



PROJECT NUMBER
101080161

Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel from All Partners

Work Package 5



Co-funded by
the European Union

About the project

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has affected our lives in many ways and manifested itself in many undesirable forms, such as the negative impact of coronavirus on individual lives, it has caused many deaths, the negative impact has also been on the global economy and employment, and on the quality of life in society in the form of restrictions on social rights, such as the right to be protected from poverty and social exclusion, the right to housing and education, and restrictions on medical care. COVID-19 also has effects on the democratic debates and the enjoyment of fundamental rights in the different countries of Europe. The impact was even more pronounced from a gender perspective, because as the United Nations (2020) noted, "from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex". Given the mentioned situation, the European Commission has awarded the project partners with the project HEARD, which focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the democratic debate, the enjoyment of fundamental rights and the work and life of women through a gender perspective.

HEARD focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the democratic debate, the enjoyment of fundamental rights and the work and life of women through a gender perspective. The search for an adequate response to overcome the crisis that occurred during the pandemic of COVID-19 should be a result of the participation of the involvement of various social partners, civil society and decision-making bodies of a given state. By involving partners from 9 different European countries in all the phases of the project we aim to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of respect for the rule of law, democratic values and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, with special attention to the social rights of citizens and residents of the given state.

The project HEARD consists of 11 Work packages. In this document - the Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel from all partners - we summarise the following project results/ deliverables of Work package 5 (WP 5):

1. Event Description Sheet for the Second Debate Panel (See Appendix 1),
2. Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel from All Partners (See Appendix 2).

About the deliverables of Work package 5

Within the WP 5 the in-situ second debate panel on the topic how COVID-19 crisis had affected on the enjoyment of fundamental rights was conducted by 10 project partners in 9 partner countries and with 333 residents and citizens of partner countries (**See Appendix 1: Event Description Sheet for the Second Debate Panel**).

After the second debate panel the feedback of the participants was processed, the report in English language was prepared (**See Appendix 2: Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel from All Partners**). During the implementation of the Work package 5 we faced some challenges. Due to the organizational issues stemming from a change in personnel, one of the partners could not implement the debate panel and prepare the report in the deadlines stated in the application form. We informed the EU Officer about the mentioned problem and together with our partners we found a solution. Thus, we completed the Work Package 5 a little later than how it was foreseen according to the application, but with this delay we made sure that the Work package 5 was carried out in a high quality and in full form as was foreseen in the project application.

The findings of the report will serve as guidelines in the next steps of the project.

Meet the partnership



Fakulteta za
organizacijske študije
Faculty of organisation studies



Associazione InCo



accompagne vos projets



CITTÀ DI VIMERCATE
MEDAGLIA D'ARGENTO
AL MERITO CIVILE



ΦΠΚΟ
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DIASPORA
FORUM
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Ajuntament
de Mislata



CARDET



Federação de Associações Juvenis | Distrito de Braga

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Appendix 1: Event Description Sheet for the Second Debate Panel.

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET**For Debate panel 2 (Work package 5)**

PROJECT	
Participant:	01 - FAKULTETA ZA ORGANIZACIJSKE STUDIJE V NOVEM MESTU (FOS) 02 - Associazione InCo-Molfetta APS (InCo) 03 - INSTITUTO ANAPTIXIS EPICHEIRIMATIKOTITAS ASTIKI ETAIREIA (IED) 04 - CBE SUD LUBERON (CBE) 05 - Comune di Vimercate 06 - FONDATSIA ZA PREDPRIEMACHESTVO, KULTURA I OBRAZOVANIE - Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education 07 - NORDIC DIASPORA FORUM (NDF) 08 - AYUNTAMIENTO DE MISLATA 09 - Federação de Associações Juvenis do Distrito de Braga (FAJUB) 10 - CARDET CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY LIMITED (CARDET)
PIC number:	01 – 943692340 02 – 922855576 03 – 998069182 05 – 905191003 06 – 940414710 07 – 916641562 08 – 897272796 09 – 929027880 10 – 999738552
Project name and acronym:	The impact of COVID-19 crisis on diverse democratic perspectives through gender perspective - HEARD

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	05
Event name:	Debate panel 2: How the COVID-19 has affected on the enjoyment of fundamental rights
Type:	Debate panel
In situ/online:	In-situ
Location:	10 partners conducted event In-situ. 01 – In-situ in Slovenia, Novo mesto

	02 – In-situ in Italy, Molfetta 03 – In-situ in Greece, Larissa 04 – In-situ in France, Pertuis 05 – In-situ in Italy, Vimercate 06 – In-situ in Bulgaria, Varna 07 – In-situ in Sweden, Stockholm 08 – In-situ in Spain, Mislata 09 – In-situ in Portugal, Braga 10 – In-situ in Cyprus, Nicosia,	
Date(s):	01 - 23. 05. 2023 02 – 10. 07. 2023 03 - 05. 10. 2023 04 - 02. 11. 2023 05 – 16. 09. 2023 06 - 29. 06. 2023 and 07. 09. 2023 07 - 11. 10. 2023 08 - 06. 06. 2023 09 - 26. 06. 2023 10 - 11. 10. 2023	
Website(s) (if any):	https://heard-project.eu/	
Participants		
Female:	217	
Male:	116	
Non-binary:	0	
From country 1 [Slovenia]:	34	
From country 2 [Italy]:	83	
From country 3 [Greece]:	48	
From country 4 [France]:	33	
From country 5 [Bulgaria]:	28	
From country 6 [Sweden]:	30	
From country 7 [Spain]:	32	
From country 8 [Portugal]:	30	
From country 9 [Cyprus]:	15	
Total number of participants:	333	From total number of countries: 9
Description		

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The second debate panel titled "How the COVID-19 has affected on the enjoyment of fundamental rights" was the second project debate panel in the project HEARD. It was organised and conducted within Work package 5 of the HEARD project in all project countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden) from all project partners.

The questions for the second debate panel were prepared based on the results of the state-of-the-art analysis and the results of the quantitative research (survey) about the fundamental rights, which was conducted in all project partner countries from November 2022 until the March 2023, which are gathered in the report of statistical analysis accordingly to all partner countries jointly and separately (so Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). We identified the similarities and significant differences in all the mentioned partner countries.

The debate panel started with the greetings and introduction of the project HEARD, it was continued with the presentation of the topic of the project. We continued the debate panel with presenting the crucial starting points of the results of the survey, which was conducted in all the partner countries, focusing on the statistically significant findings. We also mentioned the findings of the state-of-the art analysis, conducted by the project partner countries. According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes (limited movement, limitation of the rights, psychological dimension) as well as sub-themes. At the end we also presented the EC satisfaction survey, and all participants were invited and encouraged to fill in the EC survey. Finally, conclusion thoughts followed.

The second debate panel was a dynamic event, marked by discussions and a high level of engagement. The participants were active in expressing their viewpoints, experiences, and opinions on the topics, which were presented. The second debate panel was characterized by a discussion, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and opinions. This thorough engagement resulted in well-developed conclusions. The insights and feedback from these discussions were compiled and documented in a report titled "Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel".

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	29.11.2023	Faculty of Organisation Studies in Novo mesto



Appendix 2: Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel from All Partners



PROJECT NUMBER
101080161

Report of the Results of Second Debate Panel from All Partners

WP5: Debate panel 2



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Methodology

The questions for the debate panels were prepared based on the results of the state-of-the-art analysis and the results of the quantitative research (survey) about the fundamental rights, which was conducted in all project partner countries from November 2022 until the March 2023, which are gathered in the report of statistical analysis accordingly to all partner countries jointly and separately (so Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). We identified the similarities and significant differences in all the mentioned partner countries.

With the mixed methodology approach, we managed to extract 3 big themes of debate panels, that we divided in 2 sub-subjects. The **first thematic was Limited movement**, where the first sub-subject was Freedom of movement, and the second sub-subject was Freedom of peaceful assembly. The **second thematic was Limitation of the rights**, where the first sub-subject was Healthcare, and the second sub-subject was Education. The **third thematic was Psychological Dimension**, where the first sub-subject was Mental health, and the second sub-subject was Mandatory vaccination.

1. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Slovenia by FOS)

In the Table 1 below, we can see the timetable of the Debate panel 2, which was executed on 23rd of May 2023 at 16.00 pm CET on the Faculty of organisation studies in Novo mesto, Ulica talcev 3, 8000 Novo mesto, Slovenia.

Table 1. Timetable of the Debate panel 2

TIME	TOPIC
16:00	Greetings and introduction Dr Maja Pucelj, Assistant Professor
16:05	Presentation of the HEARD project
16:15	Presentation of the topic and crucial starting points
16:20	Start of the discussion on the topic: LIMITED MOVEMENT
16:35	Start of discussion on the topic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS
16:45	Start of discussion - on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION
17:00	EC satisfaction survey and conclusion thoughts

The panel debate started with the greetings and introduction of the project, continued with the presentation of the topic of the project, we presented also some facts from the covid-19 pandemic period to remind the participants about the challenges and the government reaction during mentioned period. We continued the debate panel with presenting the crucial starting points of the results of the survey, conducted in Slovenia and also in all the partner countries, focusing on the statistically significant findings. We also mentioned the findings of the state-of-the art analysis, conducted by the project partner countries.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

1. First key thematic: LIMITED MOVEMENT

1st sub-subject: Freedom of movement

- a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:
- No, the measures were too rigorous. For the next epidemic/pandemic situation, these measures would not be a necessary limitation implemented.

b) In your opinion, did it take too long the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes, the restrictions were ridiculously long.

c) Did it take too long the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- They did not make sense – especially limitation to the municipalities in Slovenia, due to the fact that Slovenia is divided into larger and smaller municipalities, with large differences in the number of inhabitants (for example Ljubljana and Škocjan). The restriction, if it were already made, would make sense for the region. Also, the time limitation for movements was not sensible. They also criticised the meetings that the politicians and inspectors had in the restaurants during the limited movements.
- The participants pointed out that in the case of highly contagious disease, the people would not be associating among themselves and that this was also seen at the beginning of the disease, as the people were strictly staying at home.

e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- In case of highly contagious disease, it would be necessary to close the country and prohibit movement outside the country (except for employees abroad - outside Slovenian borders). The opinions of professional institutions should be taken into account. The same restrictions would be necessary for all EU members or the whole world.
- Closure for families with younger children (first triad or kindergarten) did not make sense, as the children were forced to do everything by themselves.
- A lockdown should be proposed for the entire EU in the same period of time for a better possibility of realizing the problem. Due to the constant mixed closures between the countries, there was an inability to obtain certain joint effective measures to prevent the spread of disease.
- They complained also about the irrationality of the measures, which were implemented during the covid-19 spread in Slovenia – at the same time we had opened economy and closed educational facilities. They expressed real disappointment about mentioned measures as the guidelines received were diametral opposite and sometimes non-understandable (the person from nearby city could send the children to the kindergarten facility, while the other person from the other city could not do that and had to have the children at home care). Such measures resulted in the lost of the trust in the system.
- They suggested that one of the measures, which would be better for future pandemic, is the lock down for the whole Europe for 14 day's period.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- They were incorrectly designed and therefore not acceptable.

b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes, they were triggered by various unreasonable information. This information also came from other countries, not only Slovenia, so it was not just government fault. Quality of life was limited and the unsatisfactory of the life was openly showed at demonstrations.

c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- The measures were not justified in view of the violence used against the protesters.

d) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- If there would be a high level of contagious disease, it makes sense for people not to gather at demonstrations.

