

Protecting the independence of Media in times of disinformation

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Programme

- Introduction
- HLEG
- Communication of the EC
- Countering disinformation (Fakenews) while safeguarding independence of the media/freedom of information
- What can you do?
- Discussion



European High Level
EXPERT GROUP ON FAKE NEWS



39 members



Experts from civil society, social media platforms, news media & academia



Objective: advice the Commission on tackling fake news



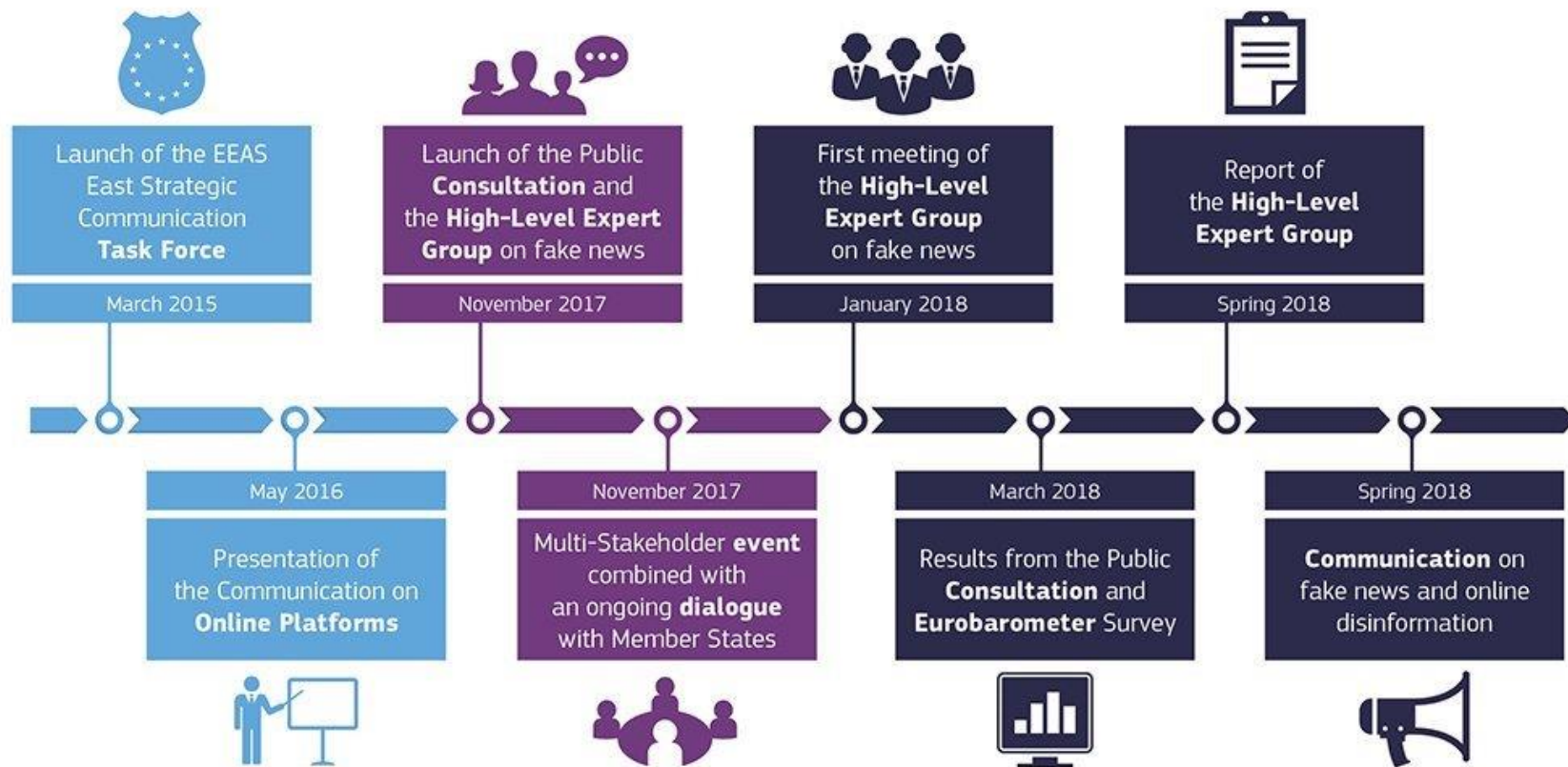
First meeting on 15 January 2018

#TackleFakeNews
bit.ly/tacklefakenews



Frame

Tackling Fake News in the EU



The Commission's Representations in the EU Member States and external delegations in third countries will participate in the debate and gather information on national rules and initiatives addressing the spread of fake news in their countries.



Task of the HLEG

Advise the Commission on:

- scoping the phenomenon of fake news
- defining the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders
- grasping the international dimension
- taking stock of the positions at stake
- and formulating recommendations.

