

Code of Practice on
Disinformation – Report of
European Fact-Checking
Standards Network for the
period January 1 to June 30,
2024

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Executive summary

The European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN) has continued its growth to be a consolidated representative of the independent fact-checking organisations operating in Europe. In comparison to the previous report, the EFCSN has added ten more members to its network. Therefore, the EFCSN is currently formed by 48 organisations, 32 of which are based in EU member states and 16 in EU neighbouring countries. Together, the EFCSN member organisations cover most official languages in the EU. Moreover, there are currently 10 organisations being assessed that will potentially become verified members of the association for the next reporting period.

Each one of them has committed to the highest ethical, methodological and transparency standards as outlined in the European Code of Standards for Independent Fact-Checking Organisations, and has agreed to be evaluated for compliance by two independent academic assessors and the EFCSN board. The commitment of verified members with independent and quality fact-checking activities as well as the belief that promoting standards and collaboration is key against disinformation is undeniable.

Collaboration is not only promoted among verified members of the EFCSN but with other Signatories of the Code of Practice on Disinformation. The Empowerment of Fact-Checkers Sub group within the permanent task-force, chaired by the EFCSN, is one of the meeting points where we are in contact with other organisations and exchange relevant insights, including with representatives of VLOPs and VLOSEs. In addition, we evaluate reports submitted by major online services and make suggestions on actions under commitments on fact-checking that we hope lead to future improvements.

During the reporting period the EFCSN carried out two projects that are particularly relevant for this reporting:

- Elections24Check tackled misinformation during the 2024 European Elections, supported by a €1.5 million Google News Initiative grant. It built a pioneering database of 3,000+ fact-checks from 46 EFCSN organisations across 36 countries and 34 languages. The project enhanced fact-checkers' effectiveness and provided valuable insights for stakeholders. Tools like AI-driven narrative detection helped monitor disinformation trends, and 30 researchers were granted access for further studies, including deepfakes detection and election watchdog activities.
- AI@EUElections, funded by Meta, aimed to strengthen Europe's response to AI-driven disinformation. Key deliverables included surveys, workshops, educational materials, and collaboration with EDMO to create an emergency playbook for European Elections. Insights will inform a future review of the EFCSN Code of Standards.

Fact-checking coverage of all EU member states remains a challenge, as several services are not complying with Commitment 30. While the agreements that do exist between platforms and fact-checkers have a positive impact on the fact-checking community, the duration of these agreements and fair financial remuneration continue to raise significant concerns.

The discussion about the future European disinformation repository are still ongoing. Meanwhile, we hope that the experience and learnings gained from Elections24Check will serve to further inform the conceptualization and development of the repository as well as empower the continuation of the talks for the next reporting period.

The report:

To provide prompt contextual information, the EFCSN prepared a survey and circulated it among verified members focused on agreements between fact-checkers and online services, integration of fact-checks and proper access to information. A total of 33 organisations based in 25 different countries in Europe shared their data and impressions. The analysis of the answers to the survey was combined with information of the work conducted by the EFCSN and reflected within this report.

II. Scrutiny of Ad Placements	
Commitment 2	
Relevant Signatories participating in advertising commit to prevent the misuse of advertising systems to disseminate Disinformation in the form of advertising messages. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 2.2	We will be open to assist in the development of tools and methodologies by Relevant Signatories to identify content and sources as distributing harmful Disinformation, to identify and take action on ads and promoted content that violate advertising policies regarding Disinformation mentioned in Measure 2.1.
QRE 2.2.1 [We will report on the conversations we engage in and partnerships we convene to identify content and sources that contravene policies mentioned in Measures 2.1 including information obtained by polling our members]	The EFCSN has had conversations with several signatories that touched on the specific issue of disinformation in ads.

II. Scrutiny of Ad Placements	
Commitment 3	
Relevant Signatories involved in buying, selling and placing digital advertising commit to exchange best practices and strengthen cooperation with relevant players, expanding to organisations active in the online monetisation value chain, such as online e-payment services, e-commerce platforms and relevant crowd-funding/donation systems, with the aim to increase the effectiveness of scrutiny of ad placements on their own services. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 3.1	
QRE 3.1.1 [insert wording if adapted]	The EFCSN remains accessible and open for conversations with relevant actors in order to provide information regarding possible misuse of advertisement systems and tackling purveyors of harmful disinformation.

IV. Integrity of Services	
Commitment 16	

Relevant Signatories commit to operate channels of exchange between their relevant teams in order to proactively share information about cross-platform influence operations, foreign interference in information space and relevant incidents that emerge on their respective services, with the aim of preventing dissemination and resurgence on other services, in full compliance with privacy legislation and with due consideration for security and human rights risks. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 16.1	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 16.1.1 [insert wording if adapted]	We actively participate in the sub-groups established within the Code, for instance the Crisis Subgroup, to share relevant information provided by our verified members. Moreover, we regularly conduct 1-on-1 meetings with Relevant Signatories in order to flag specific concerns we've detected with respect to their services and exchange any relevant information. Our members also participate in events and open discussion where topics such as information manipulation, foreign interference in information space and incidents regarding disinformation campaigns are addressed and discussed upon.

