

**Code of Practice on Disinformation
Report of Debunk.org
January – July 2023**



Executive summary

Debunk.org is an independent technology think tank and NGO that carries out disinformation analysis and runs educational media literacy campaigns in 8 countries. The organisation has worked in the disinformation countering field since 2017.

Debunk.org IN A NUTSHELL



Analyses disinformation in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Georgia and Montenegro



Monitors online election campaigns,



Organises community training,



Carries out media literacy campaigns,

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Our team publishes 100+ reports per year focusing on false and misleading coverage regarding [the migration crisis](#) on the EU border with Belarus, [COVID-19](#), [NATO](#), [hybrid warfare](#), [energy politics](#), and monitoring [elections](#).

In 2022, Debunk.org was a part of the **Ukraine War Disinfo Work Group**, which unites NGO's and research centres from 14 countries and provides [weekly reports](#) on disinformation spread by the Kremlin about its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Recently, Debunk.org started a **cooperation with Vilnius University** and established the [Baltic Disinformation Observatory](#), the main goal of which is to carry out multidisciplinary research into this topic. Moreover, Debunk.org successfully **worked together with Lithuanian public broadcaster LRT** on an [investigation](#) of disinformation actors active on Facebook.

The organisation also participates in activities organised by the [Radicalisation Awareness Network](#) (RAN Practitioners), which connects frontline practitioners from across Europe to exchange knowledge, first-hand experiences, and approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism in all its forms.

Notably, Debunk.org was also included amongst top leaders in the RoW100 list:

<https://restofworld.org/profile/viktoras-dauksas/> <https://restofworld.org/row100/>

As for **media literacy activities**, in 2021 Debunk.org launched the [Civic Resilience Course](#), which is now available in Lithuania and Montenegro. In 90 minutes, students are provided with basic skills of source and content analysis and helps to bolster their critical thinking.

Lithuania has been a leader in countering disinformation for more than a decade. In 2022, the incredible creatives from the Dutch public broadcaster made a [documentary](#) about disinformation countering efforts in the country, featuring Debunk.org alongside NFIU Lithuania, Lithuanian Armed forces, and the grassroots movement of volunteer fact-checkers "elves".

Commitment 12	
Relevant Signatories commit to increase oversight of political and issue advertising and constructively assist, as appropriate, in the creation, implementation and improvement of political or issue advertising policies and practices.	
Measure 12.1	N/A for this reporting period
Measure 12.2	N/A for this reporting period
Measure 12.3	N/A for this reporting period

Commitment 13	
Relevant Signatories commit to increase oversight of political and issue advertising and constructively assist, as appropriate, in the creation, implementation and improvement of political or issue advertising policies and practices.	
Measure 13.1	Debunk.org monitors known disinformation-spreading websites in Lithuania and collects examples of advertising which violates community standards. In 2023, Debunk.org’s team noticed on Facebook, where pages with a substantial follower count were hacked and then used to publish advertisement to scam websites (usually investment related).
Measure 13.2	As three elections will be happening in 2024 in Lithuania (the Presidential, Parliamentary, and European Parliament elections), Debunk.org is preparing to collect and analyze potential violations of political advertisement. Based on the experience gained in 2020 , Debunk.org’s team plans to focus on social media advertising.
Measure 13.3	Debunk.org will alert fellow Signatories to issues in the implementation or enforcement of political or issue advertising policies or of this Code, as soon as the analysis carried out is ready to be published.
QRE 13.1.1	Through the Task-force, the Relevant Signatories will convene, at least annually, an appropriately resourced discussion around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - novel risks in political advertising to develop coordinated policy - ongoing discussions on blackout periods - independent scrutiny of political or issue advertising
Data:	N/A for this reporting period

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.	
Measure 16.1	Debunk.org participated in meetings of the Generative AI Subgroup.
QRE 16.1.1	N/A for this reporting period

SLI 16.1.1	N/A for this reporting period
Measure 16.2	Debunk.org continuously researches emerging threats in the information environment, including new disinformation channels and actors that employ them.
QRE 16.2.1:	Debunk.org conducted an investigation together with the Lithuanian National Broadcaster LRT on a new, "censorship free" social media platform that emerged in Lithuania, 77.lt. Prominent actors known for spreading false information, including some politicians and public figures, are promoting this platform on their social media channels, encouraging people to join. Since there are no moderation mechanisms in place, anybody can share virtually anything. Coordinated inauthentic behaviour was also found on 77.lt. Investigation in Lithuanian is available here: https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lrt-tyrimai/5/2025164/uspaskicho-ir-blazytes-fondu-pinigai-nesistemine-nuomonems-platinti

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.				
Measure 17.2	Debunk.org will develop and implement activities to improve media literacy and critical thinking, such as campaigns to raise awareness and resilience to disinformation. As media literacy is not a part of the official curriculum in Lithuanian schools, the objective of these activities will be to bridge this gap and provide readily available solutions for educators.			
QRE 17.2.1	Debunk.org developed a media literacy course "InfoShield" which is hosted on the Kahoot platform. The course will serve both as a tool for teachers to use in the classroom, and a useful exercise for anybody who wants to learn the basics of recognizing falsehoods online. The course will be available in English, Lithuanian, and Montenegrin languages, it is scheduled to be launched in October 2023. Since January 2023, Debunk.org organized 5 live events in Lithuanian schools based in regional cities together with NATO Force Integration Unit and NATO eFP Lithuania.			
SLI 17.2.1:	Relevant Signatories report on number of media literacy and awareness raising activities organised and or participated in and will share quantitative information pertinent to show the effects of the campaigns they build or support at the Member State level (for instance: list of Member States where those activities took place; reach of campaigns; engagement these activities have generated; number of interactions with online assets; number of participants).			
	<i>Number of media literacy campaigns organised</i>	<i>Reach of the media literacy campaigns</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Other metrics</i>
Data:	6	N/A	Approx. 400	N/A

Commitment 29				
Relevant Signatories commit to conduct research based on transparent methodology and ethical standards, as well as to share datasets, research findings and methodologies with relevant audiences.				
Measure 29.1	Debunk.org is pleased to confirm that it uses transparent methodologies and ethical standards to conduct analysis into information influence campaigns, emerging disinformation narratives in the region, and coordinated inauthentic behaviour on social media. All analysis is based on open-source materials.			
QRE 29.1.1	All research conducted by Debunk.org is being publicized on debunk.org website and social media channels. Information about the methodology and policies is also available on the website.			
QRE 29.1.2	Resources of Debunk.org were made available in the Transparency Centre.			
QRE 29.1.3	Research results conducted by Debunk.org are always publicized through all available channels, ranging from closed meetings with representatives of relevant institutions, to public communication campaigns, aiming to inform the citizens about the latest findings.			
SLI 29.1.1	As Debunk.org does not collect data on accumulative reach of every research project which was publicized, the numbers provided in this table will provide an example of one communication campaign. The following data showcases the reach of communication about the funding attributed by the Russian state to the state-owned media. Text version: https://www.debunk.org/kremlin-spent-1-9-billion-usd-on-propaganda-last-year-the-budget-exceeded-by-a-quarter Video version: https://youtu.be/X5sQcAqv-JQ			
	<i>Number of media mentions</i>	<i>Estimated reach of media publications</i>	<i>Number of languages</i>	<i>Type of media outlet</i>
Data:	41	3.6 million	6	TV, radio, news websites, social media
Measure 29.2	N/A for this reporting period			

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.	
Measure 37.1	Debunk.org participates in the Generative AI Subgroup.

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.

N/A for this reporting period

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.