- The pointed out the need that the people who are spokesman for the epidemic/pandemic lead by example – and that not that there is a panic, if you went for a walk with your dog in the woods (you got even a fine for this act), while the person, who was a spokesman by NIJZ went to the gas station without the mask and stated that he is tired and that is why he did not wear his mask.

- An alternative possibility would be an online portal/forum, where the persons could express their opinion/suggestion in connection with the epidemic/pandemic, but would have to identify himself (name, surname,

picture). And also, there would be important to ensure that someone (with authorities) is seriously taking such suggestions.

2. **Second key thematic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS**

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- They were not justified.

b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and threatened equally?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- The situation did not enable equivalent testing – the person, who was justified for PCR testing, had better situation than others.

c) Have you experienced a deny to healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Inability to contact a doctor.
- Communication via e-mail or online ordering only.
- Inability to see a doctor, even for urgent cases.
- Quick diagnoses, without examination, which were based on e-mail.
- The medical nurses became the doctors (question of professionalism, knowledge?).

- They pointed out also the nonsense of the writing on the front doors of health institutions that the entry is allowed only for healthy persons – in that cases you do not need a doctor.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restructuring educational system to deliver online education?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- The government failed to adequately adapt the education system, certain institutions/organizations in which employees were educated in this direction succeeded, while others were not so successful.
- The first months of pandemic/epidemic were hectic, the biggest issue was also to obtain computers, printers, especially for deprived ones. Problems arose due to the impossibility of obtaining aids for online learning (computers, etc.).
- Children were left to their own abilities, as some parents were not skilled in online learning.
- Social differences became more visible, deeper as the children of wealthier and more time adjustably mothers had more help and advanced, compared to those who were deprived in that sense.

b) Have the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes, very much – primarily for primary schools, perhaps for secondary also, while for the faculties this gap was not so evident. You needed to have knowledge, access to the infrastructure, tools and technology. The areas, which did not have the access to the infrastructure, were deprived, also those, who did not have a computer or a tabled were in deprived situation. The parents, which had knowledge of IT technology, helped during this process of adjusting to virtual education process (the school/teachers, children etc.), while other did not have such opportunity.

- The challenges was in the bureaucratic obstacles, as the money for deprived was ensured relatively quickly, but then it took a long period that it was obtained by the end users.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsen during the pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes, it got worse. There were not many organizations/parents/individuals who were educated in this direction, which then extrapolated in worsening the quality gap in that time.
- The challenge is noted in reading and digital literacy of the people, included directly or indirectly in the educational space (especially in the family). Digital education would be necessary for all age groups, even those not directly connected to educational organizations.
- A greater lack of quality was visible in primary and secondary schools, compared to tertiary education.

d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- There were mixed opinions of the respondents, a sensible measure would be to test children before entering the school.

e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Limiting physical exercises (trainings etc.) was not reasonable, as only this should bring some joy and relaxation to the child during such a difficult time.

f) Did you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- If you have a suitable excess, the educational system is responsive. The children should be taught about the basic programs in digitalisation, but otherwise they are quite well taught.

3. **Third key thematic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION**

1st sub-subject: Mental health

a) Do you think the long-time of limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in general population?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes, undoubtedly.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- No, they were not detected at all, this aspect was completely neglected. There was a published phone line, but it was not well promoted. The challenge was noted in the long waiting period time, as it was necessary to wait several months (from 6-9 months) for an intervention, so the people, who were in serious distress, did not get the adequate help. The problem was overcapacity due to the detection of mental states in a larger population. Private treatment was/is too expensive.

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- There are scientific findings about the measurements on how to address these challenges, but they have not been yet implemented. Workplaces would need more drive to promote health, both physical and mental.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- An invasive campaign was carried out, they got a letter addressed to the home. This created mistrust, fear, coercion and was not a right way to address such topic.
- The problem was the country's approach to vaccination (withdrawal of vaccine due to 1 death).
- There was not enough information about the consequences or vaccination in general, people felt like "test bunnies".
- They suggest that the same vaccine would be implemented for all EU countries.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Yes, because of the differences between vaccinated and non-vaccinated. Both were carriers.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

- Due to the relatively long-term research of the vaccine, this should not be mandatory; only in case of very high mortality.

Key findings

LIMITATION OF MOVEMENT

In the panel discussion, participants agreed that current measures to restrict travel within the country are too rigorous and disproportionate. They also felt that it took too long to lift restrictions on free movement, both within the country and for travel to third countries. Participants agreed that the partially lifted restrictions on free movement could be meaningless in future pandemic situations, as municipalities and regions in Slovenia are populated differently. Instead, they proposed tailored restrictions based on research and expert opinion, as well as uniform restrictions for all EU countries. Given the public demonstrations during the epidemic, participants felt that the lockdown measures were not justified, but they also pointed to the violence during the demonstrations. For the future, they suggested better government communication strategies, leading by example, allowing opinions to be expressed through official platforms, and taking care to respect the advice of experts.

LIMITATION OF RIGHTS

In the panel discussion, participants expressed the opinion that the restrictions on access to regular health services were not justified and that the organization of health facilities did not allow for equal examination and protection of people. Many reported that they were denied health services and had difficulty seeing a doctor. Regarding online education during the

epidemic, participants agreed that the government failed to adequately adjust the education system, which increased inequalities and worsened the quality of education. Testing children to curb the spread of Covid-19 elicited mixed opinions, but some advocated testing outside of educational units. Restrictions on physical education were seen as pointless, while the education system should be more responsive to digitization and the provision of online tools.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

At the debate panel, the participants expressed the opinion that the long-term restriction of fundamental rights during the covid-19 epidemic/pandemic leads to increasing problems with anxiety, fear and deterioration of mental health in the general population. However, the government and health institutions have not adequately addressed the challenges of mental health and taken measures to prevent negative mental states, especially for vulnerable groups. To manage mental health challenges in future epidemics/pandemics, they suggested implementing scientific findings and promoting well-being in the workplace. An invasive information campaign was carried out regarding compulsory vaccination, but people felt pressured and limited and questioned the consequences and the state's approach. Participants noted the violation of people's rights in the case of mandatory vaccination and linking vaccination with freedom of movement. Mandatory vaccination was not considered a suitable way of solving future epidemic situations, except in case of high mortality, which would justify such a measure.

2. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Italy by InCo)

In the Table 1 below, we can see the timetable of the Debate panel 2, which was executed on 10th of July 2023 at 17.30 CET at the Conference Room of the association “Auser Molfetta Onlus” in Molfetta (Piazza Paradiso, 17).

Table 1. Timetable of the Debate panel 2

TIME	TOPIC
17:30	Institutional Greetings
17:40	Presentation of the HEARD project
17:50	Presentation of the topic and crucial starting points
18:20	Start of the discussion on the topic: LIMITED MOVEMENT
18:50	Start of discussion on the topic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS
19:20	Start of discussion - on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION
19:20	Conclusion

The panel debate commenced with an institutional welcome and an introduction to the project. We then delved into the project's subject matter, providing an overview. To set the context, we revisited the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding governmental responses. Afterward, we turned our attention to the essential findings from our survey, which was conducted not only in Italy but also across all partner countries, highlighting statistically significant results. Additionally, we touched upon the outcomes of the state-of-the-art analysis carried out by our project partner countries.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: LIMITED MOVEMENT

1st sub-subject: Freedom of movement

- a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

In light of the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Italian government took decisive actions to limit travel within the country. These actions, including lockdowns, regional containment measures, and travel

restrictions, were widely perceived as a justified response to the extraordinary circumstances. The core aim of these measures was to prevent the healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed, reduce the spread of the virus, and ultimately save lives. Participants acknowledge that these restrictions undoubtedly had significant repercussions on daily life and the economy, but they were to defend public safety and minimizing the loss of life, so they were perceived as necessary and proportionate.

b) In your opinion, did it take too long the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

Balancing the relaxation of freedom of movement restrictions within Italy and across the European Union during the COVID-19 pandemic involved a nuanced consideration of both public health priorities and economic revival. The general sentiment among participants was that the easing of restrictions occurred at a suitable and well-managed time.

c) Did it take too long the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

Some participants argue that these restrictions persisted longer than necessary, contending that extended closures and travel limitations significantly impacted businesses, livelihoods, and the overall economy. They suggest that a quicker return to normalcy could have been achieved through, for example efficient vaccination campaigns.

However, other participants, in favor of a cautious approach, argue that the unpredictable nature of the virus warranted a prudent stance to ensure the safety and well-being of the population.

The decision to ease restrictions was a complex process influenced by various factors, including the progress of vaccination campaigns, infection rates, expert advice, and socio-economic considerations. Finding the right timing was a intricate challenge, requiring meticulous consideration of multiple variables.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

(Participants defend not to have the knowledge to predict how the situation would involve in the future).

e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

As an Italian perspective, I believe that, in future pandemic situations, it may be advisable to consider supplementing freedom of movement within the country with additional means. This could involve implementing quarantine protocols, border controls, digital health passports, or strengthening healthcare infrastructure. The goal would be to strike a balance between ensuring public safety and minimizing the economic and social impact of such restrictions.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

Yes, since they protected public health. Participants perceive them as “necessary”, even if with consequences in the long run.

b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

In Italy, the government-imposed restrictions also resulted in public demonstrations. Many individuals and groups expressed their dissatisfaction with these measures, citing concerns about their impact on personal freedoms, economic livelihoods, and overall quality of life. These protests often revolved around issues such as lockdowns, mask mandates, social distancing rules, and vaccination requirements. While some demonstrators sought to voice their concerns peacefully, there were instances where protests turned into more significant and sometimes contentious gatherings, sparking debates about the balance between public health measures and civil liberties.

c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

One concrete action taken by the Italian government in response to public demonstrations during the COVID-19 pandemic was the deployment of law enforcement to disperse and control protests that violated social distancing and gathering restrictions. Law enforcement often used crowd control measures, such as tear gas or physical interventions, to ensure that demonstrators adhered to the COVID-19 regulations and restrictions. These actions were aimed at minimizing the risk of virus transmission in large gatherings, as perceived by the

government. However, the appropriateness and proportionality of these actions remain subjects of debate and interpretation.

d) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

Participants in future pandemic situations suggest that striking a balance between the right to peaceful assembly and public health is essential. They propose various strategies, such as better planning for protests to ensure social distancing and mask-wearing, leveraging technology for virtual protests and online advocacy, establishing clear government guidelines for gatherings, conducting education and awareness campaigns, and designating specific areas for protests with social distancing in mind. These approaches aim to safeguard both public health and the ability to exercise the fundamental right of peaceful assembly.

Second key thematic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

Government's approach was driven by the necessity to prioritize resources for COVID-19 patients during the pandemic's peak. While this approach might have inconvenienced some individuals, it was generally seen as justified given the unprecedented strain on the healthcare system.

b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?

Italy implemented measures to ensure equal access to testing and treatment. The government aimed to allocate resources equitably and respond to the pandemic as efficiently as possible. While there were challenges, these efforts were generally perceived as striving to provide equal care to all those in need during the COVID-19 crisis.

c) Have you experienced a deny to healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

No, expect for concrete cases.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restructuring educational system to deliver online education?

In Italy, the move to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic garnered mixed opinions among panel debate participants. Some believed it was a necessary adaptation to ensure the safety of students and educators, while others highlighted the challenges it posed, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who had limited access to necessary technology and internet connectivity.

b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

The impact on educational inequalities was a topic of concern, with participants acknowledging that online education had the potential to widen existing disparities, affecting minority students, those from low-income families, and students with disabilities. The consensus was that addressing these disparities should be a priority in future pandemic responses.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsen during the pandemic?

