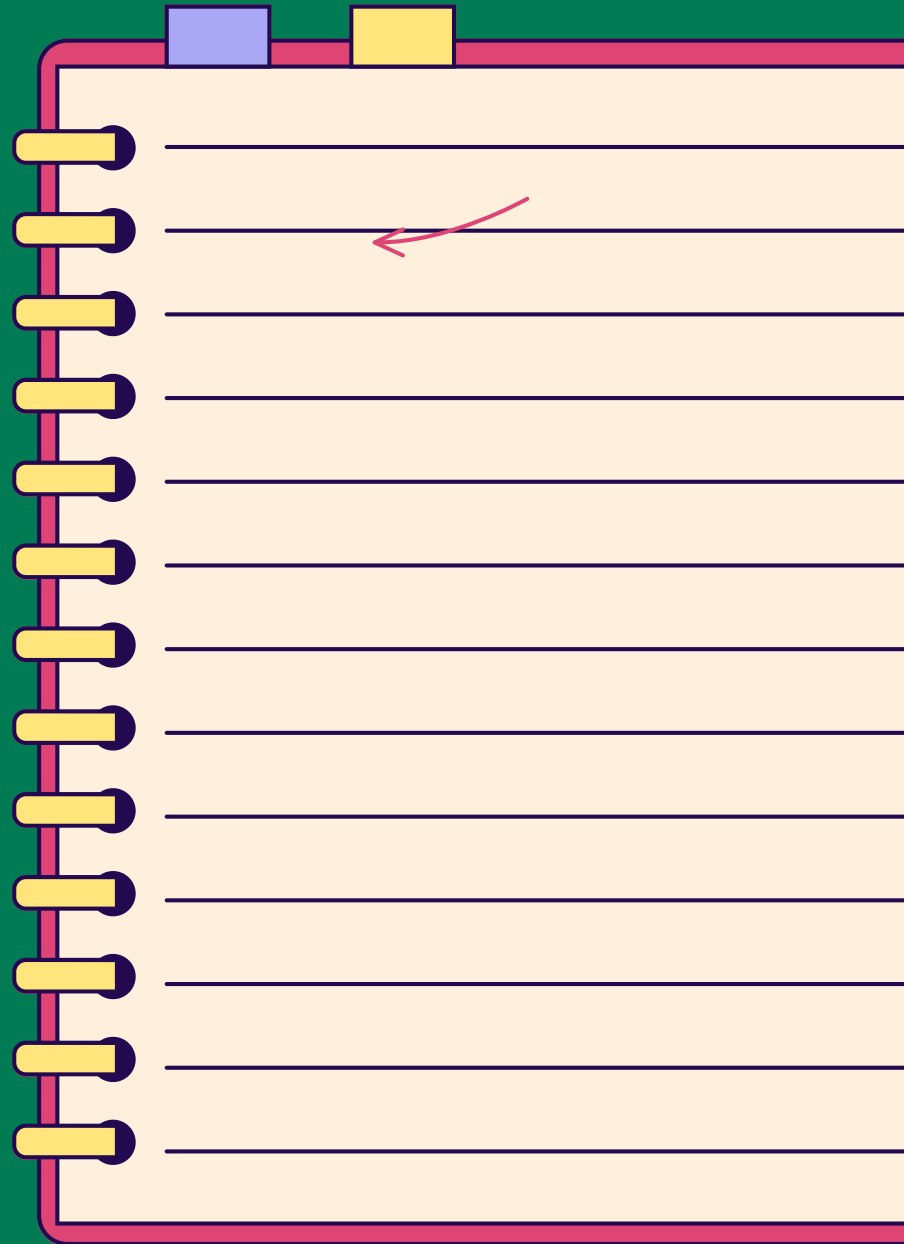


MODULE 14 - ONLINE CIVIC LIFE

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO GET INVOLVED ONLINE



INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces you to different ways to get involved as a citizen, whether by signing petitions, participating in fundraisers, volunteering, sharing information or taking part in citizen consultations. Each form of engagement is explained in a simple way and accompanied by examples of useful sites and platforms for taking action.

1 ONLINE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

HOW TO FIND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE

There are **concrete ways** to engage as a citizen using digital tools. Here are some avenues to explore to find engagement opportunities, whether at the local level or through the internet.