V. Empowering Users	
Commitment 17	
In light of the European Commission's initiatives in the area of media literacy, including the new Digital Education Action Plan, Relevant Signatories commit to continue and strengthen their efforts in the area of media literacy and critical thinking, also with the aim to include vulnerable groups. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 17.2	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 17.2.1 [insert wording if adapted]	<p>Promoting media literacy for the public benefit is part of the purpose of the Association. The EFCSN also aims to increase capacities of fact-checking organisations and offers internal training on several fields of action. In this reporting period the EFCSN has carried out two projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the AI@EUElections project, supported by Meta, the EFCSN conducted five training sessions to help train fact-checkers across Europe on best practices, new techniques and essential tools for identifying AI generated and digitally altered content. These workshops were attended by a total of 221 fact-checkers from across Europe. Recordings of each workshop, along with slides and other resources provided by the trainers, were made available to all EFCSN members. In this way, the entire network did benefit from the shared knowledge. In addition, the EFCSN in cooperation with participating member organisations conducted a public communications campaign to raise awareness of the dangers AI generated mis- and disinformation might pose and to educate the European public on how to identify and debunk AI-generated disinformation. To reach these objectives the EFCSN and participating member organisations produced a one pager, infographics and an explainer video. All this content was published in 27 different languages, spanning Europe. The video and infographics created reached a total of 12.7 million impressions. A large portion of this reach was achieved by utilising advertising budget provided by Meta. The countries covered by this media literacy campaign were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Albania ○ Belarus

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bosnia and Herzegovina ○ Croatia ○ Czechia ○ Denmark ○ France ○ Georgia ○ Germany ○ Greece ○ Hungary ○ Italy ○ Latvia ○ Lithuania ○ North Macedonia ○ Portugal ○ Serbia ○ Slovenia ○ Spain <p>2. With the support of Porticus, the EFCSN has created a mentorship program for young fact-checking organisations, pairing 10 mentee organisations with verified members of the EFCSN acting as mentors. With Factcheck.bg (Bulgaria); FactReview (Greece); Lupiga (Croatia); CESI – Center for Education, Counselling and Research (Libela) (Croatia); Medizin Transparent (Austria) and Eurocomunicare (Romania), six of these mentees are from EU member states. The program included 7 training sessions to help the organisations expand their fact-checking capacities and establish best practices, as well as prepare them for the EFCSN’s application process. Most of these training sessions were held in May and June 2024. Participating mentees also received a grant and fee waivers to encourage further engagement with the EFCSN. For both mentors and mentees, it provides networking opportunities and strengthens the cross-border connections between fact-checking organisations across Europe.</p>
Measure 17.3	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 17.3.1 [insert wording if adapted]	EFCSN’s verified members and other fact-checking organisations that collaborate with the Association work closely with on media literacy initiatives and share of practices and learnings. Moreover, we exchange insights with other relevant stakeholders such as the EDMO and its national hubs, or ERGA in order to build more complete and updated knowledge.

V. Empowering Users
Commitment 21

<p>Relevant Signatories commit to strengthen their efforts to better equip users to identify Disinformation. In particular, in order to enable users to navigate services in an informed way, Relevant Signatories commit to facilitate, across all Member States languages in which their services are provided, user access to tools for assessing the factual accuracy of sources through fact-checks from fact-checking organisations that have flagged potential Disinformation, as well as warning labels from other authoritative sources. [change wording if adapted]</p>	
Measure 21.1	<p>We are open to collaborate with relevant signatories by partnering with them to provide context and insights to develop and apply policies, features, or programs across Member States and EU languages to help users benefit.</p>
<p>QRE 21.1.1 [We will report on our engagement with Relevant Signatories on the policies, features, or programs they deploy to meet this Measure and on their availability across Member States, including information obtained by polling our members]</p>	<p>Verified members of the EFCSN have reported the following regarding their impressions on current policies, features, or programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 79% strongly agree and 9.1% agree that responses to disinformation in X/Twitter are inadequate, ineffective or nonexistent. For Telegram, the responses are similar with 87.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the aforementioned statement. Both services are described as key services in hosting disinformation and their participation in the Code is crucial for a coordinated and adequate response to the problem. • Impressions on the responses by YouTube are the most negative among the signatories of the Code, with 48.5% strongly agreeing and 36.4% agreeing to actions being inadequate, ineffective or nonexistent. The lack of fact-checking and labelling as well as an ineffective flagging system are mentioned by respondents. • When asked about Google Search responses to disinformation, respondents strongly agree (12.1%) or agree (51.5%) they are inadequate, ineffective or nonexistent (while 18.2% disagree or strongly disagree). Respondents point towards the remuneration of ClaimReview and request improved prioritisation in the search engine as immediate solutions. Responses also highlight the lack of a fact-checking program. • Regarding TikTok's, fact-checkers strongly agree (36,4%) or agree (also 36.4%) on the inadequacy, ineffectiveness or non-existence of responses. Respondents are critical with the transparency of the fact-checking program. The lack of local expertise for fact-checking in several European countries is also flagged by respondents. • Regarding Facebook, 6.1% strongly agree and 15.2% agree that responses to disinformation in the platform are inadequate or ineffective. While Instagram also gets positive impressions, it is lower than Facebook's even if the 3PFCP should work equally across both services. Respondents mention the issue of verification of political figures and the downranking of repeat offenders as areas of improvement. • A disconnect between Microsoft's LinkedIn and Bing and the European fact-checking community is reflected in the high rate of respondents that do not know about the company's responses to disinformation (72.7%, 75.8% respectively don't know).
Measure 21.2	