Quality of education during the pandemic was a subject of debate. While some participants saw opportunities for innovation in teaching methods and technology integration, others expressed concerns about the effectiveness of online teaching and its impact on students' social and emotional development.

d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?

The use of testing in schools to limit the spread of COVID-19 was a contentious issue. While some considered it a reasonable safety measure, others raised questions about privacy and accuracy. The applicability of this approach in future pandemics was deemed to depend on the specific circumstances and risks involved.

e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

In terms of restrictions on physical education and extracurricular activities, there were differing views on their duration and appropriateness. Balancing public health considerations with students' physical well-being was a common concern, with participants emphasizing the importance of carefully weighing these factors.

f) Did you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?

The responsiveness of the educational system to digitalization and online tools varied across institutions. Some were well-prepared for the transition, while others faced challenges. Panel debate participants stressed the importance of investing in digital infrastructure and teacher training to ensure a more effective response in future pandemic situations.

Third key thematic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

1st sub-subject: Mental health

a) Do you think the long-time of limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in general population?

Addressing the impact of limiting fundamental rights on mental health was a key concern in the panel debate. Participants discussed how the prolonged restrictions may have contributed to increased anxiety, fear, and mental health challenges in the general population. While some believed that the restrictions played a role in exacerbating these issues, others noted that public health measures were essential and that the focus should be on providing mental health support.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

Participants had varying opinions on whether these entities adequately addressed mental health during the crisis, especially for vulnerable groups. While some praised the efforts made to provide mental health support, others believed more should have been done to prevent negative mental health conditions.

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

In terms of limiting the effects of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations, panel participants emphasized the importance of early intervention

and accessible mental health services. They also stressed the need for public awareness campaigns to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and promote self-care practices. Additionally, a proactive approach to addressing mental health within public health policies and preparedness plans was highlighted as a key element in future pandemic responses.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

In Italy, the government did indeed launch an extensive informational campaign about the COVID-19 vaccines. The campaign aimed to educate the public about the importance of vaccination in controlling the virus's spread, emphasizing vaccine safety and efficacy. Participants mainly found the campaign to be informative and helpful, as it addressed many of the concerns and questions people had about the vaccines, e.g., about the doses and timeline, side effects...

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

There was no compulsory vaccination.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

The linkage between vaccination and the freedom of movement was a contentious topic in Italy. Some believed it was necessary to ensure public safety, while others saw it as a potential infringement on personal freedoms. This debate underscored the challenge of managing public health measures while respecting individual rights.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?

The use of compulsory vaccination as a strategy to tackle future pandemic situations stirred diverse opinions. While some saw it as an effective means to attain extensive vaccine coverage and contain the spread of diseases, others voiced apprehensions about potential authoritarian overreach and the importance of obtaining informed consent. The matter of compulsory vaccination continues to be intricate and divisive, necessitating a thoughtful evaluation of the balance between public health objectives and individual rights in Italy.

3. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Greece by IED)

Below there is a detailed presentation of the agenda and the proceedings of the event and also a reporting of the key takeaways and the conclusions extracted by the discussions with the participants. In Table 1 there is the detailed agenda of the event for Debate panel 2, which was executed on 5th of October 2023 at 17.00 pm CET on the premises of JOIST Innovation Park (IED offices are also hosted there) in Valtetsiou & Tripoleos, 41336, Larissa, Greece.

Table 1. Agenda of the Debate panel 2

TIME	TOPIC
17:00	Welcome and introduction
17:05	Presentation of the HEARD project
17:15	Presentation of the results of the primary research and Q&A
17:30	Start of the discussion on the topic: LIMITED MOVEMENT
18:00	Start of discussion on the topic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS
18:30	Start of discussion - on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The debate panel started with the presentation of the project “HEARD” and the scope, methodology, context, and conclusions of the primary research that was implemented in the framework of the project. The audience was familiarized with the consortium’s mission and activities and the research findings and conclusions in the participating countries.

Before the starting of the discussion around the agreed by the consortium topics, the moderators provoked a Q&A, to make sure that all information presented regarding the project and its research activities are clear.

Following the topics and agenda agreed by the consortium partners, the moderators initiated discussion around the 3 themes and sub-themes that are presented below:

First key thematic: LIMITED MOVEMENT

1st sub-subject: Freedom of movement

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

The participants expressed differing viewpoints on measures related to limited movement and the freedom of peaceful assembly. Some individuals advocated for the early adoption of protective measures and regular monitoring of citizen compliance as essential for safeguarding public health. Those in favor of this approach highlighted the widespread distrust among Greek citizens towards the government and authorities, which often leads to non-compliance with legislation and established rules.

Conversely, approximately half of the audience sympathized with those who expressed their disappointment and non-compliance with the rules. They believed that the Greek government and authorities have failed to establish trust with the citizens, resulting in people refusing to adhere to what they perceive as reasonable decisions. Notably, significant disagreements arose regarding the topic of peaceful assembly and the prohibition of public demonstrations. While there was a consensus that such gatherings could potentially contribute to the spread of the virus, there was division over the impact of these restrictions on people's freedom of expression, common sense, and their connection to instances of state repression.

Second key thematic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

2nd sub-subject: Education

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

During the pandemic in Greece, significant concerns arose regarding healthcare access and the availability of treatments and surgeries unrelated to COVID-19. Given the vulnerabilities in the healthcare system, the government made the decision to prioritize addressing the virus, thus reducing the healthcare system's capacity for non-life-threatening medical issues. These circumstances evoked diverse reactions among the population.

For some, this approach was seen as a necessary step with no viable alternatives given Greece's situation. In contrast, others found it illogical for Greek citizens to bear the burden of high taxes for healthcare without being able to access treatment in emergency situations.

Education is considered a public service in Greece, and its delivery faced challenges during the pandemic. The shift to distance learning and the provision of digital tools at all educational levels proceeded at a notably slow pace,

significantly impacting secondary education. The audience voiced a collective demand for more extensive training and familiarization of both students and educators in the use of digital tools, especially considering the potential for similar situations in the future and the ongoing transition towards digital education. Despite widespread disappointment with the country's educational system and its response to the pandemic, a minority of participants argued that there are abundant resources and ICT training opportunities available. They contended that the slow adoption of these resources by teachers, students, and parents cannot be justified.

Third key thematic: Psychological dimension

1st sub-subject: Mental health

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants emphasized the significant adverse effects of restrictions on mental health, which have become more apparent in the post-pandemic period. These effects have been observed in households, workplaces, and among students. Some experts at the audience mentioned increased rates of mental health disorders and important behavioural changes noticed post pandemic, something that is also validated by the increased utilization of healthcare services for mental health-related issues. No additional comments were provided by the audience regarding this topic.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

The audience included representatives from both sides of the vaccination debate within Greek society: those in favor of vaccination and those who hold concerns regarding its safety, potential risks, or the adequacy of side-effect assessments. It was commonly agreed by all participants that restrictions for traveling as well as restrictions for mobility or access to activities of non vaccinated people within the country were very strict in Greece. Some participants provided examples from other countries that were perceived as offering greater personal freedom, prompting discussions on alternative approaches. It was widely acknowledged that the vaccination campaign fell short in persuading individuals who harbored reservations or fears about proceeding with vaccination.

4. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in France by CBE Sud Luberon)

We organised the debate on the 2nd November 2023, between 18:10 to 18:50 [CET]. The debate took place at a coworking space, LE 20/35.

We started by presenting the projects and the expected results. We explained how the questions were defined. We assured them that their answers were free, and that they could really give their opinion without fear of being judged, as long as it was done with respect for others and everyone's words.

We formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: LIMITED MOVEMENT

1st sub-subject: Freedom of movement

a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

Most of the audience agreed that it was adapted to the situation. They thought the situation was sufficiently unfamiliar and unprecedented to take unprecedented measures. People think the government adapted well to the evolution of the pandemic and our knowledge of the virus.

b) In your opinion, did it take too long the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

- Most of the French people attending the debate thought that the restrictions to the freedom of movement within our country and the UE took too long to be lifted. It was contrary to the freedom of movement which is one of the fundamental principles of the UE and the fundamental rights also.
- 3 of them thought that it was too long in France, but that it was normal to limit freedom of movement between EU countries. This also enlightens euroscepticism in France.
- Only 4 people thought that the limitations in freedom of movement in France/EU were justified and proportional.

c) Did it take too long the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

- The opinion of the panel is quite different and more heterogeneous when it comes to third countries neighbouring the EU.
- People who found it more justified to restrict movement to third countries argued that each country should protect itself and is responsible for its own health.
- People who found it not justified argued that we could catch the virus in the same way from a French, an Italian or an American.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

- People mostly agreed that it was the right solution, especially when the restrictions evolve with the knowledge on the virus.
- However, a few people stated that the restrictions are not justified at all and that each person should be responsible for his own health and how to protect it.

e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

- People did not really understand this question. It seems not to be clear for them, despite trying to reformulate.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

- Most of the people stated that it is linked to the freedom of movement, at least in France. For them, the measures of lockdown were justified at the beginning to be able to contain the spread of this virus about which we knew nothing.
- 1 person said it was not justified at all : this person thinks that each person should have been responsible for its own health.

b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

Everyone agreed that the restrictions imposed by the government triggered public demonstrations. Indeed, it was forbidden to meet with people other than those living under the same roof, and then to meet with more than 5 people... etc. It was

therefore impossible to organise public demonstrations. People were not familiar with video conference tools at that time.

c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

In France, public demonstrations were forbidden in line with measures taken against the pandemic. It included all kinds of manifestation, not only public demonstrations.

d) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

People had a lot of ideas to preserve the right of peaceful assembly taking into account public health. What came the most was to wear a mask and to organise the meetings outdoors. Online demonstrations were also evoked as a means to preserve the right of peaceful assembly because now, we are familiar with these tools.

Other people are more negative because they are not confident that people will respect the established rules for a safe public demonstration.

Second key thematic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

- Most of the people attending the debate did not face any limitation to access regular health care service.
- However, for those who faced these limits, they did not find it justified. Regular health care is important even during a pandemic crisis.
- Some of them argued that it could have led to a delay in the diagnosis of some deadly diseases such as cancers etc...

b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?

- At the beginning of the pandemic, the organisation of healthcare institutions did not allow people to be tested and treated equally because of the lack of test, bed

in hospital etc... but it just reflected the situation of the healthcare system in France.

- As the pandemic was evolving, the possibility to be treated also evolved. The generalisation of the antigenic tests and auto-test helped to allow everyone to be tested. Also, everyone has been able to get vaccines.

c) Have you experienced a deny to healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Only 3 people experienced a denial to healthcare services, which is clearly an issue.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restructuring educational system to deliver online education?

- During the pandemic, no. But it led to collective reflection about how to provide distance education. The panel agreed that now, we would be able to organise remote schools, even though it is always better to see and work with human beings.

b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

- Of course it enlightened many existing inequalities.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsen during the pandemic?

- Everyone agreed that the quality of education worsened during the pandemic because both teachers and families were not prepared for online teaching.

d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?

- Half of the panel said that testing the children is a good idea to protect the rest of the population because they are vectors of disease (they pay less attention and are in contact with the most vulnerable people).

- The rest of the attendees stated that it was unuseful to test children because they are not at risk to develop severe forms of the diseases.

e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

Most of the people think the restrictions to physical education lasted too long. Indeed, they argued that sport and physical activities are one of the foundations for good mental and physical health. It helps to increase immunity and it is therefore counterproductive to deprive children of sports education.

f) Did you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?

People thought that both teachers and schools did their best to implement teaching through online tools. However, it showed that our educational system was not prepared to deal with such a crisis. People stated that it has been a mean to improve our capacity to provide online teaching.

