

NEWSLETTER 5

Shadows of Occupation – A Journey Through History and Digital Innovation

PROJECT NUMBER: 101174535

Testing the game with 240 young people

Between March and August 2026 the game **WWII Choices** was played and discussed by 240 young people in four two-day Local Testing Workshops in Alcoi, Ruggell and Thessaloniki, and reviewed by seven experts. In July the project also held its Inclusivity in Gaming Policy Forum in Thessaloniki and its Cultural Gaming Research Symposium in Quatretondeta and Alcoi. This newsletter reports what the players told us and what changed in the game.

The game is online – play it

WWII Choices is available free of charge, in the browser, at **ww2-choices.netlify.app**. Choose a character – the Journalist, the Citizen, the Persecuted or the Resister – and see where your choices lead in 10 to 15 minutes.



The outcome screen at the end of a playthrough

Four Local Testing Workshops, 240 young people

Each workshop ran over two days with the same protocol: introduction, guided gameplay, individual feedback before the group discussion, a session on the historical and cultural content with invited experts, focused testing and a closing quality discussion – covering functionality, navigation, language and localisation, historical and cultural sensitivity, accessibility and educational usability.

- **Alcoi, 11–12 March 2026** (ASEID) – 60 participants of mixed digital familiarity; first-use clarity and navigation as priorities.
- **Ruggell, 20–21 July 2026** (CYA) – 30 young people and stakeholders in educational gaming, with an inclusion and youth-work expert.
- **Thessaloniki, 27–28 July 2026** (Fifty-Fifty) – 75 participants, with a historian of the occupation and a non-formal history educator.
- **Thessaloniki, 18–19 August 2026** (PYLON ONE) – 75 participants, focused on localisation, with a linguist, a localisation specialist and an intercultural mediator.

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What changed in the game

Seven experts reviewed the game during the workshops and all their recommendations were taken on board, together with the players' feedback: a concise historical introduction and a clear line between fact and fiction; clearer first-use instructions; a shared glossary and simpler wording of instructions; visible consequences of each decision and reflection prompts after the game; short context notes for facilitators working with mixed-age groups; and a check of the respectful representation of persecuted groups. The Greek version was validated in context at the PYLON ONE workshop; the Spanish and German versions follow the same localisation strategy.

Inclusivity in Gaming Policy Forum – Thessaloniki, 7–8 July 2026

Forty young people aged 18 to 30 – ten per partner, diverse in gender, cultural background and experience, and including young people from marginalised communities in Greece – spent two days in Thessaloniki discussing what makes a game inclusive. Through a Policy Lab, a plenary and a World Café they produced the **Thessaloniki Forum Declaration** on inclusive games, covering representation, accessibility, education and curricula and funding incentives, evaluation cards on WWII Choices and redesign ideas for its next version. A visit to the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki connected the discussion to the city's own history. All participants received a Youthpass certificate.



The memorial plaque in Quatretondeta, 22 July 2026

Cultural Gaming Research Symposium – Quatretondeta and Alcoi, 22–23 July 2026

The Symposium grew from the one day in Alcoi foreseen in the project to two days. The first, in Quatretondeta, was devoted to historical memory: a **memorial plaque** carrying the project's name was unveiled in the presence of the Mayor and the community. The second day, in Alcoi, took the participants to the Cervantes air-raid shelter and to a working session with historical experts on how games can carry the memory of the war, followed by a feedback and transferability session on the game.

What's next?

The last months of the project are dedicated to bringing the game to the public. The **Cultural Sensitivity Hackathon** takes place in Eschen, Liechtenstein, on 12–15 October, and three **Local Dissemination Events** follow: in Eschen on 14 October, in Quatretondeta on 17 October during the Fireta, and in Thessaloniki on 23 October. The partners meet for the last time in Thessaloniki on 21 October, and four short videos on the project will be published at the end of October.

Play the game: ww2-choices.netlify.app · **Website:** shadowsofoccupation.eu · **Contact:** cya.liechtenstein@gmail.com · **Facebook:** facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572434565924

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