	We will, in light of scientific evidence, undertake and/or support research and testing conducted by relevant signatories on warnings or updates targeted to users that have interacted with content that was later actioned upon for violation of policies mentioned in this section. We will disclose and discuss findings within the Permanent Task-force in view of identifying relevant follow up actions.
QRE 21.2.1 [insert wording if adapted]	The EFCSN remains accessible to support research and testing efforts.
Measure 21.3	Where relevant signatories employ labelling and warning systems, we will be open to provide input in order for the design to be in accordance with up-to-date scientific evidence and help analyse the users' needs on how to maximise impact and usefulness of such interventions, for instance, such that they are likely to be viewed and positively received.
QRE 21.3.1 [We will report on our engagement with Relevant Signatories where we provide input on their procedures for developing and deploying labelling or warning systems, as well as maximising its usefulness for the user, including information obtained by polling our members]	The EFCSN has repeatedly given feedback to relevant signatories as a reaction to their submitted reports, also regarding the use of labels and warning systems. For instance, the EFCSN highlighted how, in TikTok, users can sometimes see "unverified" labels on videos, but cannot access the rationale and sources justifying such labels, so they are hardly empowered to make their own decisions. Investing in fact-checking labels is the major recommendation for Google Search and YouTube services, as it is believed that Claim-review does not provide consistency and sustainability in the long term.

V. Empowering Users

Commitment 25

In order to help users of private messaging services to identify possible disinformation disseminated through such services, Relevant Signatories that provide messaging applications commit to continue to build and implement features or initiatives that empower users to think critically about information they receive and help them to determine whether it is accurate, without any weakening of encryption and with due regard to the protection of privacy. [change wording if adapted]

Measure 25.1	We will be open to act as a third-party partner and work with relevant signatories to design and implement features to facilitate users' access to authoritative information without any weakening of encryption and with due regard for the protection of privacy.
QRE 25.1.1 [We will report on the tools, policies, partnerships, programs, and campaigns that involved our input, if any, including information obtained by polling our members]	<p>Six organisations reported having an agreement with Meta for WhatsApp five of which involved fact-checking coverage. The sixth respondent was not able to disclose the nature of their agreement due to an NDA. All of these organisations believe that their agreement with WhatsApp has an overall beneficial impact for their organisation, that they have clear knowledge of how their insights are used and have efficient tools provided by Meta to carry out the service.</p> <p>Compensation schemes are different, depending on messages sent, number of conversations or interactions, or articles published.</p>