Third key thematic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

1st sub-subject: Mental health

a) Do you think the long-time of limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in general population?

People agreed on the fact that the pandemic situation led to anxiety, fear, and mental health challenges in the general population, both because of the limiting fundamental rights and the fear of the virus.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

The panel did not think that the government took the appropriate measures to manage mental health challenges linked to the covid-19 crisis. People who needed to see a psychologist were not able to do so. Certain categories of the population should have received particular attention (elderly, students, people with disabilities, isolated people etc).

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

- The panel stated that need to widely inform about daily mental health challenges to better understand the mental health challenges appearing during a crisis such as the covid-19 crisis.

- We need also to prevent the risks associated with over-connection (continuous information for example) which can increase fear and anxiety among the population.
- It is also important to encourage people to consult psychologists and reimburse the cost of such care.
- It is also important to avoid measures such as lockdowns and social restriction, when it is possible.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

- The perception of the campaign on the Covid-19 vaccine was very heterogeneous. Half of the panel found it very well-done, useful and necessary and the other half found it aggressive, without any scientific argument, radical, blur and excessive.
- The opinion of this panel on the question of the vaccine perfectly reflects the situation in France with the opposition “pro vax” and “anti vax”, which led to many conflicts and division among the French population.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

The rights of people were deeply infringed by the compulsory vaccination in some case : to travel, to work for the health personnel, and even to go in public places (such as cinema, restaurants, bars...). For a part of the panel, this constituted a discrimination and for the other, it was normal to preserve public health.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

Included with the previous question.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?

The opinion of the panel is representative of their opinion on the informational campaign on the vaccine. Some of them think it is sometimes a sine qua none condition to emerge from a pandemic crisis. However, the rest of the panel argue the freedom to dispose of one's body.

5. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Italy by Vimercate City)

In the Table 1 below, we can see the timetable of the Debate panel 2, which was executed on 16th of September 2023 at 14.00 CET at Auditorium 'Falcone e Borsellino', at the Civic Library of Vimercate.

Table 1. Timetable of the Debate panel 2

TIME	TOPIC
14:00	Institutional Greetings, Riccardo Corti, Gianluca Pinnelli (Municipality of Vimercate) and Nadia Di Iulio, Elena Fuerler (ALDA+)
14:10	Presentation of the HEARD project
14:15	Presentation of the topic and crucial starting points
14:20	Start of the discussion on the topic: LIMITED MOVEMENT
14:45	Start of discussion on the topic: LIMITED RIGHTS
15:25	Start of discussion - on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION
15:45	Conclusion

The panel debate started with the greetings and introduction of the project, continued with the presentation of the topic of the project, we presented also some facts from the covid-19 pandemic period to remind the participants about the challenges and the government reaction during mentioned period. We continued the debate panel with presenting the crucial starting points of the results of the survey, conducted in Italy and also in all the partner countries, focusing on the statistically significant findings. We also mentioned the findings of the state-of-the art analysis, conducted by the project partner countries.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: LIMITED MOVEMENT

1st sub-subject: Limited movement

a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

The measures taken to limit traveling within Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic were largely considered reasonable, given the unprecedented public health crisis at hand. The Italian government implemented a range of travel restrictions, lockdowns, and regional containment measures to curb the spread of the virus and protect public health. These measures were essential in preventing the overwhelming of healthcare systems, reducing transmission rates, and ultimately saving lives. While they undoubtedly impacted daily life and the economy, the primary focus was on ensuring public safety and minimizing the loss of life, making the restrictions a necessary and proportionate response to the severity of the pandemic.

b) In your opinion, did it take too long for the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

The lifting of restrictions on freedom of movement within Italy and the broader European Union during the COVID-19 pandemic was a delicate balancing act between public health concerns and economic recovery. Most people felt that the restrictions were lifted at an appropriate pace.

c) Did it take too long for the restrictions travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

Some critics argue that the restrictions persisted longer than necessary, asserting that prolonged closures and limitations on movement significantly impacted businesses, livelihoods, and the overall economy. They suggest that a swifter return to normalcy could have been possible with effective vaccination campaigns and improved healthcare infrastructure. However, proponents of a cautious approach argue that the virus's unpredictable nature warranted a prudent approach to ensure the safety and well-being of the population, particularly considering potential resurgences and emerging variants. The decision to lift restrictions was influenced by various factors, including vaccine rollout, infection rates, scientific advice, and socioeconomic considerations, and finding the right timing was a complex task requiring careful consideration of multiple variables.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

The evolving nature of the pandemic required flexible and adaptive approaches, demonstrating the government's efforts to strike a balance between safeguarding

public health and maintaining essential services so in the case of COVID-19, having partially lifted restrictions, was efficient. Regarding future pandemic it is difficult to attest it right now, it could be a possibility.

e) Do you think that the freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

In future pandemic situations, supplementing the freedom of movement within Italy with a comprehensive strategy is crucial to effectively manage public health while minimizing social and economic disruptions. Freedom of movement is a fundamental right, but it needs to be balanced with measures such as efficient testing and contact tracing, timely dissemination of accurate information, targeted quarantine measures, and a robust healthcare system. Implementing a well-coordinated response that incorporates these elements can help strike a balance between enabling movement for essential activities and controlling the spread of the virus. Additionally, investing in digital technologies for remote work and education, promoting telehealth services, and fostering a culture of adherence to public health guidelines can further enhance the resilience of the society and economy during pandemics, ensuring both safety and the ability to adapt to new norms in challenging times.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

Restrictions, such as lockdown, were considered justified during the pandemic in view of the virus' volatility and fast transmission.

b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

The COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the Italian government indeed spurred public demonstrations, taking various forms of expression. Citizens and business owners, particularly those from the hospitality, entertainment, and small business sectors, voiced their discontent through peaceful protests, marches, and sit-ins. These demonstrations often highlighted the economic strain caused by the restrictions, demanding financial support, easing of lockdown measures, and more tailored solutions for affected industries. Concurrently, some gatherings turned confrontational, resulting in clashes with law enforcement and instances of civil disobedience. The dissent encompassed a spectrum of concerns, including issues of personal freedom, vaccine mandates, the perceived inconsistency of regulations,

and calls for a reassessment of the government's pandemic response strategy. The protests underscored the challenges in striking a balance between safeguarding public health and addressing the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic on society.

c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

We have had no formal forms of censorship or restrictions on structured freedoms, but we have had a crisis in the modalities to which we were accustomed, adding to a crisis that was already there. The measures that were taken were intended as "Peaceful assembly is violent to someone else's health". The restrictions were supposed to raise the question of how sacrifices serve to protect for the collective well-being, of course the population was divided in who agreed and who didn't.

d) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

COVID's opportunity is to try to think about democracy, debate in a new world! In the time of technology, social networks and in the time of pandemics how do we make democracy and participation? By creating something new, we are in the unknown

Second key thematic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

When we talk about restricted freedoms, we have to put the issue of pandemic deaths on the scales. I limit your freedom to protect others - probabilistic estimation - idea of the good and the collective welfare (Art 32).

Of course, there was a reduction in health services because there were no more places and a choice had to be made! Said that, this experience needs to be the occasion to make modifications to health systems so in case of other pandemic we can have the structures and means to be able to offer access to health care services to everyone because other diseases do not stop!

b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to COVID-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?

The organization of healthcare institutions in Italy regarding COVID-19 conditions has made significant efforts to ensure equal access to testing and treatment for the population. The government, alongside regional health authorities, established a coordinated approach to make testing widely available, prioritizing those showing symptoms or having potential exposure. Testing sites were set up across the country, aiming for geographical accessibility. Furthermore, treatment for COVID-19 has been largely provided through the public healthcare system, allowing for equal access based on medical need rather than financial capacity. However, challenges persisted, particularly during the initial phases of the pandemic, including testing shortages and regional disparities in healthcare capacity, which temporarily affected equal access. Continuous efforts have been made to address these issues and improve the healthcare infrastructure to ensure equitable access to testing and treatment for all residents in Italy.

c) Have you experienced a denial to healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Not personally but most of us could think of a case that happened to someone.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restricting the educational system to deliver online education?

Educational institutions, from primary schools to universities, swiftly adopted online platforms to ensure continuity in learning. However, the success of this transition varied across regions and institutions due to disparities in digital infrastructure, varying levels of preparedness, and the ability of educators and students to adapt to online teaching and learning. While significant progress was made, challenges such as the digital divide, lack of access to necessary devices or stable internet, and the need for training and support persisted, affecting the effectiveness and universality of online education.

b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

The transition to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting minority groups, impoverished families, and individuals with disabilities. The digital divide became glaringly evident, as those lacking access to reliable internet and suitable devices faced barriers to online learning. This divide widened educational disparities, with marginalized communities often being unable to fully participate in remote

education. Students from low-income families faced challenges in accessing necessary resources for effective online learning, further deepening educational inequities. Similarly, individuals with disabilities encountered difficulties in accessing appropriate online materials and accommodating their unique needs, thus amplifying the existing disparities in education and reinforcing the urgent need for more inclusive and accessible approaches to online learning.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsened during the pandemic?

The quality of education in Italy faced significant challenges during the pandemic, with a general consensus that it worsened for many students. The sudden shift to remote learning posed substantial hurdles, ranging from the digital divide and unequal access to online resources to difficulties in maintaining student engagement and motivation. The lack of face-to-face interactions and personalized guidance impacted the overall learning experience, especially for students who thrive in a traditional classroom setting. Educators grappled with adapting their teaching methods to an online format, and not all were adequately prepared for the shift. Additionally, disparities in household environments, varying levels of parental involvement, and the emotional toll of the pandemic further hindered effective learning. While educators and students demonstrated resilience and adaptability, the abrupt disruption of the educational system significantly challenged the quality and equity of education across the country.

d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the COVID-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?

Testing children to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Italy was a prudent strategy during the pandemic, as it allowed for early detection and isolation of infected individuals, thereby helping to contain the virus's spread within school environments and the broader community. Regular testing of children, combined with appropriate safety measures, played a crucial role in managing the risks associated with in-person schooling. This strategy can certainly be considered for future pandemic situations in Italy, providing a valuable tool to swiftly identify and isolate cases, ultimately contributing to the safe operation of schools and the protection of vulnerable populations. Adapting and fine-tuning this approach based on evolving scientific knowledge and the specific characteristics of future pandemics will be essential to optimize its effectiveness and ensure the well-being of children and the community.

e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

The length of restrictions on physical education in Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic was a subject of debate. Some argued that the restrictions were in place for an extended duration, impacting the overall well-being and development of children. They advocated for a faster return to physical education, emphasizing the importance of exercise for mental and physical health. However, others defended the cautious approach, citing the need to prioritize public health and safety. Balancing the resumption of physical education with potential health risks remains a challenge, requiring careful consideration of evolving scientific evidence and a nuanced response to future pandemics. The right approach for future situations might involve a phased and flexible reopening of physical education, guided by the best available data and tailored to the unique circumstances of each pandemic, with a strong focus on minimizing health risks and prioritizing the well-being of students.

f) Do you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?

The educational system tried to be responsive in digitalization but, being the education very different from school to school and every region having different rules it made it difficult to have a generalized structure. Regarding the provision of online tools, some resources have been allocated but obviously not enough to cover the demand and needs.

Third key thematic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

1st sub-subject: Mental Health

a) Do you think the long-time off limiting fundamental rights have let to increasing anxiety/fear/mental/health challenges in general population?

