

European Digital Media Observatory

D.17 Public Report

Project Number:	LC-01935415
Start date of the project:	15/01/2023
Duration of the project:	30
Period covered by the report:	from 16/12/2023 to 15/12/2024
Submission date:	December 2024

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Introduction

The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) was launched in June 2020 and in January 2023 the project entered a second mandate¹. EDMO is an independent observatory bringing together fact-checkers, academic researchers' experts and practitioners with expertise in the field of online disinformation, journalist-driven media, and media literacy practitioners. It promotes scientific knowledge on online disinformation, advances the development of EU fact-checking services, and supports media literacy programs. EDMO also provides policy research and analysis. This report describes deliverables and activities fulfilled by EDMO in the second year of its second mandate from December 2023 to December 2024.



¹ EDMO is based on a consortium which grew from the first to the second phase of the project also given the growing number of tasks. The current consortium is composed of the European University Institute acting as coordinator – with both the Florence School of Transnational Governance (STG) and the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) – the Athens Technology Center (ATC), University Aarhus (in particular DATALAB – Center for Digital Social Research), Pagella Politica (at The Fact-checking Factory) with the addition of the University of Amsterdam, Media & Learning Association and Europe’s Media Lab as well as two subcontractors namely the Integrity Institute and GLOBSEC.

Task 1 – Operate an Online Platform

Task I of EDMO deals with the set-up and operations of Truly Media, a secure online platform supporting the detection and analysis of disinformation campaigns, and of a web portal providing public information to raise awareness about disinformation.

The task also deals with the maintenance and update of EDMO's web portal. The portal provides access to fact-checking, research, policy-relevant and educational resources, including material in support of awareness-raising campaigns. A new version of the portal was publicly released in January 2024, after a major re-design of both the front and back end of the portal.

During the second year of EDMO's II operation, the main activities tackled under Task I include the operation and enhancement of EDMO's platform with a new synthetic audio detection service, the development of a Help Center in the platform, accessibility improvements in both EDMO's web portal and platform, the development of new analytics and interactive visualizations for EDMO's archive of fact-checks to help users gain fine-grained insights into the trends, patterns, and geographic distribution of disinformation, and last but not least the continuous maintenance and update of EDMO's re-designed web portal.

Activities

Operate, support, and enhance EDMO's secure collaborative platform

This activity deals with the operation of Truly Media and its enhancement with new functionalities, services, and tools for fact-checking and academic research activities. Besides bug fixes and general maintenance tasks, the main new features, implemented in consultation with EDMO's partners and Hubs' representatives, include:

- The integration of a new synthetic audio detection tool.
- The setting up of a new Help Centre and an in-app tutorial.
- The installation of an accessibility menu.
- New functionalities for data visualizations in EDMO's archive of fact-checks.
- Updates and improvements to the fact-checks archive.

Synthetic audio detection service

Given the increasing circulation of audio deepfakes, a new AI service has been integrated in the platform that allows users to check whether an audio is synthetically

generated or not. The service can be used to detect a variety of spoofing, spam, or disinformation attempts, including the use of synthetic voices and the playback of voice recordings. The generated verification scores represent the probability of a positive result and are decimal numbers ranging from 0 to 1 that can be intuitively interpreted.

User support and onboarding features

Users of Truly Media are now provided with a newly launched Help Centre. A dedicated section with explanatory videos helps the user delve into Truly Media's main features in a structured manner. Videos have been divided based on the main functionalities, such as Find, Organize, and Verify. The documentation section provides information on more practical matters, as well as troubleshooting information.

Finally, to improve the onboarding experience of new users and assist them in quickly getting started and understanding the platform, in-app tutorials were released to walk new users through the main platform functionalities in an interactive way.

