

Code of Practice on  
Disinformation – Report of  
Faktograf for the period of  
European Elections 2024

## Executive summary

Executive summary (max. 2 pages)

Faktograf – Association for the Informed Public is a non-profit media organization in Croatia that publishes [Faktograf.hr](https://faktograf.hr) - online media outlet specialised in fact-checking and, since March 2024, [Klimatski.hr](https://klimatski.hr) - a new media outlet focused on climate issues.

Faktograf is a verified member of the [European Fact-Checking Standards Network](#) and the [International Fact-Checking Network](#), as well as the founding member of [SEE Check](#) - the network of 6 fact-checkers in South East Europe.

[Faktograf.hr](https://faktograf.hr) and [Klimatski.hr](https://klimatski.hr) are registered as electronic publications with the Agency for Electronic Media in Croatia.

Faktograf is interested in public policies relevant for misinformation and disinformation, transparency and access to data and knowledge, good governance and democracy, as well as an enabling environment for viable journalism in the public interest, and as such is registered in the [Transparency Register](#) under ID 521295644592-54.

Faktograf is a signatory of the [Code of Practice on Disinformation](#) since June 15, 2022.

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In spring 2024 Croatia organised elections for both the European and the Croatian Parliament, so the contents, actors and channels of communications were saturated with political pre-election content, but lacking trustworthy information and abundant with misinformation and disinformation. As expected, this correlated with the growth of online harassment against journalists and fact-checkers.

Faktograf focused its activities on providing trustworthy information and debunking misinformation and disinformation to citizens in Croatia. Additionally, Faktograf engaged in promoting digital media literacy and protecting its journalists from harassment. Faktograf strengthened its cooperation with fact-checkers in the country, region, EU and globally, and continued participation in the Code of Practice Taskforce.

## Guidelines for filling out the report

### Crisis and elections reporting template

Relevant signatories are asked to provide proportionate and appropriate information and data during a period of crisis and during an election. Reporting is a part of a special chapter at the end of the harmonised reporting template and should follow the guidelines:

- The reporting of signatories' actions should be as specific to the particular crisis or election reported on as possible. To this extent, the rows on "Specific Action[s]" should be filled in with actions that are either put in place specifically for a particular event (for example a media literacy campaign on disinformation related to the Ukraine war, an information panel for the European elections), or to explain in more detail how an action that forms part of the service's general approach to implementing the Code is implemented in the specific context of the crisis or election reported on (for example, what types of narratives in a particular election/crisis would fall into scope of a particular policy of the service, what forms of advertising are ineligible).
- Signatories who are not offering very large online platform services and who follow the invitation to report on their specific actions for a particular election or crisis may adapt the reporting template as follows:
  - They may remove the "Policies and Terms and Conditions" section of the template, or use it to report on any important changes in their internal rules applicable to a particular election or crisis (for example, a change in editorial guidelines for fact-checkers specific to the particular election or crisis)
  - They may remove any Chapter Section of the Reporting Template (Scrutiny of Ads Placement, Political Advertising, Integrity of Services etc.) that is not relevant to their activities
- The harmonised reporting template should be filled in by adding additional rows for each item reported on. This means that rather than combined/bulk reporting such as "Depending on severity of violation, we demote or remove content based on policies X, Y, Z", there should be individual rows stating for example "Under Policy X, content is demoted or removed based on severity", "Under Policy Y, content [...]" etc.
- The rows should be colour-coded to indicate which service is being reported on, using the same colour code as for the overall harmonised reporting template.

Reporting should be brief and to the point, with a suggested character limit entry of 2000 characters.

### Uploading data to the Transparency Centre

The reports should be submitted to the Commission in the form of the pdf via e-mail to the address CNECT COP TASK FORCE [CNECT-COP-TASK-FORCE@ec.europa.eu](mailto:CNECT-COP-TASK-FORCE@ec.europa.eu) within the agreed deadline. Signatories will upload all data from the harmonised reporting template to the Transparency Centre, allowing easy data access and filtering within the agreed deadline. It is the responsibility of the signatories to ensure that the uploading takes place and is executed on time. Signatories are also responsible to ensure that the Transparency Centre is operational and functional by the time of the reports' submission that the data from the reports are uploaded and made accessible in the Transparency Centre within the above deadline, and that users are able to read, search, filter and download data as needed in a user-friendly way and format.