We are not only thinking about the restrictions but also about how the pandemic has taken a toll on the general population, resulting in a rise in anxiety, fear, and mental health challenges. The restrictions, including lockdowns, social distancing measures, and limitations on movement and social gatherings, disrupted daily routines and social connections, causing a sense of isolation and uncertainty. Financial strain and employment insecurity added further stress. People grappled with fears about their health and that of their loved ones, creating a heightened state of anxiety. The lack of normalcy and reduced access to recreational activities, cultural events, and other outlets for stress relief amplified mental health issues. The need for ongoing support, mental health services, and a comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges has become increasingly evident to aid in the recovery and well-being of the population.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

There was increased recognition of the importance of mental health, particularly for vulnerable groups such as frontline workers, isolated individuals, and those grappling with economic hardships. Telehealth services and helplines were bolstered to provide accessible mental health support and counselling also through the “Bonus psicologo” (which did not cover much). Public health campaigns were initiated to raise awareness about mental well-being and stress management. Additionally, mental health resources and information were disseminated widely to mitigate the potential negative impact on mental health, emphasizing self-care strategies and coping mechanisms. However, while steps were taken to prioritize mental health, continuous efforts and resources are crucial to ensuring a sustained and comprehensive approach that effectively addresses the long-term mental health effects of the crisis on the Italian population.

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

First and foremost, integrating mental health into public health response strategies is crucial, ensuring that mental health services are adequately funded, accessible, and promoted as an integral part of overall healthcare. Providing timely and accurate information to the public about the situation, preventive measures, and available mental health resources is essential for reducing anxiety and fear. Establishing a robust telehealth infrastructure for mental health support, crisis helplines, and online therapy can facilitate timely assistance and counseling. Tailored mental health programs targeting vulnerable groups, such as frontline workers, elderly populations, and individuals facing economic hardships, should be designed and implemented. Moreover, fostering a sense of community and social support, promoting physical activity, and encouraging healthy coping mechanisms are vital components to address mental health challenges during and after pandemics.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the COVID-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

The campaign aimed to dispel misinformation, encourage vaccine uptake, and emphasize the role of vaccination in controlling the spread of the virus and achieving herd immunity. Various communication channels were utilized, including television, social media, public health websites, and collaboration with healthcare

professionals to disseminate accurate information. The perception of this campaign varied within the general population; some individuals appreciated the effort and felt informed and reassured, leading to increased willingness to get vaccinated. However, others had concerns regarding the speed of vaccine development and safety, highlighting the ongoing challenge of countering vaccine hesitancy and misinformation effectively.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

In a sense of safeguarding the health of the population and, above all, of vulnerable people was not perceived as a limitation of fundamental rights. On the other hand, a part of the population experienced it in a hostile way given the fact that a vaccine was compulsory in any case and that it was impossible, if one wanted to move or in some cases work, to refuse treatment.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

It was perceived as necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement because it was one of the ways to stop or slow down the transmission of the virus.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situation?

Being this subject so divisive it is difficult to address. The people that accepted and found the mandatory vaccine as a solution for the ending of the pandemic will agree while the population that was against it will not. Seeing the results of the vaccinations rates and the decrease of the pandemic levels it is likely that the compulsory vaccine will be address as a suitable way in a future pandemic situation.

6. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Bulgaria by FECE)

Debate Panel 2 was executed twice. Table 1 below presents the timetable of the debate on 29 June 2023 at 05:00 p.m. EET in the National Student House, Sofia and Table 2 presents the timetable of the debate on 7 September 2023 at 3.00 p.m. EET in the Bulgarian Red Cross, Varna, Bulgaria.

Table 1. Timetable of the Debate panel 2 on 29 June 2023 in Sofia, Bulgaria

TIME	TOPIC
17:00	Greetings and introduction Mariya Veleva
17:05	Presentation of the HEARD project
17:15	Presentation of the topic and crucial starting points Dr Zornitsa Draganova. Introduction of Prof. Stoyan Stavru
17:25	Start of the discussion on the topic: LIMITED MOVEMENT
17:45	Start of discussion on the topic: LIMITED RIGHTS
18:05	Start of discussion - on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION
18:20	EC satisfaction survey and conclusion thoughts

Table 2. Timetable of the Debate panel 2 on 7 September 2023 in Varna, Bulgaria

TIME	TOPIC
15:00	Greetings and introduction Dr Nevena Dobрева
15:05	Presentation of the HEARD project
15:10	Presentation of the topic and crucial starting points Dr Zornitsa Draganova.
15:20	Start of the discussion on the topic: LIMITED MOVEMENT
15:30	Start of discussion on the topic: LIMITED RIGHTS
15:40	Start of discussion - on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION
15:50	EC satisfaction survey and conclusion thoughts

The panel debate started with the greetings and introduction of the project and continued with the presentation of the topic. Dr Zornitsa Draganova presented the findings of the state-of-the-art analysis and some facts from the COVID-19 pandemic to remind the participants about the challenges and the government's reaction during the mentioned period. We continued the debate panel by showing the crucial starting points of the survey results conducted in Bulgaria and all the partner countries, focusing on the statistically significant findings.

According to the mentioned research findings, we formulated three themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key theme: Limited movement

1st sub-subject: Limited movement

a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

During the debate, the importance of using correct language when discussing fundamental rights and distinguishing basic concepts was emphasised. Participants highlighted that having a basic understanding of our rights is crucial, as they are the tools we have relied on for decades. It is important to note that no rights are unlimited, as we have accepted the rules of our nation as its citizens and have ceded some of our rights to the system. There are human rights that protect us as human beings and civil rights governed by national law. In Bulgaria, the Constitution applies in a peaceful state of the country. It is important to understand that while our rights are protected, they can be restricted or affected.

b) In your opinion, did it take too long for the restrictions on the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

The timing of lifting restrictions can vary from one situation to another. In Bulgaria, at the beginning of the pandemic, the approach to freedom of movement was to isolate the town of Bansko, where an outbreak of Covid-19 was identified. After that, movement between cities was limited for some time. However, the focus was more on restricting people's movement than on taking rational actions such as delivering necessary equipment and informing society about how to react in case of Covid-19 infection. Misinformation caused significant anxiety and led to mistrust.

c) Did it take too long for the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- The society had to relinquish some of its rights but the later opening of borders to third countries took too long according to the BRC in Bulgaria.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- In the decision-making process, there were two perspectives: the conservative precautionary principle and the proportional principle. The

precautionary principle involves tight restrictions in a state of emergency, while the proportional principle considers the level of danger and tailors measures accordingly, such as quarantine or isolation. The appropriateness of partially lifting restrictions on freedom of movement during a future pandemic situation would depend on these two perspectives and the level of threat it poses.

After two years of restrictions (partial and entire lockdown) in Bulgaria due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government and health authorities announced on April 1, 2022, that the emergency situation would be lifted and most social measures would be removed.

e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- According to the shared opinions, hardly anything will change in future. At the beginning of Covid-19, there were no masks. Disinfectants and gloves were few, and social services were limited. Now, we are prepared with these supplies. We need the institutions to work for more authority and trust, otherwise, we will be even less prepared.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- During discussions, citizens expressed concern that the freedom of expression in Bulgaria led to the spread of conspiracy theories and disinformation ("informational enlightenment"). The experts were selected based on the precautionary principle, which damaged trust in institutions. The pandemic in Bulgaria was seen as a product of media and politics due to the lack of authoritative discourse and the spread of unreliable information, even by experts. Conflicting information led to mistrust in authorities and disinformation.
- Due to the lack of trust in authorities, some people believe that the media has been used to spread fear and panic intentionally. It has been proven that one way to control people is to isolate them in their homes, and some participants in the discussion shared that in the future, we may find ourselves locked up again and only able to communicate with AI-powered assistants.

b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- Members of BRC shared that when the pandemic was at its peak, it was not difficult to work with people from diverse backgrounds, including the ethnic Roma community. However, it was crucial to keep an accurate count of the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. With the onset of war, and even before that, during public demonstrations, tracking the number of deaths and taking preventive measures was no longer a priority.

c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

It is important to understand that while our rights are protected, they can be restricted or affected. The distinction between these two terms is crucial, as restrictions can be legal in certain situations. For example, during a declaration of war, martial law, or a state of emergency, individual civil rights may be temporarily restricted by law. In Bulgaria, the state of emergency was introduced on March 13, 2020, to combat the spread of coronavirus. This legally restricted some fundamental rights, including movement between regional cities, closure of schools, universities, and shopping centres, and even bans on walks in parks and gardens.

However, on May 13, 2020, the state of emergency was replaced by an emergency epidemic situation, which only legally restricted rights through quarantine or isolation. Isolation requires contact with an infected person, while quarantine poses a greater risk to society and requires a higher level of emergency. It is crucial to understand these perspectives when discussing fundamental rights and the legal restrictions that may be imposed in certain situations.

d) How do you think in future pandemic situations we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- Given the situation, it was important to prioritise public health while still ensuring that our right to peaceful assembly is respected. In the future, governments and public health authorities can work together to develop guidelines and protocols that balance the need for public safety with the right to peaceful assembly. By working together and remaining vigilant, we can ensure our rights are respected while also keeping ourselves and our communities safe and healthy.

Second key thematic: Limited rights

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- The initial stampede, closure, within the BRC was no more than a week. The nature of the work did not allow the staff of the BRC to stop their work - helping and serving old people, delivering aid, and running courses. All worries remained in the background. No one refused to come to work because they were afraid. The nature of Red Cross work is to be of help to others. The fact that our colleagues did not remain closed protected them from feeling helpless.
- We did not receive timely information on how to respond. We were not prepared to meet people's needs for food and high organisation to be face to face with people all the time. We also failed to provide masks to people, no one provided us with masks from the government so we could give them to vulnerable groups.

b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

The pandemic created numerous challenges, including violating people's rights to access information, healthcare, and employment. Initially, in BRC they had to make their own masks to ensure safety. Unfortunately, eight people were infected with Covid-19 in November 2020, but the rest of the team continued to work. The BRC staff relied on their own strength and determination to assist and never closed.

c) Have you experienced a denial of healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- During public crises like this, people's expectations of humanitarian aid organisations rose, and many individuals would show up every day to collect relief items, which was a disincentive for those working in the BRC. People's anxiety remained high, as the risks were complex, especially due to the difficulty in following rules and regulations in Bulgarian psychology. Despite numerous challenges, the BRC continued to work and dynamically restructured their work by reducing groups. They expect researchers to be present during such processes in the future.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restructuring the educational system to deliver online education?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- The education system in Bulgaria was not prepared for online learning, causing a drastic shift from classroom education to an online environment. As a result, education staff had to deal with the situation on their own, without proper training on how to work with the online platforms.
- The measures taken to help teachers and students were delayed, and by the time they were available, most had already found ways to manage the situation with the help of colleagues or younger family members.

b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- During the pandemic, online education became a necessity, but it was discovered quickly that many children did not have the technical equipment or knowledge to participate effectively. This highlights the inequality gap between families of different financial statuses and those with disabilities.
- Some parents chose to educate their children without technology, which presented a challenge. Even children with good awareness and high grades struggled to participate fully in classes because of a lack of technical skills.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsened during the pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- Online learning has allowed parents to access lessons and monitor their child's progress. However, it has also highlighted that some children lack technical knowledge and resources, leading to parents partially participating in classes. The first few weeks were more of a test period for teachers and children due to the lack of proper transition. The educational staff put in a lot of effort to make things work. Children were allowed to interact with their classmates, which was motivating and helped them navigate this period more easily. They could discuss situations with their peers and work on educational material together.

d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations? Did it take too long for the restrictions on physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- There was a lack of parent involvement, and no parents were willing to assist teachers during the process. Under communism, the state played a significant role in education, but with the state's limited involvement now, parents have a more influential role in shaping school policies. It is unclear whether testing children will be a viable solution in future pandemics. However, we should improve the process and involve parents more. The lifting of restrictions on physical education also took too long, which could be improved in the future.

e) Did you think that the educational system was responsive to digitalization and providing online tools?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about an urgent need for the education system to shift quickly towards digitalization. Due to the lack of technical resources, this has caused a lot of stress for everyone involved.
- The Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria mandated all measures related to COVID-19 in the education system. The government budget funds schools to provide an environment and tools necessary for effective learning and work. Innovation in education and digitalization have been part of the educational program development for many years.