Accessibility improvements

The Truly Media platform now includes a dedicated accessibility menu, designed to enhance usability and access for all users, especially those with disabilities. This feature allows users to customize the platform's visual and navigational aspects, offering options like adjusting font sizes, color contrasts, and screen reading aids, ensuring an inclusive experience. The implementation of the accessibility menu is part of a broader effort to make Truly Media's interface more user-friendly and accessible, supporting diverse user needs within the EDMO framework. As part of this effort, improvements were also made to EDMO's web portal to enhance its accessibility (for more details, see section 2.2.2 below).

Analytics and visual insights in EDMO's fact-checks archive

The platform provides access to a collection of fact-checks produced by the EDMO hubs and other members of EDMO's fact-checking network. The fact-check archive is exposed as a widget inside EDMO's portal. With the use of the widget the user is able to search and browse among the published fact-checks. The archive of fact-checks has been enhanced with analytics and visualizations showing a) the number of fact-checks over time, b) the distribution of fact-checks by language, c) the contribution of each EDMO Hub to the archive, and d) fact-checks per provider/authoring organization.

In a consecutive release, more sophisticated analytics and interactive visualizations have been developed to help users gain fine-grained insights into the trends, patterns,

and geographic distribution of disinformation. The visualization types include pie charts, map charts, and time series about EDMO's debunk articles based on country of origin and topic. To enhance user insights about the spread of disinformation, data about disinformation narratives was extracted, by employing machine learning techniques (clustering) and Large Language Models (LLMs) to track the most widespread disinformation narratives and filter results based on the country and release date of related debunk articles.

General updates and improvements in EDMO's fact-check archive

A new functionality has been developed that enables users to download data from the archive for further research and analysis purposes, including filtering options. In October 2024, the archive contained more than 13.000 fact-checks in 21 languages, coming from 13 Hubs and over 40 organisations.

Operate, update, and maintain EDMO's web portal

Content updates

The website is constantly updated in line with the content produced by EDMO and the Network of EDMO Hubs, including coverage of prominent events, such as the 2024 European Elections and other national electoral processes in the US, Moldova, Georgia and Romania, as well as and topical issues such as climate, artificial intelligence, media literacy best practices and more.

Accessibility improvements

To enhance the website's accessibility standards and achieve an average accessibility score of around 90%, a series of adjustments were implemented. These included additions of Alt text to all images, icons and graphics, color adjustments and underlined links, to the benefit of individuals with visual impairments. Moreover, the structure of HTML headings and tags was reorganized to improve both readability and compliance with semantic HTML standards.

Automation of EDMO Hubs content contributions

To streamline the process of integrating content from the EDMO Hubs into EDMO's web portal, an automation system has been developed to replace manual submissions via email or forms. Each hub can now provide an RSS feed containing their fact-checks, reports, events, and news, thereby reducing administrative effort, improving consistency and collaboration, while supporting multilingual content.

Task 2 – Governance of EDMO

Since the first phase of the project, EDMO's governance has been refined to better streamline its functioning and ensure wider representativeness at the level of the EDMO Network and effective outreach². The governance is now made of three bodies:

- the **Executive Board**
- the **Advisory Council**
- the **Management Committee**

EDMO's Governance Charter and Guiding Principles are available on the EDMO Website. For greater transparency and accountability, conflict-of-interest statements by members of both the Executive Board and Advisory Council are also made publicly available in the governance section of the website. The work of the three bodies is managed and coordinated by EDMO's Secretary-General Paula Gori (European University Institute).

The governance structure reflects the principle that EDMO and its Hubs form a Network made of autonomous and coordinated project consortia.

The Executive Board

The Executive Board meets monthly, either online or in presence, and is responsible for strategic and operational decision-making. It is chaired by Paolo Cesarini (European University Institute) and can count on the strategic support of the Advisory Council, to which it may ask for *ad hoc* advice whenever appropriate.