	Impressions are divided regarding WhatsApp responses to disinformation: 30,3% agree or strongly agree that these are inadequate, ineffective, or nonexistent while 12,2% disagree or strongly disagree on that statement; 57,6% don't know, in part because the service is not popular in the countries of some respondents.
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VII. Empowering the fact-checking community	
Commitment 30	
Relevant Signatories commit to establish a framework for transparent, structured, open, financially sustainable, and non-discriminatory cooperation between them and the EU fact-checking community regarding resources and support made available to fact-checkers. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 30.1	We will assist Relevant Signatories in setting up agreements between them and independent fact-checking organisations (as defined in whereas (e)) to achieve fact-checking coverage in all Member States. These agreements should meet high ethical and professional standards and be based on transparent, open, consistent and non-discriminatory conditions, and will ensure the independence of fact-checkers
QRE 30.1.1 [We will poll verified members of the EFCSN in order to offer contextual information to data reported by Relevant Signatories within this QRE]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No organisations that participated in the survey reported having agreements of any kind in place with LinkedIn, X/Twitter, Telegram or YouTube. Only one organisation that participated in the survey reported having an agreement with Bing about the subscription to a fact-checking wire service. • 13 agreements were signed specifically during the reporting period (January 1 - June 30), 2 of them with Google, 6 with Meta (FB & IG), 2 with Meta (WA). and 3 with TikTok. • The sustainability of collaborations between signatories and independent fact-checking organisations depends not only on financial contributions but on the duration of these contracts. About this, 30,61% of the agreements have a duration of at least one year while 69,39% of between 6 months to one year. • In the case of Meta, all agreements are focused on providing fact-checking coverage of a European country. Regarding Facebook and Instagram, 80,8% strongly agree or agree that they have clear knowledge of how their fact-checks are used and 69,2% that efficient tools supported for monitoring disinformation in this service, but only 57,7% agree or strongly agree that the same is the case for Instagram.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of contracts signed with Google (88,9%) do not provide fact-checking coverage and are oriented towards the organisation of training, content creation or supporting other activities. All organisations that have an agreement with Google report having clear knowledge of the use of their insights and agree they count on efficient tools. The results on Google for this QRE are however slightly distorted, as the support by the Google News Initiative for the Elections24Check project, that was carried out by the EFCSN and its participating members, was not categorised as constituting an agreement with Google by almost all respondents. All agreements with TikTok that were reported were directed to providing fact-checking coverage. The majority (62,5%) believe they do not have a clear knowledge of how the platform uses the fact-checks provided nor efficient tools for monitoring disinformation in the service.
Measure 30.2	We will intercede for the community of independent European fact-checking organisations in order to assure relevant signatories provide fair financial contributions for their work to combat Disinformation on their services.
<p>QRE 30.2.3 [We will poll verified members of the EFCSN in order to offer contextual information to data reported by Relevant Signatories within this QRE]</p>	<p>Out of the fact-checking organisations that participated in the survey, only one had an agreement with Microsoft's service Bing. No organisation reported an agreement with X/Twitter, Telegram or YouTube. Concrete data on the adequacy of their financial contributions to fact-checkers cannot be provided on those services but considering the non-existence of agreements it can be assumed that their financial contributions are very much limited.</p> <p>Regarding agreements signed with the various online services, fact-checking organisations in the survey believe these collaborations have a beneficial impact for them.</p> <p>The majority of agreements signed between Meta and fact-checking organisations (66,7%) have a variable compensation linked to the number of articles published or contents rated.</p> <p>In the case of TikTok, 85,7% of respondents report that compensation is variable.</p> <p>87,5% of agreements with Google (Google Search) have a fixed compensation.</p> <p>Moreover, fact-checkers shared impressions on the signatories fair financial contributions to fact-checkers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72,7% do not believe that X/Twitter provides fair financial contributions 66,7% do not believe that Telegram provides fair financial contributions 69,7% don't know if LinkedIn provides fair financial contributions while 30,3% think they don't 66,7% don't know if Bing provides fair financial contributions while 30,3% think they don't 39,4% don't know if TikTok provides fair financial contributions; the same share of respondents (39,4%) think they don't while 21,2% think they do 51,5% do not believe Google Search provides fair financial contributions, 21,2% believe they do, while 27,3% don't know. 69,7% do not believe YouTube provides fair financial contributions while 30,3% don't know. 78,8% believe Meta provides fair financial contributions

Measure 30.3	
<p>QRE 30.3.1 [We will report on actions taken to facilitate the cross-border collaboration between fact-checkers. We will also poll verified members of the EFCSN in order to offer contextual information to data reported by Relevant Signatories within this QRE]</p>	<p>The EFCSN, aside from ensuring high-standards for fact-checking organisations, offers access to a close-knit community where members can exchange knowledge, research, trends and other insights, as well as find opportunities to collaborate. The EFCSN also organises regular training and mentorship opportunities for its members, an annual conference and various forms of support for those facing harassment and other threats.</p> <p>Over the course of the reporting period, the EFCSN has coordinated four projects to facilitate cross-border collaboration between fact-checkers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elections24Check was a pioneering effort to tackle misinformation and disinformation around the 2024 European Elections. Supported with a 1,5 million euro grant from the Google News Initiative, it has created a first-of-its-kind database to collect articles, fact-checks, debunks, and narrative reports authored by 46 EFCSN member organisations in a harmonised way, using 34 languages and coming from 36 countries. After the conclusion of the project, the database contains data on more than 3000 fact-checks. The project's objectives which were all met were to enhance the effectiveness and situational awareness of fact-checkers throughout the election period and beyond, give stakeholders and researchers valuable insights about misinformation circulating in Europe, and offer the European public access to verified, fact-checked information. To achieve these objectives, the project created a sophisticated backend and frontend for the elections24.efcsn.com website and a backoffice system. These tools assisted fact-checkers across Europe with core activities like monitoring and contextual research. They used AI-generated narrative detection to offer more detailed insights into trends in electoral disinformation. To further facilitate collaboration with other stakeholders and academia, 30 external researchers were granted access to the backoffice, allowing them to interact with the platform's extensive data. The researchers plan to utilise the platform's data for a variety of significant projects. These include analysing coordinated sharing behaviour (CSB), monitoring abnormalities and trends, conducting generative AI-related research such as deepfakes detection, and undertaking country-specific projects focused on foreign interference. They are also engaged in election watchdog activities, power dynamics analysis, and platform-specific research. Elections24Check was a successful pilot of what a comprehensive European fact-check repository could look like and provided numerous insights into how best to design and implement the various parts of such a repository (e.g. data framework, infrastructure, data ingestion workflows) so that it is as useful and insightful for as many stakeholders as possible. 2. Climate Facts Europe was a public database of debunked climate change and/or climate policy related dis- and misinformation, created in collaboration with 24 member organisations, supported by the European Climate Foundation. Its purpose was to increase cross-country collaboration while promoting access to verified climate information. As part of the project several EFCSN member organisations analysed cross-border climate-related dis- and misinformation. Their findings were published in four in-depth reports.

