

# Newsflash

## 26th Youth Studies Forum

The University of Lleida (UdL) hosted the **26th Youth Studies Forum** on 13 November 2025. Under the title “Youth and polarisation: a challenge for democracy”, the forum (organised by the Government of Catalonia Directorate-General for Youth and the Catalan Youth Agency, with the support of the UdL) organised talks and round tables with the participation of experts in political science, sociology and political analysis. The Forum addressed current forms of ideological polarisation among Catalan young people, and their collective potential as an active agent in defending democratic values and fundamental rights. The conference was structured around three main questions: 1) How can we define and describe the polarisation in discourse and how does it take shape in different areas of socialisation?; 2) Why does such discourse spread quickly, especially among specific profiles of young people?, and 3) How are public authorities and youth and community movements responding to this phenomenon? The event was attended by 200 people, including local and regional youth professionals, political leaders, members of research teams and youth organisations and students and people interested in the topic.





# Social media and minors

In October 2025, the Spanish Government’s Science and Technology Office of the Congress of Deputies, known as Oficina C, published the study **Informe C. Redes sociales y menores** (Report C. Social media and minors). The document describes how children are especially vulnerable to the effects of digital platforms during adolescence, due to the emotional, social and neurocognitive changes characteristic of this developmental stage. The report indicates that social media, designed to maximise attention and usage time, may promote patterns of “problematic use” that affect between 3 % and 8 % of minors in Spain. In addition, greater vulnerability is observed in younger adolescents (aged 10–15) and in girls, whose more image-focused use can negatively impact sleep, self-esteem, and identity building. Despite the risks identified,

the report also highlights the opportunities offered by social media in terms of the social, intellectual and civic development of children and adolescents. Experts emphasise the importance of how, why and in what context networks are used as well as the amount of time spent online.

## Redes sociales y menores

El internet a redes sociales comienza cada vez antes y muchos menores lo hacen sin las habilidades necesarias para gestionarlas con seguridad. Estos servicios generan y amplían oportunidades pero también riesgos capaces de influir en su bienestar y desarrollo.

### Riesgos e impactos

La vulnerabilidad depende de múltiples factores que interactúan. El conocimiento sobre los efectos directos del uso se han limitado pero esta información no debe ser excusa para la inacción.

**Vulnerabilidad: factores clave**

- Individuales y psicosociales:** Edad (10-15 años), riesgo de adicción, baja autoestima, ansiedad, etc.
- Características del individuo:** Más de 3 horas de uso diario, como principal medio de comunicación, etc.
- Uso de las plataformas:** Uso de cámaras web, uso de aplicaciones, etc.

**RIESGOS**

- Contenido: Odio, Violencia, Pornografía, Desinformación
- Contactos y conductas: Vigilancia excesiva, Abuso sexual, Mensajes acoso/comportamiento inapropiado, Convenciones online
- Comercial: Fraudes, Robos de identidad, Trabajo explotación sexual, Persuasión comercial manipulativa

**EFECTOS SOBRE LA SALUD Y BIENESTAR**

- Efectos sobre la salud y bienestar: Estrés, Ansiedad y uso problemático, Depresión, Problemas de sueño, etc.
- Erosión de identidades: Pérdida de identidad, etc.
- Lejanía de la realidad: Problemas de concentración, etc.

### Hacia una estrategia integral

Requiere regulación para que las plataformas se responsabilicen plenamente de los riesgos y efectos de sus productos y políticas que reduzcan la vulnerabilidad social.

**Medidas regulatorias alternativas:** Bases de datos, Modelos de gobernanza, etc.

**Regulación sistemática:** Creación de marcos regulatorios y de diseño.

**Cooperación internacional e intersectorial:** Seguridad por diseño y por defecto.

**Transparencia algorítmica y acceso a datos:** Acceso a datos de diseño, etc.

**Mapa de la actividad de contenidos:** ACCIONES SOBRE LAS PLATAFORMAS: Diseño seguro.

**Acciones sobre la sociedad:** Estrategias para el bienestar digital personal.

**Medios regulatorios:** Bien superior del menor, Protección de menores, Lucha penal contra los delitos, Principio de precaución.