# Reporting on the signatory's response during an election

## Reporting on the signatory's response during an election

### 2024 European Parliament Elections

Threats observed during the electoral period: [suggested character limit 2000 characters].

The campaign for the European Elections was organised in Croatia in part simultaneously with the campaign for the Croatian Parliament elections, so the contents, actors and channels of communications were saturated with political pre-election content.

During both election campaigns citizens in Croatia lacked trustworthy information (including on the [decision of the Constitutional Court to forbid a political party to publicly mention who is their candidate for the Prime Minister](#)) and were exposed to misinformation and disinformation.

Having in mind that election periods are a factor that influences the frequency of harassment against fact-checkers, Faktograf also expected the growth of coordinated online harassment campaigns against journalists and fact-checkers. According to [Mapping Media Freedom](#) in Croatia in 2024 there have been 17 cases of various attacks against journalists, including three incidents against members of Faktograf. One of those was committed by a successful candidate and [now a member of the European Parliament](#).

Mitigations in place during the electoral period: [suggested character limit: 2000 characters].

In spring 2024 Faktograf focused its activities on providing trustworthy information and debunking misinformation and disinformation to citizens in Croatia. Additionally, Faktograf engaged in promoting digital media literacy and protecting its journalists from harassment, while also cooperating with fact-checkers in the country, region, EU and globally.

#### 1. providing trustworthy information

To professionally cover both election campaigns - for the European and for the Croatian Parliament, Faktograf aggregated all its reporting in the [live blog](#). It included [fact-checking the candidates' claims from the public debates](#), [exclusive publishing of unavailable minority opinions in the Constitutional Court](#), analysis of [the Constitutional Court ban](#), reporting on the [claims that political ads on Google were paid for by Polish actors](#),... Also, Faktograf started publishing a new media outlet focused on climate issues [Klimatski.hr](#) and [co-organised a debate](#) with candidates for the EP focused on the climate crisis.

#### 2. debunking misinformation

Having in mind that [Facebook exempts politicians from their third-party fact-checking program](#), Faktograf provided Meta the service of fact-checking in Croatia. Faktograf debunked a series of deepfake scams on Facebook such as [a fake video of the editor of RTL and the Croatian president](#), [a fake video of a "famous cardiologist" connected to the ruling party giving an interview to a TV host](#) and fake videos [of the Prime Minister promoting investment in a gas company](#) and of the [President promoting investment in an oil company](#).

Faktograf was also approached by TikTok and started providing fact-checking services in the period before the elections.

#### 3. promoting digital media literacy

Faktograf called its audiences to send in questions that interest them and asks for accuracy checks on topics relevant for the European Parliament elections ([One hundred days until the elections for the European Parliament - send us your questions!](#)).

Regarding the expected spread of deep fakes, Faktograf engaged in prebunking efforts such as [Elections are approaching, and AI disinformation is becoming more and more convincing](#) and [The most common topics of disinformation before the EU elections were the war in Ukraine, followed by the climate, EU policies and migration](#).

Faktograf also had a series of videos on its TikTok account.

#### **4. anti-harrasment activities**

While investigating a question from the audience on the lacking transparency of private property of a candidate for European Parliament, Faktograf's journalist Andrej Dimitrijević was verbally attacked by the candidate who also used his profiles on Facebook and Twitter to start a hateful campaign against the journalist. The Croatian Journalists Association [condemned the lynching](#), other media outlets continued with reporting on the politician's assets and his party president insisted on full disclosure that was later given to the public.