(in about six weeks)



The Report

1. Problem definition
2. Measures already taken by various stakeholders
3. Key principles and general, short- and long-term objectives
4. Responses and actions
 - a) Transparency
 - b) Media literacy
 - c) Empowerment of users and journalists
 - d) Diversity and sustainability
 - e) Process and evaluation
5. Conclusions: summary of actions by stakeholders



Multidimensional Approach

Five pillars:

1. enhance transparency of the online news ecosystem,
2. promote and sharpen the use of media literacy approaches to counter disinformation and help users navigate our media environment,
3. develop tools for empowering users and journalists and foster a positive engagement with fast-evolving information technologies,
4. safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the European news media ecosystem, and
5. calibrate the effectiveness of the responses through continuous research on the impact of disinformation in Europe and an engagement process if technically feasible, be accompanied by related news suggestions



- short term

The Recommendations for the EC

- Facilitate the creation of a **multi-stakeholder Coalition against disinformation**
- Monitor self-regulatory measures
- Support the establishment of European Centres for research on disinformation
- Pursuing and intensifying efforts in support of media innovation projects,



- long term

The Recommendations for the EC

- Sharpen actions in support of media and information literacy for all citizens
- Increase funding in support for quality journalism
- Promote research and innovation on improving technologies for online media services
- Support the establishment of European Centres for research on disinformation
- Provide guidance to Member States on State aid rules to the media sector



Recommendations for Member States

- **To refrain from interfering with editorial independence of media**
- Commitment to media literacy
- Setting up of a public funding in accordance with State Aid rules to improve the sustainability and pluralism of the new media landscape



Recommendations for other stakeholders

- Definition of a multistakeholder Code of Practices based on the key principles described in the HLEG Report
 - *Platforms to play a pivotal role*
- Active participation within the proposed European Centres for Research on Disinformation
- Ensure the highest level of compliance with ethical and professional standards
- Continue in investing in quality journalism
- Civil society to build a community of practice linking different media literacy organisations at EU level
- Establishment of a Coalition including all relevant stakeholders



Code of Practices

Code of Practices reflecting the respective roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders, especially online platforms, media organisations, fact-checking and research organisations.



Task for media (news) organisations

- refer to the existing journalism deontological codes, ethics and standards to guarantee quality in the methods in which news is produced,
- including guidelines issued by international organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists or national bodies.
- It is also suggested that, in this context, the role played by Press Councils and their European organisation, the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE), should be highlighted, including as regards the implementation of source transparency indicators



Start self regulation social media platforms

10 key principles

1. Platforms should **adapt their advertising policies**, including adhering to “follow-the-money” principle, whilst preventing incentives that leads to disinformation, such as to discourage the dissemination and amplification of disinformation for profit. These policies must be based on clear, transparent, and non-discriminatory criteria;
2. Platforms should **ensure transparency and public accountability** with regard to the processing of users’ data for advertisement placements, with due respect to privacy, freedom of expression and media pluralism;
3. Platforms should **ensure that sponsored content**, including political advertising, is appropriately **distinguished** from other content;
4. Platforms **should take the necessary measures to enable privacy-compliant access to data for fact-checking and research activities**;
5. Platforms should make available to their users advanced settings and controls to **empower them to customise their online experience**;



10 key principles

6. Platforms should, in cooperation with public and private European news outlets, where appropriate **take effective measures to improve the visibility of reliable, trustworthy news and facilitate users' access to it;**
7. Where appropriate, **trending news items should**, if technically feasible, **be accompanied by related news suggestions;**
8. Platforms should, where appropriate, provide user-friendly tools to **enable users to link up with trusted fact-checking sources** and allow users to exercise their right to reply;
9. Platforms that apply flagging and trust systems that rely on users should design safeguards against their abuse by users;
10. Platforms should cooperate by i.a. **providing relevant data on the functioning of their services including data for independent investigation by academic researchers and general information on algorithms** in order to find a common approach to address the dissemination and amplification of disinformation.



↻ Mariya Gabriel Retweeted



DigitalSingleMarket ✓ @DSMeu · Mar 12

"We now have a wide array of material that will help us put forward a number of options to better address the risks posed by #disinformation spread online."

@GabrielMariya bit.ly/2HpOBud #fakenews #tacklefakenews



↻ 12

♥ 28

Communication of the EC

- A Code of Practice on Disinformation
- An independent European network of fact-checkers
- A secure European online platform on disinformation
- Enhancing media literacy
- Support for Member States in ensuring the resilience of elections
- Promotion of voluntary online identification systems
- Support for quality and diversified information:
- A Coordinated Strategic Communication Policy aimed at countering false narratives about Europe and tackling disinformation within and outside the EU.



Important notes:

- Fakenews can be used to because it has been appropriated by some politicians and their supporters, who use the term to dismiss coverage that they find disagreeable, and has thus become a weapon with which powerful actors can interfere in circulation of information and attack and undermine independent news media.
- Government institutions should refrain from judging whether news is false, fake, good or bad. Mistakes are easily made, which harms trust in media and government. Moreover; it harms the indepence of the media and freedom of information. Big risk of censorship.



What could you, ombudsman, do?

- Stay sharp. Make your media organisations live up to their journalistic standards and codes
- Organise meetings (roundtables) to discuss strategies to cope with disinformation and ways to dilute it.
- Promote the (importance of) these standards and codes
- Enhance the availability of time for journalist to do their work according to journalistic codes
- Enhance the availability of tools for journalist, so they will be able to identify disinformation
- Safeguard freedom of information and freedom of press



Discussion

