

Code of Practice on
Disinformation – Report of
European Fact-Checking
Standards Network for the
period July 1 to December 31,
2024

Table of Content

II. Scrutiny of Ad Placements	1
Commitment 2	1
Commitment 3	1
Commitment 16	1
V. Empowering Users	2
Commitment 17	2
Commitment 21	2
Commitment 25	3
VII. Empowering the fact-checking community	3
Commitment 30	3
Commitment 31	4
Commitment 33	5
VIII. Transparency Centre	5
Commitment 34	5
Commitment 35	5
Commitment 36	6
IX. Permanent Task-Force	6
Commitment 37	6
X. Monitoring of Code	7
Commitment 38	7
Commitment 39	7
Commitment 40	7
Commitment 42	8
Commitment 43	8
Reporting on the service's response during a period of crisis	9
[Name of crisis]	10
Reporting on the service's response during an election	13
2024 European Parliament Elections	14

Executive summary

In the past reporting period, the integrity of digital information spaces in Europe has come under pressure. Political shifts outside of the EU and increased foreign interference have emboldened domestic disinformers. At the same time, large digital platforms appear to be disengaging from the fight against misinformation and disinformation. In light of these developments, the work of the EFCSN and its member organizations is more important than ever.

With regard to the Code of Practice, the EFCSN's work was focused on the conversion of the Code of Practice on Disinformation into a Code of Conduct under the DSA, which was finalized in February 2025. This transition marks a pivotal step toward a safer information space, reinforcing the European Union's commitment to combating disinformation.

Fact-checking is an essential part of reducing the harms of misinformation, which Executive Vice-President Henna Virkkunen highlighted in her opinion on the Code conversion. "Independent, impartial fact-checking can significantly contribute to identifying and addressing risks linked with the dissemination of disinformation, negative effects on civic discourse, and electoral integrity while fully respecting freedom of expression."

In particular, the EFCSN emphasizes the importance of fact-checking by professional, independent fact-checkers, as the European Board for Digital Services similarly affirmed in its comments on the conversion. "As regards fact-checking, the Board notes that, as set out further above, it considers it an effective instrument to address disinformation and encourages VLOPs and VLOSEs signatories to apply a multi-layered approach by including such third-party input and not only rely on automatic detection, recommender systems or user reporting tools."

The conversion of the Code brings legal strength to the initiative by serving as a significant and meaningful benchmark of DSA compliance for VLOPSEs.

However, this achievement is tempered by concerns regarding the diminished commitments from key platform signatories. Notably, major platform services such as Google Search, YouTube, and LinkedIn have withdrawn entirely from the fact-checking chapter of the Code, thereby reducing their engagement with fact-checkers and limiting users' access to verified information.

These developments underscore the critical need for robust enforcement of the DSA and sustained collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of measures designed to protect the European information ecosystem.

About the EFCSN

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 60 organisations, 40 of which are based in EU member states and 20 in EU neighbouring countries. Together, the EFCSN member organisations cover most official languages in the EU.

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 assessors and the EFCSN Governance Body. The commitment of verified members with independent and quality fact-checking activities as

well as the belief that promoting standards and collaboration is key in the fight against disinformation.

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. Additionally, the EFCSN advocates for the integrity of information spaces and holds influential actors to account.

As the EFCSN submitted its last transparency report in September 2024, covering the reporting period January 1 to June 30, 2024, this report covers the period from July 1 to December 31, 2024. The previous edition also contains detailed information about our activities to ensure the integrity of the European Elections 2024. Thus, we do not report on our response during an election in this edition.

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 no conversations with relevant signatories that touched on the specific issue of disinformation in ads in the last reporting period. The EFCSN remains 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..

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. 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. On October 29, 2024, the EFCSN held its annual conference in Brussels bringing together 150 fact-checkers, stakeholders and experts to discuss pressing issues and exchange information.

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]	Promoting media literacy for the public benefit is part of the purpose of the Association. To that end, the EFCSN has endorsed the EDMO Guidelines for Effective Media Literacy Initiatives in October 2024. The EFCSN also aims to increase capacities of fact-checking organisations and offers internal training on several fields of action. On October 28, the EFCSN organized a workshop with all participating members of the FactCRICIS project to discuss – among other things – various approaches to prebunking. The following day the EFCSN held its annual conference in Brussels bringing together 150 fact-checkers, stakeholders and experts to discuss pressing issues and exchange information.
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

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]

Measure 21.1	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.
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]	Independent academic research as well as data presented by Meta in its report have shown that fact-check labels are widely effective. We have shared these insights with relevant signatories numerous times in the past.
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. 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]	Nothing to report.

