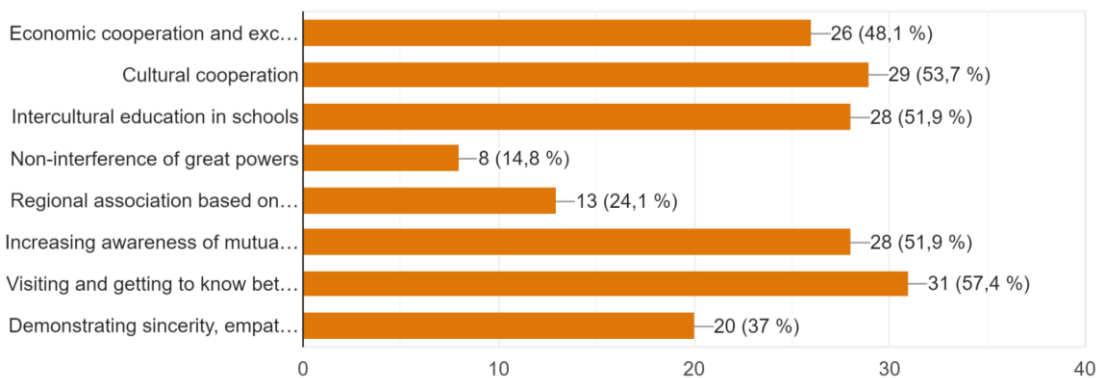


Students



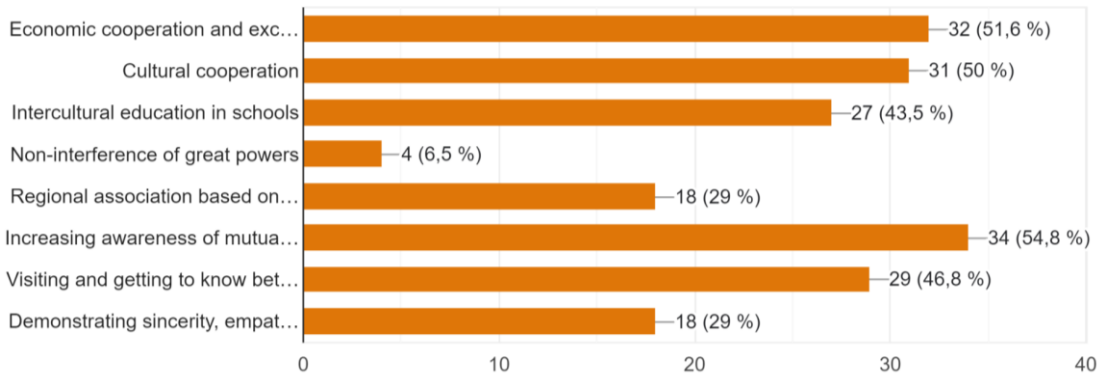
- What can contribute to good relations between the Balkan countries in the future? (Choose the **three** most appropriate responses in your opinion)

