

Expert Forum (EFOR), Romania

Transparency Report under the disinfo Code

September 2026

During 2026, Expert Forum (EFOR) focused on strengthening institutional capacity and cooperation in addressing disinformation and improving the integrity of the information environment. EFOR worked with ANCOM, Romania's Digital Services Coordinator, to support better coordination among public institutions and civil-society organisations and to clarify practical approaches to identifying and responding to coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB). This included work towards a clearer operational understanding of CIB and of the roles and responsibilities of different institutions when such behaviour affects the public information space.

In parallel, EFOR continued its long-standing work on transparency of party and campaign finance, including cooperation with the Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP), with particular attention to expenditure on media and online communication and to the implementation of the new EU rules on political advertising. To complement this institutional and regulatory work with evidence on citizens' behaviour, EFOR also carried out a national survey on the use of different media and social-media platforms as sources of information and the levels of public trust associated with them: <https://expertforum.ro/en/romania-facebook-tv>. The findings provide a more detailed picture of how different groups in Romanian society access and assess information and help inform EFOR's work on disinformation, regulation and media literacy.

EFOR also continued its long-standing monitoring of political and campaign finance, with particular attention to the connection between public party funding, media expenditure and online political advertising. In 2026, EFOR published analyses of party financing and sanctions and monitored the implementation of the EU Regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising (TTPA). This included tracking transparency notices for contracts between political parties and media providers and comparing them with information on party subsidies and expenditure. EFOR found significant continuing transparency gaps concerning the ultimate beneficiaries of political spending, sources of financing and the use of targeting techniques. The results and underlying information are also made accessible to journalists, researchers and citizens through EFOR's public monitoring and data tools, including banipartide.ro.

Since 2025, EFOR has been a partner in FACT, the EDMO hub covering Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, together with investigative media and research organisations from the region: <https://fact-hub.eu>. Within the hub, EFOR contributes research and expertise on elections, disinformation and democratic resilience. EFOR also contributes empirical research on the information environment, including its 2026 survey on social-media use and trust in media in Romania. A particularly important part of EFOR's role in FACT is responsibility for media and information literacy activities. Through the FACT Youth Hub, EFOR develops and implements activities

aimed at helping young people recognise manipulation, understand how information circulates online, strengthen digital and critical-thinking skills, and translate these skills into practical civic engagement.

The FACT media-literacy work builds on EFOR's broader civic-education programmes and established networks of teachers and young people. Through School for Democracy and initiatives such as *Let's Talk About YOU(th)!*, EFOR combines media literacy with active citizenship, public speaking, evidence-based argument and engagement with problems affecting local communities: <https://scoalapentrudemocratie.ro/lets-talk-about-youth>. Young participants learn to identify a relevant issue, research reliable information and evidence, distinguish substantiated arguments from manipulation, formulate realistic solutions and communicate them publicly. EFOR also works directly with teachers, developing practical educational tools that can be used beyond individual workshops and therefore multiplying their reach in schools and communities. This combination of disinformation research, media literacy and civic education allows findings from EFOR and FACT investigations to be translated into educational activities that strengthen young people's capacity to navigate the online information environment critically and participate in democratic life.