3. **AI@EUElections** aimed to improve and strengthen the abilities of Europe's fact-checking community and the public to counter AI-generated and digitally altered mis- and disinformation. The project was funded by Meta. From March through June 2024, the EFCSN and more than 30 member organisations completed several key deliverables. They conducted an internal survey of EFCSN members to understand the state of fact-checking AI-generated and digitally altered mis- and disinformation. Additionally, we explored the landscape of artificial intelligence, its potential misuse by disinformers, the reliability of detection tools, and potential strategies to utilise AI in debunking practices through expert interviews. To strengthen the fact-checking community's ability to identify and debunk AI-generated disinformation, five workshops for members were organised. To educate the European public and key stakeholders, we created a one-pager, an explainer video, and infographics, which were distributed across Europe via organic reach and a sponsored social media campaign. We also collaborated with the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) to build an emergency response playbook for the week of the European Elections. This was done in response to the fear many members had that a hyper realistic audio deepfake would surface just as their countries headed to the polls. Finally, the entire project provided valuable insights to inform the review of the EFCSN Code of Standards which we will conduct at the end of the year.
4. **Fact-Checking Incubator:** With the support of Porticus, the EFCSN has created a mentorship program for young fact-checking organisations, pairing 10 mentee organisations with verified members of the EFCSN acting as mentors. The program included 7 training sessions to help the organisations expand their fact-checking capacities and establish best practices, as well as prepare them for the EFCSN's application process. Most of these training sessions were held in May and June 2024. Participating mentees also received a grant and fee waivers to encourage further engagement with the EFCSN. For both mentors and mentees, it provides networking opportunities and strengthens the cross-border connections between fact-checking organisations across Europe.

From the survey

Regarding the impressions of fact-checking organisations on online platforms' actions, polled organisations regarding the contribution of signatories to fostering cross-border collaboration between fact-checking organisations. These are the results:

1. 66,7% believe Google fosters collaboration but not enough while 12,1% think that they do, 9,1% think that they don't at all. These numbers have improved in comparison to the previous reporting period as a result of the Elections24Check project which had as its main objective to foster cross-border collaboration between fact-checking organisations.
2. 30,3% believe Meta contributes to fostering cross-border collaboration while 63,6% think that they do but not enough. 6,1% think that they don't foster collaboration at all.
3. 63,6% believe that YouTube does not foster collaboration at all while 36,4% think that they do but not enough
4. 66,7% believe that TikTok does not foster collaboration at all while 33,3% think that they do but not enough
5. Around 90% believe that LinkedIn, Bing, X/Twitter and Telegram do not foster collaboration at all

Fact-checking organisations believe that providing cross-border data on disinformation and actors from different countries would give relevant insights useful for their job and provide a wider picture of disinformation at an EU-level, as we have explored in the Election24Check and Climate Fact Check projects. Improved technological tools that allow this collaboration are also much needed.

Measure 30.4	To develop the Measures above, we will be open to engage in consultations.
QRE 30.4.1 [We will report on the conversations with Relevant Signatories we engage in, including the development of the framework of cooperation described in Measures 30.3 and 30.4. Furthermore, we will poll verified members of the EFCSN in order to offer contextual information to data reported by Relevant Signatories within this QRE]	<p>The EFCSN has engaged in conversation with Relevant Signatories both privately and within the Task-force of the Code.</p> <p>The fact-checking community is willing to enter agreements with relevant signatories. Out of organisations that currently do not have a contract with them, 95,8% of them would consider an agreement with Google provided that fair remuneration is contemplated, 97% would consider the same with YouTube, 88% with TikTok, 72,7% with LinkedIn, 56,3% with Bing. On non-signatories, 78,8% would be interested in entering an agreement with X/Twitter and 75,8% with Telegram.</p> <p>Moreover, these organisations without an agreement are already investing time and work in monitoring disinformation in these platforms without any financial contribution given the need. Specifically, 100% organisations without agreement with Meta do, 84% for TikTok, 78,8% for Twitter, 72,7% for Telegram, 72,7% for YouTube, and 41,7% for Google Search.</p>