Youth



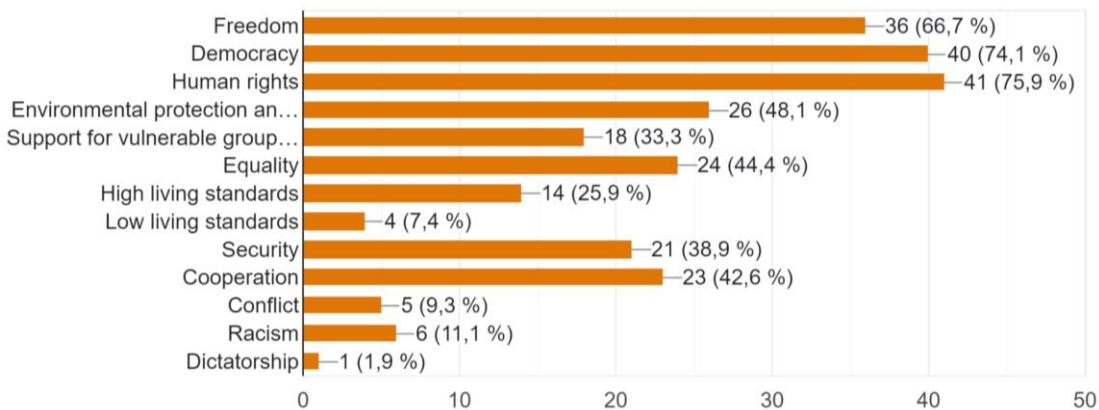


Students

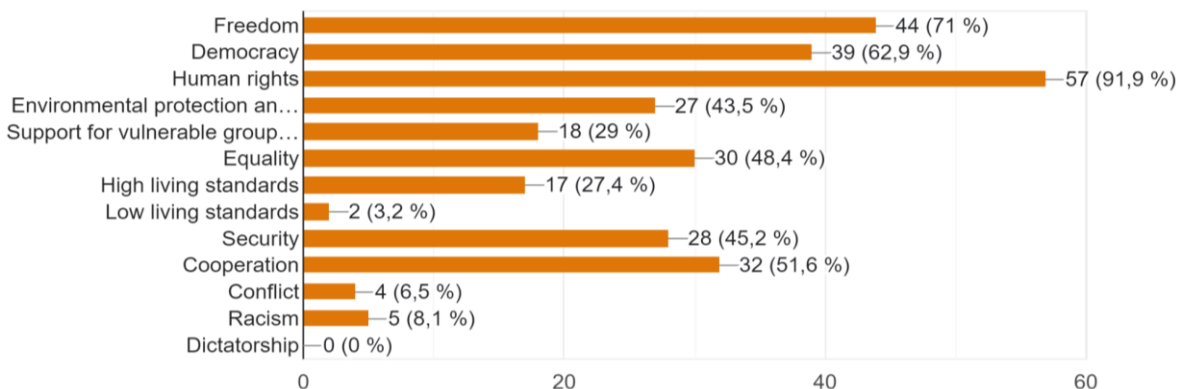


- Choose **five** of the distinguishing characteristics below that best describes, in your opinion, a European.

