

Code of Practice on
Disinformation – Report of
Science Feedback for the
period January – June 2024

Executive summary

Science Feedback's main effort when it came to protecting the integrity of the European Parliamentary elections was our active participation in the Rapid Response System (RRS) set up under this Code of Practice.

The existence of this RRS was a key factor in our decision to step up our monitoring efforts of the election campaign period, as it offered a window of transparency into platforms' decision-making processes when it came to approaching election-related disinformation.

Making use of the possibility for a fruitful exchange of information with other stakeholders, Science Feedback signalled to platform signatories a number of pieces of content which contained election-related disinformation that was likely to breach platforms' guidelines or applicable legislation.

The content flagged related to:

- the [enforcement of EU sanctions on Russian media entities and personalities](#), some of whose content was still available to EU audiences on various platforms despite the law prohibiting it,
- medical misinformation, notably misleading information about Covid-19,
- the spreading of conspiracy theories around the attack on Slovak Prime Minister R. Fico,
- foreign interference in EU democratic processes through the use of social media accounts based in Africa posting ads that targeted French audiences and attacked domestic political actors using Russia-aligned messaging,
- the use of fake accounts impersonating politicians or political parties,
- defamation.

Reporting on the signatory's response during an election

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2024 European Parliament Elections

Overall, Science Feedback did not detect any extremely acute disinformation event specifically related to the EP elections.

However, the European elections saw an exacerbation of preexisting disinformation trends. Disinformation was either directly related to the EU (e.g. misrepresenting the functioning of EU institutions, specific policies proposed or voted at the EU level, misrepresentation of the competencies devolved to the EU) or simply used the elections to feed preexisting narratives that had at best an indirect relationship with the election at hand (e.g. narratives around law and order, birth rates, the Israel-Gaza conflict, developments around the war in Ukraine...).

In Science Feedback's view, the EP elections served mostly as a focal point for an acceleration of preexisting disinformation phenomena. As such, time-bound responses such as the Rapid Response System are an extremely useful complement to, but cannot be a substitute for, strengthened sustained action to tackle disinformation.

Science Feedback increased the resources dedicated to general monitoring of online platforms for short-term disinformation events, by dedicating one full-time staff member to online patrols, tasked with identifying issues and developments that would fall within the scope of the RRS.