Third thematic: Psychological dimension

1st sub-subject: Mental health

a) Do you think the long-time limitation of fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in the general population?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- Parents and children have been affected by being confined to their homes. Lockdown periods and online learning have made it harder for them to leave the house. Children have adapted quickly to staying home and learning online, and communicating online has become normal for them. Even after the first lockdown, children changed in just two months.
- #### b) Did the government and healthcare institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

- The researchers did not have to convince the staff of BRC to endure psychologically, as they showed remarkable resilience in coping with the crisis. However, it is crucial to investigate whether any measures were taken to prevent negative mental health effects, especially among vulnerable groups who may have been more affected by the crisis on their mental wellbeing.
- c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?
 - It is essential to encourage open communication and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, which can help individuals feel more comfortable seeking help when needed. It is also important to prioritise mental health as a crucial aspect of overall healthcare and disaster management planning to ensure that it is addressed adequately in future pandemic situations.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

- a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- The health culture of the Bulgarians is low. With the vaccines, another thesis about chipping people came out, i.e. a bubble of psychosis was inflated by the media. People's low trust in institutions came out. They don't have enough authority to make people believe them, and the non-compliance, the refusal to vaccinate. They did not convince society how many doses it should be - 1,2,3,4,5.

- b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

- If another pandemic comes, the authority of the institutions will be even lower and trust - tending to zero. We had time to observe names in the health system/authoritative figures but they were literally pitted against each other in front of the media with extreme bipolar opinions.

- c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

When the Covid-19 pandemic began, humanitarians were on the front line, trying to combat the lack of sufficient vaccines and information about vaccination. The authorities were slow in providing information to help people make an informed decision. Although vaccines were quickly created, only the death toll was counted without any timely information campaign

being carried out. The burden on organisations like BRC increased, and they had to decide how best to serve those in need.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?

Whether compulsory vaccination is a suitable way to address future pandemics is a complex issue that requires careful consideration of the risks and benefits. While vaccination can be an effective way to prevent the spread of disease, it is important to respect individuals' rights and autonomy. Ultimately, any decision must be made to protect public health while also upholding ethical and moral principles.

Key findings

LIMITED MOVEMENT

At the debate panel, participants reached a consensus that the actions and measures taken by the government were partially appropriate, considering the situation that led to numerous questions directed towards the authority institutions. The debate also highlighted the importance of increasing awareness about our human and citizen rights.

LIMITED RIGHTS

During the debate, many participants expressed disappointment at the lack of timely support and the spread of misinformation. They noted that the overwhelming amount of information led to chaos and forced the people on the frontline to solve the problems themselves. The need for better awareness of the situation, constructive dialogue between institutions and clear instructions that respect constraints was stressed.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

During the debate, the participants expressed optimism in dealing with the anxiety caused by the pandemic. However, they also emphasised the importance of giving priority to the psychological aspect of the crisis. It was noted that in Bulgaria, there is a common stigma associated with the mental impact of Covid-19 and the resulting crisis.

7. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Sweden by NDF)

In the table below, we can see the timetable of Debate panel 2, which was executed October 11, 2023 9:00am-12:00 noon, in Stockholm Sweden.

Table 1. Timetable of the Debate panel 2

TIME	TOPIC
9:00am	Registration and Welcome
9:30am	Introduction to the Debate Panel
10:00am	Opening Statements by Panellists
10:30am	Questions from Moderator
11:00am	Cross-Examination between Panellists
11:30am	Moderator's Remarks and Thank You
12:00 noon	Conclusion and Networking

The core of the panel discussion revolved around the presentation of the project's central topic. We emphasised the relevance and importance of the chosen subject matter, underscoring how it directly impacts not only Sweden but also our partner countries. The intent was to set the stage for a substantive and informed conversation.

Throughout the panel debate, our objective was to encourage an open and constructive exchange of ideas and perspectives. By structuring the discussion in this manner, we sought to ensure that the participants gained a deeper understanding of the project, its context, and the research that underpinned it, ultimately fostering a more informed and engaging debate.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: LIMITED MOVEMENT

1st sub-subject: Limited movement

- a) In your opinion, did it take too long for the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- In agreement some participants noted that the restrictions took long to be lifted stating that it hindered personal liberties, disrupted the functioning of the single market and economic recovery which caused frustration among citizens who could not travel freely within the Union.
- While other participants indicated that the imposition was a response to an unprecedented global health crisis. Noting that the measures taken were with the best interests of public health in mind, and they were gradually lifted as the situation improved.

b) Did it take too long for the restrictions travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants noted that it took too long for the restrictions on travel to third countries neighboring the EU to be lifted. These restrictions had a severe impact on businesses, tourism, and individuals who have family or business ties in those countries. The prolonged restrictions had serious economic consequences.
- On the other hand participants highlighted that the situation was continuously changing, making it difficult to estimate when it would be safe to eliminate these restrictions. In hindsight, we should admire the EU's commitment to balancing health and economic concerns, even though it took too long. The essential thing is that we're gradually returning to normalcy, which is a good thing for everyone.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants in support stated that: Curfews aided in the reduction of virus propagation by reducing unwanted social interactions during the nighttime hours when people tend to congregate for leisure activities. This was especially crucial when our healthcare systems were overburdened and the curve needed to be flattened.
- They additionally supported lockdown enforcement, making it simpler for authorities to assure compliance with other critical measures such as social

separation and mask-wearing. These restrictions were necessary in times of crisis to preserve public health and save lives.

- Their effectiveness was determined by characteristics like enforcement and compliance. To mitigate the economic and social impact of curfews, clear communication and support for affected individuals and companies were critical.
- It was however a tricky balance to strike between protecting public health and preserving individual rights, and the basis for curfews may differ depending on the specific conditions of each place.
- Curfews had a disproportionately negative influence on the lives of many people, particularly those who worked important overnight shifts. It also violated personal freedoms and civil liberties, creating concerns about the proper balance between public health and individual rights.
- Furthermore, curfews may not have been as effective as supporters say, as they frequently moved social events into the daytime, thereby offsetting the intended benefits. Instead of curfews, we should have focused on targeted and effective methods to restrict the spread of the virus while minimizing the damage on people's lives, such as mask laws and testing.
- Curfews probably had a part in pandemic containment, but their justification should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. They were an essential emergency measure in locations where infection rates were soaring to keep healthcare systems from failing.

b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

- Participants were quick to point out that public demonstrations were the result of public frustration stemming from a variety of reasons, including political unhappiness, economic hardship, and social injustice.
- However, dismissing the link between government limits and popular demonstrations would be incorrect. Throughout history, government measures such as establishing curfews, limiting free speech, or suppressing opposition have resulted in enormous protests. These limits are frequently regarded as infringements on fundamental civil liberties and human rights, provoking public outrage and discontent.
- Furthermore, the internet and social media have dramatically increased citizens' ability to organize and mobilize fast in reaction to unfair government actions. These

platforms have been critical in linking like-minded people and facilitating protest coordination, making it easier for grievances to grow into large-scale demonstrations.

c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants agreed that when comprehensive government steps are done to safeguard public safety and uphold the rule of law, they are justified. It is critical to establish a balance between the right to protest and the necessity to keep the peace and safeguard citizens.
- Participants in the deferral process emphasized that, while governments have a responsibility to preserve order and safeguard public safety, significant actions against public demonstrations should be utilized only as a last resort. It is critical to preserve and protect citizens' rights to congregate peacefully and express their discontent, as this is a pillar of any functioning democracy

Second key thematic: LIMITATION OF THE RIGHTS

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants indicated that restrictions on access to routine healthcare services during crises were not arbitrary; rather, they were enacted to make the best use of available resources and to preserve public health. While it is a difficult decision, it is justifiable when weighed against alternate means of care delivery.
- On the other hand participants noted that restrictions on regular access to healthcare treatments for chronic diseases and non-urgent situations are generally unjustified. To protect the well-being of all citizens, we should focus on expanding healthcare capacity and maintaining key services even during crises.

b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to COVID-19 conditions allow people to be tested and threatened equally?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants noted that access to testing was far from equal. As People in affluent areas had easier access to tests, while those in underserved communities faced significant barriers, including long wait times and limited testing sites. According to the participants the inequality in testing access had profound consequences, as early detection is crucial for preventing the spread of the virus.
- The availability of treatments and medical resources had not been distributed equitably. With the high-income individuals often had more resources and connections to secure the best medical care, including experimental treatments and access to ventilators when necessary. Meanwhile, marginalized communities and vulnerable populations faced disproportionate challenges in obtaining the care they needed.
- The disparities in healthcare access were exacerbated by systemic issues such as income inequality, racial disparities, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure.
- In addition, the rollout of vaccines also raised concerns over equity; it could be noticed that developed at an unprecedented pace, distribution was uneven, with wealthier nations securing more doses than they needed while lower-income countries struggled to vaccinate their populations. This not only perpetuated global health disparities but also allowed the virus to continue spreading and mutating, putting everyone at risk.

c) Have you experienced a denial to healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants emphasized the need of acknowledging that, while some of individuals may not have encountered denials of healthcare services, many others did. These differences in access to care during the pandemic point to fundamental flaws in our healthcare system that must be addressed.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restricting the educational system to deliver online education?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants pointed out that the government succeeded in restructuring the educational system to deliver online education, being a monumental task the governments adapted to the challenges however acknowledging the transition to online education was rushed, and teachers often struggled with adapting their teaching methods to the online environment.
- The government should have invested more in teacher training and digital infrastructure to ensure a smoother transition.
- Participants of different opinions noted that while the government made efforts to transition to online education, there were significant shortcomings in the process including many students lacking access to the necessary technology and internet connectivity, leaving them at a disadvantage.
- Additionally, the sudden shift to online learning exposed the digital divide, leaving marginalised communities behind. The quality of online education varied greatly, and there was a lack of standardised approaches. In many cases, students faced technical issues and felt isolated from their peers.

b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants highlighted that while new models of education have the potential to democratize learning, in many situations they have exacerbated existing disparities, further lagging disadvantaged populations.
- Other participants stated that, while there are problems, new modalities of education have the potential to alleviate inequities by expanding access and flexibility, thereby helping underprivileged groups to pursue their educational ambitions. Addressing the issues while recognizing the positive impact of these developments is critical.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsened during the pandemic?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants noted that the sudden shift to remote and online learning posed significant barriers to effective teaching and learning resulting in unequal access to educational resources, hindering the learning experiences of countless students.

- The abrupt transition to online learning disrupted the traditional classroom dynamics, having teachers adapt their teaching methods that accommodate virtual environments, often struggling to maintain student engagement and monitor progress effectively.
- Additionally, the pandemic imposed immense stress and mental health challenges on both students and educators. The anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty caused by the pandemic had a direct impact on students' ability to focus and learn effectively.