1) SEARCH AND SHARE RELIABLE INFORMATION ONLINE

Before committing, it is essential to ensure that the information you find is reliable and of quality. The Internet is full of resources, but it is necessary to know where to look and how to validate what you find. For this, it is interesting to refer to "Fact Checking" platforms. Fact-checking, or "fact-checking" in French, allows you to verify whether information is true or false, and consists of comparing information with reliable sources to avoid believing or sharing fake news.



MODULE ALERT

Learn how to process the information you read online by following Module 3 "Processing Information"

SOME SITES TO VERIFY THE INFORMATION

- The European website [EUvsDinsinfo](#) carries out fact-checking and identifies fake news, focusing on the European Union's diplomatic relations and the European elections.
- The American site [FactCheck.org](#) identifies false information circulating on American policies
- The [Africa Check](#) website specializes in fact-checking the African continent.
- [Google Scholar](#) is a platform providing access to numerous scientific academic articles



• CLICK!

Access the platforms directly by clicking on the underlined texts!

FRENCH FACT-CHECKING PLATFORMS

- The website Les Décodeurs du Monde verifies facts and identifies fake news in French and in the rest of the world.
- France Info also has its own verification platform, called Vrai ou Fake.
- France 24 has developed its Info ou Intox program. The episodes are available on the site.
- Agence France Presse (AFP) has an AFP Factuel platform which carries out fact-checking, with a section specifically dedicated to artificial intelligence.



BELGIAN FACT-CHECKING PLATFORMS

- Faky is a platform developed by the French-speaking RTBF, which lists false information but also allows the reliability of a press article or an image to be assessed.
- DinsinfoCheck is a platform created by EDMO BENELUX that consists of fact-checking, promoting media literacy and conducting research in several languages (French, German, and Luxembourgish).
- FactCheck.Vlaanderen identifies false information in the Flemish media

PORTUGUESE FACT-CHECKING PLATFORMS

- Polígrafo is a Portuguese newspaper dedicated to fact-checking that offers online verifications and a television column on the SIC channel.
- L'Observador – Fact Check is a fact-checking section of the online newspaper Observador, a member of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN).

2) USE THE INTERNET TO FIND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering is a great way to get involved in your community. The Internet makes it easy to find out about events and initiatives happening near you. You can do this simply by doing an internet search or by going to more specific sites.

- **Consult the website and social networks of your municipality/town hall**

Most of the municipalities where you live have a website where you will find a calendar of events, citizen forums or calls for volunteers. Don't hesitate to also look at the social networks of the town hall/municipality, as they often use these platforms to share information about their activities.

- **Explore local engagement platforms:**

Local websites allow you to find volunteer missions in your area, to do this, do an internet search by typing in a few key words like "volunteering" "volunteering" and the name of your area.



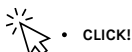
MODULE ALERT

Learn how to search the internet safely by following Module 2

Some platforms also offer online volunteering missions, allowing you **to get involved directly from home behind your screen!** This would allow you to get involved with international associations or those that are not located near you.

SOME SITES TO LOOK FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- The Idealist website lists many volunteer opportunities anywhere in the world, on-site or online.



- You can visit **the websites of local branches** of large NGOs. Depending on your interests, you can get involved with the following NGOs: Red Cross, Doctors of the World, Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, Amnesty International, Save the Children, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Greenpeace, ... These NGOs offer a variety of opportunities to get involved locally while being part of a global movement for social and environmental change.

FRENCH VOLUNTEERING PLATFORMS

- France Bénévolat is a site that allows you to find volunteer missions throughout France in numerous associations and NGOs.
- Benevolt is a platform that allows you to search for a volunteer mission near you, thanks to its location tool
- I want to help is a site developed by the government to help you find a volunteer mission, based on your interests.

BELGIAN VOLUNTEER PLATFORMS

- The Give a Day platform lists volunteering opportunities based on your interests and location in Belgium
- The Social Guide lists numerous volunteering announcements in all the provinces of the Wallonia-Brussels region
- Volunteering also lists opportunities for engagement in Wallonia and Brussels in its "classified ads" section.

3) PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND LOCAL FORUMS

Another way to get involved as a citizen is to give your opinion on local projects, public services or decisions that affect the life of the municipality, through **public consultations**. This allows residents to express their needs and contribute to the choices made by the municipality.

- **What is a public consultation?**

A public consultation is a time when the city hall or another institution asks citizens for their opinion on a specific subject, such as building a new park, improving roads or improving public services. Everyone can give their opinion and propose ideas before decisions are made.