This incident, as well as two other incidents against Faktograf's journalist [Melita Vrsaljko](#), were reported to the [Mapping Media Freedom](#) database, caused [international reactions](#) and contributed to deployment of [an international mission to assess media freedom challenges in Croatia](#).

In order to protect its own fact-checking operation from risks of various threats stemming from a super election year in Croatia (such as a DDoS attack or a SLAPP), Faktograf enhanced digital and offline security and safety of its members and resources. Additionally, Faktograf has engaged in the continuation of the project [Decoding the Disinformation Playbook 2](#) with focus on disinformation tactics used by populists to intimidate and discredit journalists covering the elections to the European Parliament in 2024.

These issues were further discussed in public events, such as [the 11th GlobalFact summit](#) in July in Sarajevo, organised by the International Fact-checking Network and hosted by the [SEE Check](#) network, as well as [World Congress and Media Innovation Festival](#) in May in Sarajevo, organised by the International Press Institute.

#### **5. collaboration with the EFCSN:**

Faktograf collaborated with other fact-checkers and participated in projects organised by the EFCSN:

[Elections24Check](#) enabled building of a public database of political fact-checks, disinformation debunks, prebunking articles and narrative reports on transnational trends - in total more than 3,000 fact-checks from 46 EFCSN organisations across 36 countries and 34 languages.

[AI@EUElections](#) delivered surveys, training sessions and educational materials on best practices, new techniques and essential tools for identifying AI generated and digitally altered content. Faktograf [participated in the project](#) and [the public communications campaign](#) to raise awareness of the dangers AI generated mis- and disinformation might pose and to educate the public in Croatia on how to identify and debunk AI-generated disinformation.

[FactCRICIS](#) - European Fact-Checking Response in Climate Crises was a cross-country collaboration in detecting and debunking climate disinformation across the EU, that has been identified by members as a likely key topic for the elections.

#### **6. participation in the Code of Practice Taskforce:**

Having in mind [the Commission Guidelines on the mitigation of systemic risks for electoral processes](#) and the [Rapid Response Mechanism](#) of the Taskforce, Faktograf actively participated in the sub-groups established within the Code: Empowerment of fact-checkers, Monitoring & Reporting, Generative AI, and Crisis Response.

Although Faktograf was not approached by any platform to provide expertise relevant for risk analysis, mitigation and rapid response mechanisms in Croatia, we remain open to dialogue and engaging with all stakeholders.

[Note: Signatories are requested to provide information relevant to their particular response to the threats and challenges they observed on their service(s). They ensure that the information below provides an accurate and complete report of their relevant actions. As operational responses to crisis/election situations can vary from service to service, an absence of information should not be considered a priori a shortfall in the way a particular service has responded. Impact metrics are accurate to the best of signatories' abilities to measure them].

**Policies and Terms and Conditions**

Outline any changes to your policies

Policy	Changes (such as newly introduced policies, edits, adaptation in scope or implementation)	Rationale

**Scrutiny of Ads Placements**

Outline approaches pertinent to this chapter, highlighting similarities/commonalities and differences with regular enforcement.

<b>Specific Action applied</b> (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
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	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
<b>Political Advertising</b>	
Outline approaches pertinent to this chapter, highlighting similarities/commonalities and differences with regular enforcement.	
<b>Specific Action applied</b> (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
<b>Integrity of Services</b>	
Outline approaches pertinent to this chapter, highlighting similarities/commonalities and differences with regular enforcement.	
<b>Specific Action applied</b> (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
<b>Empowering Users</b>	
Outline approaches pertinent to this chapter, highlighting similarities/commonalities and differences with regular enforcement.	



<b>Specific Action applied</b> (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
<b>Empowering the Research Community</b>	
Outline approaches pertinent to this chapter, highlighting similarities/commonalities and differences with regular enforcement.	
<b>Specific Action applied</b> (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available
<b>Empowering the Fact-Checking Community</b>	
Outline approaches pertinent to this chapter, highlighting similarities/commonalities and differences with regular enforcement.	
<b>Specific Action applied</b> (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact including relevant metrics when available