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]	[no polling data; what to report?]
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.
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]	[no polling data; what to report?]
Measure 30.3	
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>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 two projects to facilitate cross-border collaboration between fact-checkers.</p>

	<p>FactCRICIS: Launched in May 2024 and co-funded by the European Union, FactCRICIS aims to enhance the ability of European fact-checking organizations to respond to crises, particularly those linked to climate change. The project seeks to foster faster, more coordinated, and more impactful responses to climate misinformation by equipping fact-checkers with advanced tools, expert networks, and improved methodologies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consortium of Diverse Partners: The European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN) has brought together 25 European member organizations, working alongside researchers and technological experts. This collaborative effort ensures that fact-checkers have access to cutting-edge technological solutions and scientifically backed insights, strengthening their ability to counter climate-related falsehoods effectively. ● Development of a Comprehensive Resource Package: A core objective of FactCRICIS is to create a robust resource package that blends advanced technological tools with climate expertise. This package is designed to help fact-checkers analyze, verify, and debunk misinformation more efficiently, ensuring that responses are rapid, data-driven, and scientifically sound. ● EuroClimateCheck Experts Database: In January 2025, EFCSN called climate researchers to join a database of experts. This initiative aims to facilitate collaboration between fact-checkers and climate scientists, providing organizations with quick, secure access to verified experts. This network enhances the ability to debunk complex climate narratives effectively across Europe. As of the writing of this report, the Experts Database holds more than 180 climate experts from top-notch institutions around Europe and the Globe. ● EuroClimateCheck Fact-Checks & Prebunks Database: To support fact-checkers in their work, we have designed a specialized database to collect, store, and analyze climate-related misinformation and fact-check data. This database includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narratives tracking and categorization: The system identifies emerging climate falsehoods and tracks their spread across different media and social platforms. ○ Fact-checking contribution system: Fact-checkers can upload analyses, ensuring transparency and a collaborative approach to debunking climate misinformation. ○ Data analysis tools: The database integrates trend analysis capabilities to help detect patterns in climate misinformation, allowing for more proactive responses. <p>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. Mentees and mentors were matched based on concrete needs, experiences and expectations from the program. The training phase ran through April-July 2024. 27 training sessions were organized. The mentoring process ran through August-October 2024. Mentors and mentees had one-to-one meetings based on their concrete needs, requests and projections. A mid-term meeting was organized on 25 June in Sarajevo (BiH) in a hybrid format and the final event was organized in Brussels on 30 October 2024 in hybrid format too. For both mentors and mentees, it provides networking opportunities and strengthens the cross-border connections between fact-checking organisations across Europe.</p>
Measure 30.4	To develop the Measures above, we will be open to engage in consultations.

<p>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>	<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.</p>
---	---

<p align="center">VII. Empowering the fact-checking community</p>	
<p align="center">Commitment 31</p>	
<p>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]</p>	
<p>SLI 31.1.3 – Quantitative information used for contextualisation for the SLIs 31.1.1 / 31.1.2 [change wording if adapted]</p>	<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>
<p>Data</p>	
<p>Measure 31.3</p>	<p>[insert wording if adapted]</p>
<p>QRE 31.3.1 [insert wording if adapted]</p>	<p>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> <p>The proposal included 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. We envision the repository to be of utmost use for all stakeholders in the information integrity ecosystem as it will serve to collect extensive metadata about fact-checks and disinformation claims, content and sources.</p> <p>Considering that all platform signatories have unsubscribed from this Measure, we are reassessing the situation. We remain committed to building, feeding and maintaining such a repository as pilot projects such as Elections24Check have proven its usefulness.</p>
<p>Measure 31.4</p>	<p>[insert wording if adapted]</p>
<p>QRE 31.4.1 [insert wording if adapted]</p>	

	<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		
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]		
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 March 2025.	
	Nr of fact-checkers IFCN-certified	Nr of members of EFCSN
Data	<p>68 signatories 10 organisations under renewal 9 organisations with certification expired</p>	<p>60 verified members 4 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]
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.</p>

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]