VII. Empowering the fact-checking community

Commitment 31

Relevant Signatories commit to integrate, showcase, or otherwise consistently use fact-checkers' work in their platforms' services, processes, and contents; with full coverage of all Member States and languages. [change wording if adapted]

SLI 31.1.3 – Quantitative information used for contextualisation for the SLIs 31.1.1 / 31.1.2 [change wording if adapted]	<p>The EFCSN leads the discussion regarding this SLI as Chair of the Empowerment of Fact-Checkers SG. A document was tabled proposing ideal metrics regarding the use of fact-checking for showcasing, moderating, or machine-learning purposes as well as regarding the impact of the fact-checking content used, which was commented upon and adapted to take into account the various services.</p> <p>This conversation will be reopened periodically in the light of the assessment by the EFCSN to the adequacy and relevance of the information provided by relevant signatories under this specific SLI.</p>
Data	
Measure 31.3	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 31.3.1 [insert wording if adapted]	Within the sub group on empowerment of fact-checkers chaired by the EFCSN, we had delivered a proposal agreed by members of the EFCSN for the establishment of the fact-checking repository envisioned in the Code.

	<p>The proposal includes a general overview of how the repository should be envisioned, a description of the data that members of the EFCSN will provide through the tool, information on the expected volume and scope, and a proposed timeline to continue with the discussions.</p> <p>The sub group is discussing a scheme for financial contributions that guarantees its sustainability.</p>
Measure 31.4	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 31.4.1 [insert wording if adapted]	<p>Within the steps proposed by the EFCSN for the establishment of the repository and as discussed in the Empowerment of fact-checker SG, we explore various ways in which the disinformation repository can be useful for a wide set of users, including researchers and universities. To that end, we have started reaching out to a wide range of organisations to gather their input. These discussions and meetings started taking place in early September 2024.</p>

VII. Empowering the fact-checking community		
Commitment 33		
<p>Relevant Signatories (i.e. fact-checking organisations) commit to operate on the basis of strict ethical and transparency rules, and to protect their independence. [change wording if adapted]</p>		
Measure 33.1	[insert wording if adapted]	
QRE 33.1.1 [insert wording if adapted]	<p>The EFCSN was established by a wide group of European fact-checking organisations that wanted to raise the bar and work according to the highest standards in ethics, transparency, methodology, and independence as outlined in the Code of European Standards for Independent Fact-Checking Organisations (2022). Our members agree for their actual adherence to those standards to be evaluated by two different independent academic experts every two years, and EFCSN has a complaint procedure to deal with alleged non-compliance by its members. The Code of the EFCSN is contemplated under Measure 33.1 as an instrument to comply with it.</p>	
SLI 33.1.1 - number of European fact-checkers that are IFCN- and/or EFCSN-certified [change wording if adapted]	Methodology of data measurement: We have taken into account fact-checking organisations based in EU Member or Council of Europe states, plus Belarus and Kosovo. For both networks, we have included the status of the organisations as for September 2024	
	Nr of fact-checkers IFCN-certified	Nr of members of EFCSN
Data	<p>56 signatories 18 organisations under renewal 13 organisations with certification expired</p>	<p>48 verified members 11 under review</p>

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 34	
To ensure transparency and accountability around the implementation of this Code, Relevant Signatories commit to set up and maintain a publicly available common Transparency Centre website. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 34.3	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 34.4	[insert wording if adapted]

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 35	
Signatories commit to ensure that the Transparency Centre contains all the relevant information related to the implementation of the Code’s Commitments and Measures and that this information is presented in an easy-to-understand manner, per service, and is easily searchable. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 35.2	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 35.3	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 35.4	[insert wording if adapted]

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 36	
Signatories commit to updating the relevant information contained in the Transparency Centre in a timely and complete manner. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 36.1	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 36.1.1 (for the Commitments 34-36) [insert wording if adapted]	EFCSN has not taken part of the task-force subgroup in charge of the Transparency Center but we have been in contact with other signatories in order to follow the development and correct functioning of the tool. Furthermore, we are available to signatories or other relevant actors that want to receive input from our association.