**Regulación más específica:** Regulatorio de acceso, control de contenidos, etc.

**Reducción de desigualdad digital:** Participación ciudadana y comunitaria, Alfabetización digital, etc.

**Concienciación:** Intervenciones en centros educativos, Sistemas de salud.

**Control parental:** Medición y estrategias familiares.

**Elaboración de políticas:** Estrategias para el bienestar digital personal.

La evidencia sobre la efectividad de las intervenciones en este campo es incipiente y requiere evaluar los intervenciones cuando se aplican.

Oficina C

## Communicating with children and adolescents

The Childhood and Adolescence Institute, associated with the Metròpoli Institute and Barcelona City Council, recently published the working document ***Comunicar amb infants i adolescents*** (Communicating with children and adolescents), containing guidelines on inclusive, respectful communication that recognises children as the main stakeholder. It provides a conceptual framework to guide the Institute's programmes and projects, intended as a source of inspiration for other institutions. The document includes the right to receive adequate information which identifies the risks of disinformation, contributes to overcoming adult-centrism and promotes authentic dialogue and participation. It also includes recommendations on communicating inclusively with children and adolescents, covering some of the particularities that differentiate them as a group, and how to adapt messages to age, degree of maturity and diverse abilities. The guide also stresses the key role of the media in promoting aware, critical and listened-to child citizens, from a respectful and inclusive perspective. Consult other **methodology documents** from the same Institute on how to generate research with the ethical participation of children and for authentic participation of children and adolescents.



### Comunicar amb infants i adolescents

Orientacions per a una comunicació inclusiva, respectuosa i que reconeix la infància com a ciutadania del present

## Addressing hate speech through education

In 2023, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect developed the policy guide *Addressing hate speech through education* to explore educational responses and provide guidance and recommendations to policymakers on how to strengthen education systems to counter hate speech. According to the authors, hate speech is spreading faster and further than ever before because of social media user growth and the rise of populism. Both online and offline, hate speech targets people and groups based on who they are. It has the potential to ignite and fuel violence and promote violent extremist ideologies, including atrocity crimes and genocide. Education can play a central role in countering hateful narratives and the emergence of group-targeted violence. According to this

policy guide, educational responses to hate speech and all forms of hateful communication include: 1) training teachers and learners in the values and practices that make respectful global and digital citizens; 2) adopting pedagogical and whole-school approaches to strengthening social and emotional learning, and 3) revising and reviewing curricula and educational materials to ensure they are culturally responsive and include content that identifies hate speech and promotes the right to freedom of expression.



## Adolescents confronting hate speech

In 2022, the Fad Juventud Foundation published the report *Adolescentes frente a los discursos de odio* (Adolescents confronting hate speech). The aim of the initial research, led by the INTER Group for Research in Intercultural Education at the Spanish National University of Distance Learning (UNED) was to understand the meaning that adolescents attach to hate speech to develop training materials and resources that promote critical thinking education. The conclusions identify scenarios, agents, and strategies for confronting this phenomenon. The adolescents surveyed experienced a common perception and feeling that violence and hatred are increasing and gradually becoming normalised. The anonymity and perceived distance provided by the virtual world seem to be the elements that facilitate the dissemination of hate speech on social media, although this same virtual space can be used to generate and disseminate messages and discourses that offer alternative narratives to those of hegemonic hate speech. The authors of the report

consider that adults as well as young people need training and prevention on this issue, pointing out that particular attention should be paid to everyday spaces and people close to us, since the degree of closeness is a key factor in the credibility we accord to certain messages.



**ADOLESCENTES FRENTE  
A LOS DISCURSOS DE ODO.**  
UNA INVESTIGACIÓN PARTICIPATIVA PARA  
IDENTIFICAR ESCENARIOS, AGENTES  
Y ESTRATEGIAS PARA AFRONTARLOS.

