

European phase ESC 2021

Information and misinformation: Official statistics in world overflowing with data

Statistical information is everywhere, and mostly that is a good thing. We can for example understand our society better based on statistics. Debates are more fruitful if we all have the same reliable facts. We can also make choices based on statistical facts. What should I study, how is the job market in different sectors, what challenges might I face as a woman in the work market?

The problem is that available information might also be false or incomplete.

How can we decide what information to trust? Should we trust influencers or YouTubers? What about politicians or environmental activists? Should we trust all newspapers? Should we trust all statistics? What about official information, can it always be trusted?

Official statistics is different from other statistics. It is published by government agencies or other public bodies as a public good, something everyone can access. It is statistics produced after a set of pre-defined quality requirements, among them transparency on how the data is collected and how the statistics are made.

In this video assignment you shall imagine that you are invited to a youth organization to present a video about the challenge of misinformation in the society and the role official statistics can have.

You can approach the topic the way you like, but below are some questions that might help you on your way:

- What consequences can misinformation have on people or the society? Do you know examples of misinformation in your country, in the European Union, or at international level? What consequences did it have?
- How would the society be like without statistics (i.e. no unemployment numbers, no population figures)?
- Picture a debate without common facts, how would it go? (i.e. a TV-debate before an election)

Besides reflecting on the theme, we would like you to make references, examples or other use of official statistics in the video.