Third key thematic: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

1st sub-subject: Mental Health

a) Do you think the long-time off limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental/health challenges in general population?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Participants noted that while restrictions on fundamental rights may heighten public anxiety, it is critical to assess the context and necessity of these restrictions. Striking a balance between individual liberties and public safety is a difficult task that demands serious thinking and continual conversation.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

- Participants expressed that the government and healthcare institutions were keenly aware of the psychological dimension of the crisis from the very beginning, through launching public awareness campaigns, providing mental health hotlines, and increased funding for mental health services.
- Additionally, many countries introduced policies to support remote work and access to telehealth services to ensure people could access mental health support while practicing social distancing.
- However, other participants pointed out that the psychological toll of the pandemic was immense, and in some cases, the response has been insufficient.
- The government and healthcare institutions should have continued investing in mental health resources and destigmatizing seeking help for mental health issues.
- While attempts have been made to address the psychological aspect of the crisis, participants agree that more comprehensive and integrated approaches are

required to avert unfavorable psychological states during future crises. Mental health should be prioritized in our healthcare system, with adequate attention and resources.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the COVID-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- Some participants stated that the government, in collaboration with health agencies and experts, launched numerous public service announcements, social media campaigns, and even televised addresses to inform the public about the vaccines' safety and efficacy, providing detailed information about the vaccine approval process, potential side effects, and the benefits of vaccination, all with the goal of dispelling myths and encouraging vaccination.
- Participants, on the other hand, acknowledged that, while there were informational initiatives, they were not as extensive as they should have been. The government should have done a better job of reaching out to certain communities, particularly those who are hesitant to receive vaccines owing to mistrust or disinformation.
- The participants agreed that the government did run informative efforts concerning the Covid-19 vaccinations, but the effectiveness and scope of these campaigns may vary based on the perspective and specific situation of different regions and populations.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

- The participants agreed that the government did run informative efforts concerning the Covid-19 vaccinations, but the effectiveness and scope of these campaigns may vary based on the perspective and specific situation of different regions and populations.
- Other participants noted that while public health is undoubtedly important, compulsory vaccination for work or travel should not be the solution as it undermines individual autonomy and opens the door to potential abuses of power.

There should be alternative ways to promote vaccination while respecting individual freedoms.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

The following arguments were used by participants in the discussion to answer to the topic:

In agreement the participants noted the choice to link vaccination and freedom of movement was not only necessary, but also responsible and ethical as it protected public health, promoted fairness, and balances individual liberties and society responsibilities. While it may appear to limit human freedom, it is a vital precaution in the unique conditions of a global epidemic.

Key findings

LIMITED MOVEMENT

Finally, our findings provide an in-depth analysis of the constraints enforced during the global health crisis. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the lengthy restrictions, expressing worries about personal liberty, disruptions to the single market, and economic recovery. These worries highlight the considerable impact such actions can have on citizens and the economy as a whole. Others, on the other hand, saw the limits as necessary in reaction to an extraordinary health catastrophe. They stressed that these measures were put in place to protect public health and were subsequently removed when situations improved. When considering such limits, it is critical to recognize the complicated balance between individual liberties and public health, emphasizing the importance of continued debate and deliberate decision-making in comparable future scenarios.

EDUCATION

Finally, discusses how new educational models have exposed both the promise and the dangers of these revolutionary approaches. While participants recognized the promise for democratizing learning and improving accessibility, it was impossible to overlook the stark truth that new technologies frequently exacerbate existing educational gaps. The debate has highlighted the importance of striking a delicate balance between addressing these issues and reaping the benefits of increased access and flexibility. It is abundantly obvious that maintaining fair access and outcomes in the developing educational landscape is vital for societal growth. This continued discussion serves as a reminder that education systems must always adapt and evolve, and it calls for all stakeholders to work together to innovate and build a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

HEALTHCARE

Finally, our findings shed light on the complicated decision-making processes surrounding healthcare access during crises. Participants agreed that restrictions on routine healthcare services were not arbitrary, but rather planned measures aimed at optimizing resource usage and protecting public health. While these judgments are clearly difficult, our study demonstrates that they are reasonable when weighed against alternative modes of care delivery. It is also worth noting that participants voiced worries about regular access to healthcare treatments for chronic diseases and non-urgent situations. They contended that such restrictions were often unreasonable and could endanger the health of people who require continuing care. As a result, our study emphasizes the need of taking a dual approach during crises: emphasizing the expansion of healthcare capacity while also guaranteeing the continuity of critical services to protect the health and well-being of all populations. Balancing these concerns is crucial to developing a healthcare system that can respond to crises effectively while adhering to fairness and equitable standards.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN

This study's findings show the contradictory nature of the government's and healthcare institutions' responses to the psychological side of the crisis. On the one hand, there have been admirable attempts to increase awareness, provide support, and improve access to mental health care. On the other hand, participants agreed that these efforts fell short of addressing the pandemic's devastating psychological impact. Moving forward, it is critical that mental health be prioritized in our healthcare system. To provide a more complete and integrated strategy during future crises, governments and healthcare institutions must devote appropriate resources and attention to mental health. Lessons from this pandemic emphasize the significance of addressing mental health in order to protect the well-being of individuals and communities during times of crisis. This includes not only urgent crisis treatment, but also long-term investment in mental health infrastructure and the de-stigmatization of seeking care for mental health problems.

COVID-19 VACCINE COMPULSIVENESS

Finally, the government worked with health institutions and professionals to educate the public about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. Public service announcements, social media campaigns, and television presentations were among the efforts that gave extensive information about the vaccine approval process, potential adverse effects, and the benefits of vaccination. The purpose was to debunk falsehoods and promote immunization. However, discussion participants remarked that these educational endeavors were not as comprehensive as they should have been. In summary, while acceptable efforts were made to communicate information about COVID-19 vaccinations, there is still space for improvement in ensuring that

all sectors of the public receive accurate and thorough information to make educated vaccination decisions. To achieve general vaccine acceptability, targeted communication tactics and a deeper awareness of community-specific concerns are required.

8. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Spain by Ayto. Mislata)

In the Table 1 below, we can see the timetable of the Debate panel 2, which was executed on 6th of June 2023 at 11.30 pm CET at “Centro Social La Fábrica” of Mislata.

Table 2. Timetable of the Debate panel 2

TIME	TOPIC
11:30	Presentation of the topic and crucial starting points
11:40	Start of the discussion on the topic.
12:20	Conclusion

The roundtable brought forth the central theme, stressing the significance and pertinence of the selected subject matter. It underlined its direct impact not only within Spain but also in our partner countries. Our goal was to create an extensive and informed framework to encourage further discussion and debate.

We aimed to foster an open and constructive exchange of ideas and views throughout the roundtable. By structuring the discussion in this manner, we ensured that participants attained a comprehensive grasp of the pertinent topics. The project, its context, and the underlying research foster an engaging and well-informed dialogue.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: Limited movement

1st sub-subject: Limited movement

- a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

- During the pandemic there were different phases depending on the intensity and severity of Covid-19, so that depending on the time, the measures taken in relation to travel restrictions were considered reasonable or unreasonable.
- The travel restrictions were changing. Ports and airports were closed, travel was restricted to those essential for access to employment for essential services, for shopping, the number of people who could travel in a vehicle was restricted, travel to neighbouring towns, outside the province, autonomous community and the country was restricted. The violation of this fundamental right affected the population in different ways, so that these measures were not always understood as reasonable, but rather as generic and sometimes did not take into consideration the real needs of certain groups.

b) In your opinion, did it take too long the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

- Perceptions of delays in lifting restrictions were associated more with family separations than with leisure travel.

c) Did it take too long the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

- Similar responses to the previous question were made in relation to this issue.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

- We do not know; it would be an aspect to be studied by experts in the field.

e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

- Of course it is.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

- The lockdown measures during the pandemic are not questioned, especially during the times of highest incidence of Covid-19, as there was evidence of the need for lockdown and isolation to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Especially in the early stages when the restrictions were established by the National Government, they began to be questioned after a few months when the management of the measures became autonomous and there were differences

in the lockdown measures that were established depending on the Regional Government.

- b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?
- At some points in the process, yes, as there was a denialist movement that was against the restrictions imposed by the government, so there were public demonstrations during the less severe phases of the pandemic.
- c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?
- The public demonstrations in the case of Spain took place when they could take place due to the absence of major restrictions, so no measures were imposed against them.
- d) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?
- With the creation of teams of multidisciplinary experts who could analyse all aspects to be taken into account in order to establish effective, efficient and proportionate measures to address public health needs without eliminating the right to peaceful assembly.

Second thematic: Limited rights

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

- a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?
- In Spain, through the media, the affected population publicly denounced the medical neglect suffered in the face of chronic illnesses and urgent conditions. All of this happened after the first months of the pandemic's greatest fear and health impact.
 - Society did not understand the limitations imposed on access to the usual health services, they felt helplessness and lack of understanding of their medical needs.
- b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?
- It depended on the health area of reference, each health centre could offer differentiated care, so possibly not all people had equal access.

c) Have you experienced a deny to healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- People's individual rights were violated by prohibiting access to hospitals and health centres. Only telephone consultations were carried out, with the consequent feeling of distance and coldness that this entailed.
- The general feeling of fear and abandonment is evident.
- These initial measures lasted over time and triggered a health care protocol based on maintaining the distance between health personnel and the sick population. In other words, the decisions taken at the time of the pandemic became standard procedure.

2nd sub-subject: Education

a) Did the government succeed in restructuring educational system to deliver online education?

- Yes, after an initial period in which the educational centres had to use the means and resources they had at their disposal due to the fact that this was a supervening situation. On the other hand, teachers also had to adapt to this transfer of knowledge through new technologies, something for which not all staff were prepared.
- As the first weeks of Covid-19 went by, new tools and ways of facilitating distance learning were structured.

b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

- In the first phase, inequalities in access to online education clearly increased for certain socially vulnerable groups, as they did not have access to electronic devices or the internet.
- Subsequently, once the needs of these groups had been identified, the educational administration itself provided electronic devices and access to mobile data to be able to follow classes online.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsen during the pandemic?

- Most schools at all levels did not have the necessary technological resources to provide online teaching, which meant that during the period they needed to adapt to the new reality, the quality of education deteriorated. On the other hand, families also lacked the necessary technology.

- At primary school level, it was very difficult to make students understand that they could not attend school. Apart from trying to make them comply with the health measures, they had to be made to understand that they could not interact with their classmates but at the same time they had to continue learning through means that were unknown to them.

- d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?
 - The measures adopted in schools to prevent the spread of Covid-19 were: increased hygiene, use of masks, taking temperatures before entering classrooms, interpersonal distance, rearrangement of classroom furniture, not sharing materials among students and avoiding cooperative work.

- e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?
 - Given that this was an unprecedented and extraordinary situation at the time, it was not possible to assess the duration of the restrictions linked to the field of education. Most schools teach physical education outdoors, which a priori meant that this was a safe environment. However, restrictions were maintained regarding the scheduling of personal grooming within the subject, thus avoiding possible interpersonal contact.

- f) Did you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?
 - The current education system after the pandemic has increased the presence of digital content and activities to a greater extent than before the pandemic. The tools existed before the pandemic, but what has happened is that their use and effectiveness at school level has increased, improving knowledge and use by the educational community, teachers, families and students.

Third thematic: Psychological dimension

1st sub-subject: Mental health

- a) Do you think the long-time of limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in general population?
 - Obviously, yes. Restrictions, fear and personal loss led to an increase in the presence of mental health problems in the population, as well as a worsening of mental health problems in people who were already suffering from mental health problems prior to the pandemic.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

- Associations and specific groups of relatives of people with mental health problems were responsible for publicly denouncing the needs to which they and their relatives were exposed as a result of restrictions on mobility, care and services.
- We understand that as a result of these public denunciations, response measures were articulated, but they were not really preventive measures to reduce the negative impact on mental health.