Centro  
Reina Sofía | **fad**



## Polarisation Atlas of Spain 2025

At the end of 2025, More in Common Spain presented the first edition of **Atlas de la polarización en España** (Polarisation Atlas of Spain), an annual project to measure and understand the evolution of social division in the country. The aim is to understand how different ideas can lead to distance, mistrust, rejection, or political disenchantment. The study analyses the different forms of polarisation and their consequences: perceived, ideological, affective-social and systemic. The study is based on a survey of 2 508 adult respondents who are eligible to vote. The results indicate that a perception of social division is widespread among Spaniards, although most still believe that differences can be overcome. The left–right axis is the main source of perceived division, and social media and the media are considered to be the main drivers of polarisation. According to this report, Spain is seen as more ideologically polarised than other major European democracies. Issues such as immigration and the territorial model are the most divisive for voters. The Atlas reveals another worrying fact: up to 14 % of Spaniards have broken off friendships or family relationships for political reasons in the last year.



## Survey on post-truth and conspiracy theories 2025

At the end of 2025, the Government of Catalonia Centre for Opinion Studies (CEO) published the *Enquesta sobre postveritat i teories conspiratives 2025* (Survey on post-truth and conspiracy theories 2025) based on a sample of 5 667 people aged 16 and over and living in Catalonia. The study contains data on perceptions of the main problems in Catalonia, social trust, and trust in institutions and the media. It also includes information on the use of traditional and social media to remain informed on current events. In the second section, it presents data on beliefs and conspiracy theories, and information on the consumption and spread of fake news and post-truth phenomena. The third section looks at preferences in political leadership, ideological positions and populist attitudes, and the last section includes data on international politics and preferences on the strength of the European Union. The survey concludes with two random experiments: one on the credibility of emergency messages depending on the source and the other on the effects of populist and post-truth messages on opinions regarding the housing situation.





## Detecting online hate speech

At the end of 2025, the Government of Catalonia and Spanish Government signed the **first agreement** on monitoring online hate speech, with the participation of the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE). The agreement provides Catalonia with a comprehensive instrument for taking action in tackling this phenomenon. Firstly, it incorporates the use of the state **ALERTODIO** platform, which helps to identify discriminatory content, record its scope and analyse dissemination patterns. For the first time, this system will include keywords in Catalan, thereby significantly improving accuracy in monitoring and detecting hostile content. Secondly, Government of Catalonia technical staff will receive specialised training and methodological assessment, thereby enabling improvements in reporting illegal content and reinforcing coordination with digital platforms. This makes Catalonia the first autonomous community to be integrated into the State hate speech monitoring system, opening the path for other regions to follow. The commitment is to protect the public, preserve peaceful coexistence and prevent these messages from taking root. Hate speech violates fundamental rights, such as equality, dignity and security. The individuals and groups most exposed to discrimination are women, the LGBTQI+ community, migrants, religious communities, and racialised and disabled people.



## Youth and democracy in the digital age

The 2025 Ferrer i Guàrdia Foundation report *Joves i democràcia en l'era digital* (Youth and democracy in the digital age) analyses the political, social and cultural transformations that characterise Catalan youth in a context of rapid change. The document explores the growing democratic fracture and proposes forms of resistance. It analyses why young people become distanced from democratic values, how secular education can serve as a stronghold for critical thinking and the ways in which digital dogma can amplify inequalities and exclusionary narratives. The aim is to assert the importance of secularism and critical education as instruments to reconnect democracy with citizens, especially young people, and build a joint project based on freedom of conscience, social justice and equality of treatment. The report is divided into three sections: the first analyses youth disaffection and the causes of the democratic fracture; the second focuses on the role of secular