Youth



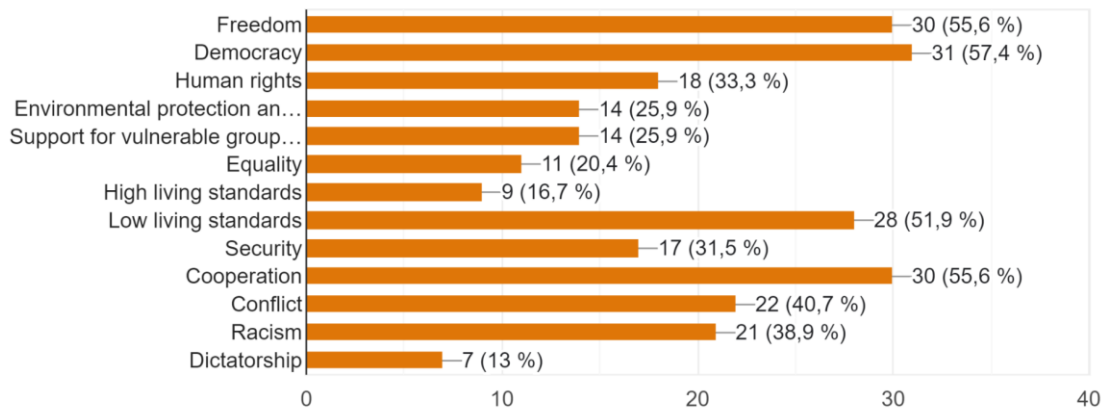
Students



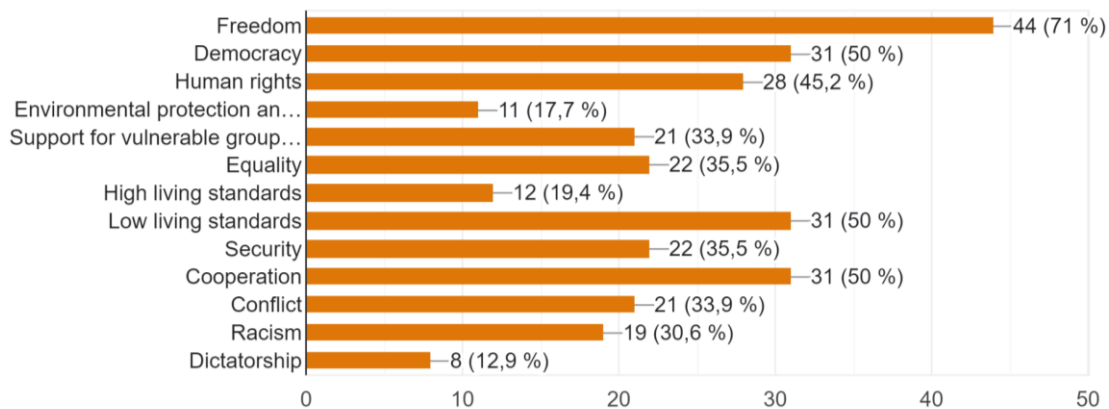


- Choose **five** of the distinguishing characteristics below that best describe, in your opinion, a Romanian.

Youth



Students



As a conclusion we can notice that there are not big differences between the answers from the two groups (youth and students) and the majority of the young generation as a positive attitude towards Balkans and European states. We can notice that Romanians feel more close to the European culture than the Balkan one, but even with this they are still tolerant and inclusive when it is about embracing the others' culture, Balkan or European.

We can also notice that the answers that we got shows that the general believe is that the interference of big powers is quite little and the good relationships between Balkan countries can be made just if the Balkan countries will want to do this by intensing the cultural and economical relationships.



5. Group Interviews

5.1. Teachers Interview

In the interview with the teachers, we tried to determine how they see and feel the youngsters.

Are they excited about the issues of the day? What excites them the most?

In general, students in smaller classes are more interested in History than those in the bigger classes. Students begin to study history, in our country, in primary school, in the fourth grade and since it is a new subject at the beginning they are very excited. As they grow up their interest decreases. Most of all they like the information from the mediaeval period.

Are they interested in national history? Where does their interest in history come from - family, school, media...

Students are very interested at the beginning to find out information about national history. Unfortunately, the school is the only one that deals with awakening their interest for knowledge because sadly nowadays parents are increasingly seized by work and daily worries and they find it very difficult to deal with the education of their own children, so they leave this aspect almost entirely in the care of the school. Social media promotes other aspects and values, in our opinion education is not promoted in the media as it should.

Do they read, apart from the obligatory authors in the curricula, and what kind of literature do they prefer to read - foreign authors, national...

Yes, but again I have to say that as they grow up their interest in reading decreases and they mostly read foreign authors.

5.2. Students and Youth Interview

In the interview with the students and Youth we tried to see their opinions about their European ways of view about Europe in general, European culture, Balcan culture and their desires for a potential greater Europe in future.



Do 'being European' and 'being an EU citizen' have the same meaning for you?

No, because being European is about culture, values, and common traits and roots, whereas being an EU citizen is only about being a citizen of one of the member states of the European Union.

Do you think 'being European' is a unifying factor?

Yes, we think that being European is about being member of a great family of people with common history, roots, traditions, religions, and values.

Do you think that the EU respects its values (rule of law, human rights, non-discrimination, free market, private property...)?

Mostly yes, despite occasionally flaws and inequalities in some matters, we believe that the EU is dedicated to maintaining its values.

Do you want Europe to have no borders and become a single country?

No, because the current national states know the best how to deal with the internal issues of every single territory.

Do you want the EU to expand by accepting new countries from the Balkan Peninsula?

Yes, being an actual European community is not possible without most of the states of the European continent which share the European values.

Choose 5 things that best describe a European?

The sense of social responsibility, the love for freedom, the good life standard, democracy and a rich culture.

Choose 5 things that best describe Bulgarian/Greek/Macedonian/Romanian/Serbian/Turkish (here each partner specifies)

The hospitality, the joyful people, the entertaining culture, the good cuisine, the natural beauties.



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2 What threatens Europe to a greater extent?

The globalization and the phenomenon of uncontrolled migration which can negatively affect the ethnical, cultural and social aspects of our continent.

2 What threatens your/our country more?

The emigration of the qualified work force outside the country because of the not enough good life standard at home.

2 In your opinion, what can contribute to the good relations of the Balkan countries in the future?

Raising awareness about our common values, promoting strategic partnerships between these countries and encouraging cultural exchanges.