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

- Identifying groups of experts in mental health-related disorders to tailor measures in case of future pandemics taking into consideration the impact of pandemics on the mood of the population, as well as the specific needs of groups already affected by mental health-related illnesses.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

- The government monitored the entire process of vaccine development at the international level, followed by the purchase of different drugs at the European level, and then a vaccination protocol was established, with priority given to health professionals, social services, vulnerable groups and age groups.
- Information campaigns through the media aimed to encourage the population to be vaccinated because of the personal and collective advantages of vaccination.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

- It was made compulsory for certain professional groups, such as the health sector, for access to certain jobs, travel and access to restaurants and leisure facilities. People could not freely decide on their vaccination; in these cases it was a compulsory procedure in order to be able to exercise their right to work, to free movement and access to leisure and restaurants.

- c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?
 - At the time, the aim was to increase the health safety of people travelling by plane, among other things.

- d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?
 - More than compulsory vaccination, the biggest awareness campaign is information and knowledge of the properties and possible side effects.

9. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Portugal by FAJUB)

The Second Debate panel was executed on 26th of June 2023 in Braga, Spain.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: Limited movement

1st sub-subject: Limited movement

- a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

Up to September 2021, Portugal, like many other countries, implemented various measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. These measures included restrictions on travel, both within the country and internationally, depending on the pandemic situation at the time.

The reasonableness of these measures depends on factors such as the severity of the pandemic, the capacity of the healthcare system to handle cases, the economic impact of restrictions, and public opinion. Some people have felt that the measures were necessary to protect public health, while others have viewed them as overly restrictive and detrimental to the economy and personal freedoms.

- b) In your opinion, did it take too long the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

Most of the people have felt that restrictions were lifted at an appropriate pace to protect public health.

- c) Did it take too long the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

Most of the people have felt that restrictions were lifted at an appropriate pace to protect public health.

- d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

Most of the people agreed.

- e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

With more medical human resources and appropriate medical machines.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

- a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

Most of the people agreed.

- b) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

No.

- c) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

No.

- d) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

Respecting the measure protection advised by the experts in that specific case.

Second thematic: Limited rights

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

- a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

Only by the lack of medical human resources, which is not a proper justification and for sure it does no good to people suffering from chronic diseases.

- b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?

Yes.

- c) Have you experienced a deny to healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Not personally, but some people knew other cases.

2nd sub-subject: Education

- a) Did the government succeed in restructuring educational system to deliver online education?

Yes, but it was not a good solution for the parents.

- b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

Of course, in some cases due to the lack of proper devices of poor families.

- c) Do you think the quality of education worsen during the pandemic?

Most of the people agreed, due to the fact that the online education lacks the personal touch and also it is difficult to keep the attention of the students, especially the younger ones.

- d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?

Only if that means the schools to be opened and to ensure the proper health of the children, their families and teachers.

- e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

Yes, individual sports should have been always permitted. It was the right response to close gyms and sport clubs where there was a lot of contact, but individual sport should be permitted for future pandemic situations.

- f) Did you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?

More or less. The older teachers had difficulties adjusting to the online tools.

Third thematic: Psychological dimension

1st sub-subject: Mental health

- a) Do you think the long-time of limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in general population?

All the people agreed.

- b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

Not in the beginning, nor during the pandemic, the attention was more after the pandemic, when they started to analyse the consequences.

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

By analysing the consequences of the limitations measures and taking into account the importance of mental health on a long term.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

Yes, it was the antidote for COVID-19, but also the "ticket" to freedom.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

It was a long period in which you couldn't eat at a restaurant, stay at a hotel or travel without the vaccine.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

Most of the people disagree, thinking that respecting the measures, such as wearing a mask and disinfecting hands would have worked, instead of asking for the vaccination.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?

Most of the people agree that it is not a suitable way, taking the vaccine should be a personal decision, not linked to the freedom of movement.

10. Report for the Debate panel 2 (WP 5) in the project HEARD (conducted in Cyprus by CARDET)

The Debate panel 2, which was executed on 11th of October 2023 at 18.30 pm EEST on the Headquarters of CARDET, in 29 Lykavitou, Engomi, Nicosia, Cyprus.

The panel debate started with the greetings and introduction of the project, continued with the presentation of the topic of the project, we continued the debate panel with presenting the crucial starting points of the results of the survey.

According to mentioned research findings, we formulated 3 themes and sub-themes as stated below:

First key thematic: Limited movement

1st sub-subject: Limited movement

- a) Were the actual measures taken to limit travelling within your country reasonable?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: At the debate panel, present participants responded to the topic with the following arguments:

Participants stated that, in their opinion, the measures taken to prevent or restrict travel to the country were unreasonable, in particular the curfew made no sense. Although from the point of view of the human rights the measures to restrict travel were acceptable to prevent the spread of the virus and protect the citizens.

Others reported that the measures within the department on travel were not explained to the public and most of the time the police stopped people and fined them if they did not follow the instructions, such as the one where people had to text and get permission to leave their homes once or twice a day with limited time.

- b) In your opinion, did it take too long the restrictions to the freedom of movement within your country/the EU to be lifted?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Panel participants discuss that, especially in the second phase of the pandemic on the island, the measures continue to be unreasonable. In the first wave, the government's paranoia and extreme measures were understandable, but in the

second phase the harsh measures were not unacceptable and as a result, the restrictions continued for a long time.

c) Did it take too long the restrictions to travel to third countries neighbouring the EU to be lifted?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants reported that the measure on travel to third countries neighbouring the EU was not long in being lifted. Especially due to the different measures followed by non-EU countries.

d) Do you think the partially lifted restrictions to the freedom of movement in your country can be the right response also in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

From a human rights perspective, one of the participants said that it is not a violation in order to protect the country. However, the right approach from the government is to protect citizens with fake news, to be able to follow the instructions of doctors and scientists and of course to be able to explain to the public what is happening and why they should follow the measures. In the case of Cyprus, there was a law from the colonial period that specifically referred to pandemics and the government's actions at the beginning of the pandemic had to do with that law. The law will give the state permission to act, but the government must take into account the negative aspect of the measures and restrictions for the citizens.

e) Do you think that freedom of movement within your country needs to be supplemented with other means in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants stated that freedom of movement cannot be replaced by other supplements. Others disagreed and indicated that it can be an option.

2nd sub-subject: Freedom of peaceful assembly

a) Were measures of the lockdown justified during the pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants believed that during the pandemic the measurements were not justified and served others. Also, some reported that the government was following what it did in other countries, such as Greece, without taking into account the size of the country and other factors.

b) Did you trust the chosen experts?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants pointed out that at the beginning of the pandemic they trusted the experts because they had no other choice. But in the second phase they lost their trust in the government and as a result, to the experts too.

c) Did the restrictions imposed by the government trigger public demonstrations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants reported that in the second phase, government decisions caused public protests, but not in relation to the restrictions as such. Mainly in relation to vaccinations and the restricted freedom towards people who had not been vaccinated.

d) Did the government take extensive actions against public demonstrations? Were they justified?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants said that the government did not allow public demonstrations, which was absurd. Also, participants reported that there were different types of demonstrations, those related to government restrictions and the extreme measures had violent incidents by the police to stop the demonstration resulting in one person losing half of their vision. Other demonstrations, mostly by anti-vaccination groups, targeted the media and resulted in journalists being attacked and their cars burned. In the second case, the police acted but not as violently as at first.

e) How do you think in future pandemic situation we can stand for our right of peaceful assembly taking into account the public health?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants believe that the right to peaceful assembly should not be impeded. The government should realize that it did not have the power against the citizens, but the people were given the power to be more protected and act on their behalf. Peaceful assembly gives people the opportunity to express their dissent and be heard.

Second thematic: Limited rights

1st sub-subject: Healthcare

- a) Were the limitations to access regular health care services (in case of chronic diseases and related conditions/not urgent) justified?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants reported that restrictions on access to regular health services were limited, but in some cases, people accessed them in a variety of ways. In the second phase of the pandemic, restrictions were not justified. People reported that the second blockade was because the government wanted to protect people and hospitals. There were not many beds for people with the virus and the restrictions were intended to help the hospitals.

- b) Did the organization of healthcare institutions related to Covid-19 conditions allow people to be tested and treated equally?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants reported that citizens did not have the same opportunities to be tested in the second phase. In the beginning everyone could be tested for free (rapid test). However, from the second phase the free rapid test for unvaccinated citizens was not an option and they had to pay to have the safepass to get to work every 48 hours.

- c) Have you experienced a deny to healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants reported experiencing denial of access to health care services for issues unrelated to COVID-19 and also in COVID-19 cases.

2nd sub-subject: Education

- a) Did the government succeed in restructuring educational system to deliver online education?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants indicated that the government has succeeded in restructuring the online education system.

- b) Has the move to online education widened the existing inequalities (minorities, poor families, disabled, etc.)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

The government did its best to help families who did not have access to the internet and laptops by providing students and families.

c) Do you think the quality of education worsen during the pandemic?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants believe that the pandemic has worsened the quality of education and will continue in the post-covid era.

d) What is your opinion about testing the children to limit the spread of the Covid-19 and can it be used in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Some participants said that child testing protects everyone, especially at a time when most cases were coming from schools. Also, children were able to learn how to protect themselves and be careful.

e) Did it take too long the restrictions to physical education to be lifted? Was it the right response also for future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants indicated that the restrictions should not be lifted early, but perhaps they should keep the measures in place for longer because schools were full of COVID outbreaks in 2021.

f) Did you think that educational system was responsive in digitalization and providing online tools?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants disagree and state that the education system is not built to respond to digitalisation and this could be taken into account and a mindset could be created by students to be able to use online tools but also to study and interact without being physically present.

Third thematic: Psychological dimension

1st sub-subject: Mental health

a) Do you think the long-time of limiting fundamental rights have led to increasing anxiety/fear/mental health challenges in general population?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: Participants believe that restricting fundamental rights increases anxiety, fear and mental health challenges. Not only during COVID, but even now.

b) Did the government and health care institutions pay attention to the mental health challenges of the crisis? Did they take measures to prevent negative mental health conditions (especially for vulnerable groups)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: Participants could not report any measures taken by the government to prevent negative mental health conditions.

c) How can we limit the effect of mental health challenges in future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: Participants reported that the extreme measures created fear and that fear led to mental health challenges. As a result, measures should follow a positive mental health perspective and be considered in future pandemics. Either with meetings in open spaces, or with support from various experts to people who need it.

2nd sub-subject: Compulsory vaccine

a) Did the government conduct a wide informational campaign about the Covid-19 vaccines? What was your perception of this campaign?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: Participants stated that the government had promoted a campaign, which was informative. People trusted the campaign and the government and others did not.

b) Were the rights of people infringed in case of compulsory vaccination/obligation to be vaccinated (for work, travel)?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE:

Participants reported that people had to be vaccinated, but they also had the choice not to do so and with that they had some limitations. For example, they had to be tested every 48 hours and had to present the safepass at the places they entered.

c) Was it necessary to link vaccination with the freedom of movement?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: Participants believed it was one of the restrictions that they could have under the government in order to get them either vaccinated or tested.

d) Do you think the compulsory vaccine is a suitable way to address future pandemic situations?

POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEBATE: Participants reported that it is not because not all people have been vaccinated.

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