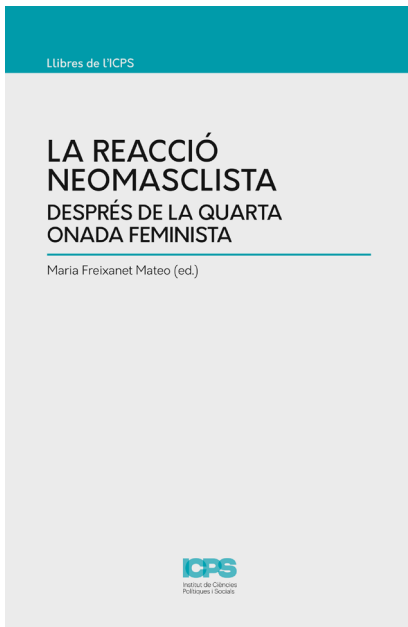
education as a space of resistance and emancipation, and the third addresses digital dogmas and the inequalities they generate. Each section contains articles by various experts who provide complementary perspectives, ranging from sociological analysis to comparative studies and pedagogic reflection. The report was promoted by the Ferrer i Guàrdia Foundation, a Catalan organisation specialising in the fields of education, youth, secularism, civil liberties and citizen participation.





## The neosexist reaction

Whenever feminism advances, sexism mutates. The fourth wave of feminism grew during the second decade of this century and reached its peak around 2018, when it shook the world. At almost the same historical moment, an antagonistic discourse began to spread: neosexism, the most recent update of sexism. The book *La reacció neomasclista després de la quarta onada feminista* (The sexist backlash against fourth-wave feminism), published last year in Catalan by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Political and Social Science Institute of Barcelona (ICPS), brings together specialists from various fields of academic knowledge and social intervention in an attempt to consciously describe our historical moment, which rides between the impact of a powerful feminist wave and the reaction to its ideas. Edited by Maria Freixanet Mateo, the monograph attempts to provide clarification on a series of questions: Are we living in a time of backlash against feminism? Does each wave provoke counter movements? What are the key elements of the fourth wave of feminism? What are the core arguments of neosexism, and what does digital anti-feminism look like today? How influential are social media networks? What do we do with the mandate of masculinity? Which educational and political strategies are useful against neosexism?



## International AI Safety Report 2026

The *International AI Safety Report 2026* provides a scientific assessment of the current state of general-purpose artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities and risks to support informed policymaking. The work was overseen by an international expert advisory panel nominated by over 30 countries and intergovernmental organisations. Written by over 100 independent experts and led by Turing Award winner Yoshua Bengio, it represents the largest international collaboration on AI safety research to date. The report provides decisionmakers in government and beyond with a shared and authoritative global picture of AI's risks and impacts. Rather than recommending any specific policies, it provides a scientific evidence base to inform decision-making. The *Extended Summary for Policymakers* includes the key findings and figures alongside concrete examples of notable developments since the

2025 edition. It is structured around three central questions: What can general-purpose AI do today? What emerging risks does it pose? How can those risks be mitigated? To learn more about the state of play and way forward in core government functions, further reading includes the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report *Governing with Artificial Intelligence* (2025), and a new book from AI expert Virginia Dignum, *The AI Paradox: How to Make Sense of a Complex Future*.



## The Catalan strategy for government reform

In October 2024, the Catalan Government approved the **strategy for the transformation and improvement of the public services of the Administration of the Government of Catalonia** with the aim of making Catalan government more efficient, transparent and approachable for the general public. This route map is based on three main pillars: 1) a shock plan with specific and immediate actions to improve organisation, civil service and administrative services; 2) 50 proposals for reform made by a committee of experts in different fields (CETRA), and 3) the simplification and streamlining of procedures. Resulting from these actions, the first **executive report** was presented in November 2025 and a committee comprising representatives from all Government of Catalonia ministries (CIMTA) was set up, which presented their initial evaluation report on the implementation of CETRA's proposals in February. The document gives the green light to all the measures, noting that 10 have been implemented, 36 are in progress and 4 are planned, their aim being to make government more efficient, transparent and approachable. Progress continues in the reforms, with a stable monitoring, assessment and transparency system that includes an advisory council made up of leading experts to ensure coherence, control and accountability in the actions (CARE). One of the most notable results of the strategy was the approval of **Law 9/2025**, of 13 November, on the right to adequate

attention and good government, known as the Law on the right to make mistakes, applicable to both public employees and people interacting with government authorities.