IX. Permanent Task-Force

Commitment 37

Signatories commit to participate in the permanent Task-force. The Task-force includes the Signatories of the Code and representatives from EDMO and ERGA. It is chaired by the European Commission, and includes representatives of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The Task-force can also invite relevant experts as observers to support its work. Decisions of the Task-force are made by consensus. [change wording if adapted]

Measure 37.1	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 37.2	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 37.3	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 37.4	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 37.5	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 37.6	[insert wording if adapted]
QRE 37.6.1 [insert wording if adapted]	<p>As a signatory of the Code, the EFCSN is currently part of the Task-force, specifically of the following sub-groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowerment of fact-checkers SG, which the EFCSN chairs, - Monitoring & Reporting SG, - Crisis Response SG, - Ad Scrutiny SG, - Outreach and Integration of New Signatories SG and - Generative AI SG.

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 38

The Signatories commit to dedicate adequate financial and human resources and put in place appropriate internal processes to ensure the implementation of their commitments under the Code. [change wording if adapted]

Measure 38.1	[insert wording if adapted]
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QRE 38.1.1 [insert wording if adapted]	<p>In order to work and report on our commitments under the Code, the EFCSN counts on a Policy Task-force formed by representatives of some verified members of the association, in charge of duties related to both reporting information and engaging with relevant actors, including the Task-Force and other signatories.</p> <p>The elected Governance Body of the EFCSN is ultimately responsible for following the development of the Code and ensuring its compliance. Meanwhile, verified members of the association continuously contribute by giving insights based on their experience that the EFCSN can report on to contextualise information provided by other signatories or flag possible breaches in commitments. For the task of reporting on the EFCSN commitments, verified members respond to a survey that helps reflect their impressions on the disinformation landscape and contextualise the information provided by other Signatories.</p>
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X. Monitoring of Code
Commitment 39
Signatories commit to provide to the European Commission, within 1 month after the end of the implementation period (6 months after this Code's signature) the baseline reports as set out in the Preamble. [change wording if adapted]

X. Monitoring of Code	
Commitment 40	
Signatories commit to provide regular reporting on Service Level Indicators (SLIs) and Qualitative Reporting Elements (QREs). The reports and data provided should allow for a thorough assessment of the extent of the implementation of the Code's Commitments and Measures by each Signatory, service and at Member State level. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 40.2	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 40.3	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 40.4	[insert wording if adapted]
Measure 40.5	[insert wording if adapted]

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 42

Relevant Signatories commit to provide, in special situations like elections or crisis, upon request of the European Commission, proportionate and appropriate information and data, including ad-hoc specific reports and specific chapters within the regular monitoring, in accordance with the rapid response system established by the Taskforce. [change wording if adapted]

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 43

Signatories commit to produce reports and provide data following the harmonised reporting templates and refined methodology for reporting and data disclosure, as agreed in the Task-force. [change wording if adapted]

Reporting on the service's response during an election

Reporting on the service's response during an election

2024 European Parliament Elections

Threats observed during the electoral period:

The lead-up to the elections was marked by a persistent and significant prevalence of various mis- and disinformation claims and narratives. This included efforts by domestic disinformers, for example, by weaponizing the farmers' protests to spread anti climate policy and anti EU misinformation narratives in the first half of 2024 (see [this report](#)). We also detected numerous pro-Russian narratives widely circulating all over Europe (examples [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). The EFCSN and our members were also a target of a cross-border disinformation campaign spreading pro-Russian propaganda, which was uncovered by CheckFirst and Reset.tech and dubbed "Operation Overload". The campaign did not have a great [impact on fact-checkers](#) and their editorial output.

In general terms, we monitored the misinformation landscape for several months before the elections, using the most extensive election-related fact-checking database to date set up as part of the Elections24Check project, supported by the Google News Initiative. We found that a lot of misinformation circulated about issues connected to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The second most misinformation affected topic according to the Elections24Check data was climate and climate change related misinformation. Despite a growing focus on GenAI content, and fears about the threats this poses to reliable information, the Elections24Check data, on a total of almost 3000 articles collected over 4 months, revealed that less than 2% of the verified content was rated as "AI Generated".

Mitigations in place during the electoral period:

The EFCSN coordinated three projects focused on the elections:

1. **Elections24Check** Supported with a 1,5 million euro grant from the Google News Initiative, it has created a first-of-its-kind database to collect articles, fact-checks, debunks, and narrative reports authored by 46 EFCSN member organisations in a harmonised way, using 34 languages and coming from 36 countries. After the conclusion of the project, the database contains data on more than 3000 fact-checks. The project enhanced the effectiveness and situational awareness of fact-checkers throughout the election period and beyond, gave stakeholders and researchers valuable insights about misinformation circulating in Europe, and offered the European public access to verified, fact-checked information. Elections24Check was a successful pilot of what a comprehensive European fact-check repository could look like as well as what insights and benefits it could provide for various stakeholders involved in countering dis- and misinformation. It provided numerous insights into how best to design and implement the various parts of such a repository (e.g. data framework, infrastructure, data ingestion workflows).
2. **Climate Facts Europe** was a public database of debunked climate change and/or climate policy related dis- and misinformation, created in collaboration with 24 member organisations, supported by the European Climate Foundation. Its purpose was to increase cross-country collaboration while promoting access to verified climate information. As part of the project several EFCSN member organisations analysed cross-border climate-related dis- and misinformation. Their findings were published in [four in-depth reports](#).
3. **AI@EUElections** aimed to improve and strengthen the abilities of Europe's fact-checking community and the public to counter AI-generated and digitally altered mis- and disinformation. The project was funded by Meta. From March through June 2024, the EFCSN and more than 30 participating member organisations explored the state of fact-checking AI-generated and digitally altered mis- and disinformation as well as the landscape of artificial intelligence, its potential misuse by disinformers, the reliability of detection tools, and potential strategies to utilise AI in debunking practices. To strengthen the fact-checking community's ability to identify and debunk AI-generated disinformation, five workshops for members were organised. To educate the European public and key stakeholders, we created a one-pager, an explainer video, and infographics, which were distributed across Europe via organic reach and a sponsored social media campaign. We also collaborated with the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) to build an emergency response playbook for the week of the European Elections.

Empowering Users

As part of our AI@EUElections project the EFCSN and more than 30 of our members developed and carried out a pan-European communications campaign to raise awareness about AI generated and / or digitally altered mis- and disinformation.

Awareness campaign on AI-generated and manipulated disinformation
(Commitment 21, Measure 21.1)

Description of intervention
The EFCSN and participating members produced a one pager, infographics and an explainer video. All this content was published in 27 different languages, spanning Europe.

Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
The video and infographics created reached a total of 12.7 million impressions. A large portion of this reach was achieved by utilising advertising budget provided by Meta. The countries covered by this media literacy campaign were:

- Albania
- Belarus
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Czechia
- Denmark
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- North Macedonia
- Portugal
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Spain

Empowering the Research Community

As part of the Elections24Check project we provided independent researchers access to the full data on an application basis.

Data access for researchers to fact-checking database ()

Description of intervention:

	<p>Facilitated through the Elections24Check backoffice, we provided access to the full Elections24Check dataset as well as all analytical features of the backoffice (statistics dashboard, AI-based claim clustering and narrative construction). We launched a targeted communication campaign to attract researchers' interest. This campaign included publishing a brief explaining the statistics and AI modules available on the platform.</p>
	<p>Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available:</p> <p>We received 43 applications from researchers, of which around 30 were accepted.</p> <p>The researchers plan to utilise the platform's data for a variety of significant projects. These include analysing coordinated sharing behaviour (CSB), monitoring abnormalities and trends, conducting generative AI-related research such as deepfakes detection, and undertaking country-specific projects focused on foreign interference. They are also engaged in election watchdog activities, power dynamics analysis, and platform-specific research.</p>
<p>Empowering the Fact-Checking Community</p>	
<p>To empower the fact-checking community specifically with regard to the European Elections, the EFCSN carried out two relevant projects: Elections24check (supported by the Google News Initiative) and AI@EUElections (supported by Meta).</p>	
<p>Project Elections24Check (Commitment 30, Measure 30.3)</p>	<p>Description of intervention</p> <p>Elections24Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Created a first-of-its-kind database to collect articles, fact-checks, debunks, and narrative reports authored by 46 EFCSN member organisations in a harmonised way, using 34 languages and coming from 36 countries. ● Created a sophisticated backend and frontend for the elections24.efcsn.com website and a backoffice system. These tools assisted fact-checkers across Europe with core activities like monitoring and contextual research. ● Used AI-generated narrative detection to offer more detailed insights into trends in electoral disinformation. <p>Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available</p> <p>Elections24Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contains data on more than 3000 fact-checks ● Provided a successful pilot of what a comprehensive European fact-check repository could look like and provided numerous insights into how best to design and implement the various parts of such a repository (e.g. data framework, infrastructure, data ingestion workflows) ● Enhanced the effectiveness and situational awareness of fact-checkers throughout the election period and beyond ● Received significant public resonance with 73 press mentions. In addition, the daily EDMO EU Elections Disinfo Bulletin relied heavily on Elections24Check as a data source.

Project AI@EUElections (Commitment 30, Measure 30.3)	<p>Description of intervention</p> <p>AI@EUElections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided insight to fact-checkers based on research on the state of fact-checking AI-generated and digitally altered mis- and disinformation as well as the technological and psychological landscape of artificial intelligence and how it can enhance disinformation operations. • Strengthened the abilities of Europe’s fact-checking community to identify and debunk AI-generated disinformation by organising 5 workshops for members; • Proposed standards for debunking AI-generated and digitally altered content based firmly on expert opinions and our experience during the project and EU Parliamentary Elections.
	<p>Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available</p> <p>AI@EUElections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 hours of training materials • over 200 fact-checkers attended the workshops