- **How to participate in public consultations?**

- You can consult the website of your town hall/municipality, in order to access their agenda. Indeed, town halls/municipality often publish consultations on their website or in their municipal bulletin. Just look at this information to know what topics are on the agenda, and how to participate.
- You can also join citizen forums. Some municipalities set up discussion spaces, online or in person, where residents can exchange ideas and debate local projects. A common example is the participatory budget, which allows citizens to propose projects to improve their neighborhood and vote on those that will be funded by your municipality/town hall.

SOME CITIZEN CONSULTATION SITES AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

- The European Commission's Have Your Say platform provides access to various areas of citizen engagement, such as:
 - European citizens' initiatives to support European initiatives
 - To access public consultations to give one's opinion on the future policies of the European Union
 - To participate in debates and discussions between citizens.

4) PARTICIPATE IN CROWDFUNDING INITIATIVES

Crowdfunding is a simple way to help projects by giving a little money online. It allows people or associations to realize their ideas thanks to the contributions of many citizens.

- **What is a public consultation?**

Crowdfunding helps support meaningful projects, such as protecting the environment, helping people in difficulty, or supporting culture. It's a simple way to contribute to important causes, even with a small budget. Unlike traditional donations, crowdfunding allows you to choose the exact project you want to support and see the impact of your help directly. In addition, some campaigns offer thanks or gifts in exchange for support, such as exclusive products, invitations to events, or unique experiences.

- **How does it work?**

Participating in a crowdfunding campaign is very simple. All you have to do is choose an online platform that hosts projects and browse through the different initiatives offered. Once you have found an interesting project, you can decide how much you want to donate and make a secure payment. Some projects only reach their goal if a certain amount is collected, while others receive the money even if the total amount is not reached. After the campaign, the creators of the project usually keep their contributors informed of the progress and realization of their ideas, which allows you to follow the concrete impact of your support.

SOME CROWDFUNDING SITES

- [The Kickstarter](#) site for creative and technology projects
- [The GoFundMe](#) platform for solidarity collections and emergency situations
- [The Patreon](#) site to help artists and creative projects

FRENCH-SPEAKING CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS

- The [Ulule](#) site for financing solidarity, cultural and entrepreneurial projects
- The [Kiss Kiss Bank Bank](#) platform to support various platforms for innovative and creative projects.
- The [Hello Asso](#) site to help associations and solidarity actions.
- [The Grow Funding](#) platform to support local and social projects in Belgium

PORTUGUESE CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS

- The [PPL](#) platform for financing social, cultural and ecological projects.
- The [GoParity](#) site which specializes in financing ecological and sustainable projects.

6) SUPPORT CAUSES THROUGH ONLINE PETITIONS

A petition is a text in which citizens request a change or action from an authority (government, city hall, company, organization, etc.). Petitions make it possible to defend a cause, raise public awareness and encourage decision-makers to act.

- **Why sign a petition?**

Signing a petition is a quick and easy way to support a cause that matters to you. It allows you to make your voice heard, even if you don't have much power or resources. A petition can put pressure on decision-makers by showing that many people share a common demand. Sometimes, when a petition collects a large number of signatures, it can lead to concrete changes in laws, public policies or business decisions.

- **How to sign an online petition?**

To sign a petition, simply go to an online platform, read the description, and add your name and email address. Some petitions also allow you to leave a comment to explain why you support the cause. If you can't find a petition that matches your fight, you can create one yourself by clearly explaining the objective, collecting signatures, and sharing the petition on social media so that it reaches more people.

SOME EUROPEAN & GLOBAL CITIZEN PETITION PLATFORMS

- The [Change.org](https://change.org) platform is the most recognized worldwide for creating and signing petitions on all types of subjects.
- [Avaaz](https://avaaz.org) is an international network that launches campaigns and petitions on global issues.
- We [MOVE EU](https://we-move.eu) is a European platform dedicated to petitions for social and environmental justice.
 - For France: [My Opinions](https://myopinions.com) is a French platform where citizens can launch and sign petitions
 - For Belgium: [Online Petitions](https://onlinepetitions.be) is a Belgian website allowing citizens to submit local petitions
 - For Portugal: [Petição Pública](https://peticao-publica.pt) is the main Portuguese platform for creating and signing petitions