The composition of the EB reflects the key pillars of EDMO's activities:

- **Fact-checking** (Giovanni Zagni, Pagella Politica)
- **Research** (Prof. Claes de Vreese, University of Amsterdam)
- **Media and Information Literacy** (Sally Reynolds, Media and Learning Association)

Since January 2023, all 14 Hubs elect, on an annual basis, three Board members to represent the Hubs. The new composition of the Executive Board (EB) guarantees agility and coordinated efforts in the implementation of strategic decisions, including for responses to critical events.

² Information on EDMO events, including external events attended by EDMO representatives, can be found on the EDMO Calendar Webpage: <https://edmo.eu/events/>.

The Advisory Council

The Advisory Council (formerly: Advisory Board) is chaired by Prof. Madeleine de Cock Buning (European University Institute) and comprises a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder group of experts (see EDMO website here). Its broad composition ensures expertise in most relevant domains and sectors to steer EDMO's strategy and support the Executive Board towards the achievement of the project objectives and the fulfillment of its guiding principles.

Six Advisory Council Meetings were held in 2024, either online or in person.

The Management Committee

EDMO's Management Committee is composed of a senior representative for each member of the consortium and is chaired by Paolo Cesarini (European University Institute). It meets monthly to ensure coordination and effective implementation of EDMO's activities. Management Committee meetings are held before the meetings of the Executive Board, so as to ensure that the latter can take decisions with the widest possible support of the members of the consortium. Since January 2023, one representative from the hubs attends such meetings.

Task 3 – Support and coordination of fact-checking activities

This task is coordinated by Pagella Politica/Facta, with contributions from GLOBSEC and ATC. Its main activities consist of (1) Fostering joint fact-checking activities and exchanging best practices (2) Steering the EDMO Task Force on the 2024 European Parliament elections (3); Providing access to online fact-checks and fostering synergies between the relevant work carried out by the hubs; (4) Mapping fact-checking activities in Europe and providing support; (5) Supporting the implementation of the Code of Practice commitments on fact-checking.

Activities

Foster joint fact-checking activities and exchange of best practices

This activity is articulated through the publication of monthly briefs, collaborative publications and networking events.

Monthly briefs are short graphic reports aimed at offering readers a general picture of the main disinformation trends circulating in Europe in the month preceding the publication, with a special focus on highlighting which disinformation stories are recurrent across national borders.

Starting from July 2021, EDMO briefs on disinformation in the European Union have been published on a monthly basis on a [dedicated section](#) of the EDMO website. Overall, 40 monthly briefs have been published until October 2024. Of these, 25 have been published since the start of the second phase of the EDMO project. Among these, 11 reports were published during the reporting period of this report (December 2023 – October 2024)³.

Collaborative investigations provide a deep insight into specific topics most affected by the disinformation phenomenon. They focus on one specific piece of disinformation or news area that is relevant on a European, regional, or at least transnational level (2 countries involved minimum). These investigations can be specifically produced by PP/F for the EDMO website or be led by any member of the network. In the latter case, they are generally published in the original language on the website of the member of the investigation (and of any other member wishing to translate it to its own language), as well as in English in a [dedicated section](#) of the EDMO website.

³ *Disinformation in the EU looks at the us presidential race in September (October 2024). Disinformation on immigration takes to the streets (Sept 2024). Disinformation about politics and the Olympics takes the stage in July (August 2024). Post-election disinformation suggests election rigging in June (July 2024). EU-related disinformation keeps growing before the EU parliament elections (June 2024). EU-related disinformation peaks in April (May 2024). Macron's words and Crocus 'terrorist attack boost disinformation about Ukraine (April 2024). Disinformation about farmers' protests keeps growing in February, fueling anti-EU sentiment (March 2024). As the farmers' protests gain traction in the public debate in January, so does the disinformation about them (February 2024). Disinformation about attacks to Christmas by the EU, or other actors, goes viral in December (January 2024). In November, a clear attempt to drive a wedge between Israel and Ukraine supporters using disinformation (December 2023)*

The network has published **21 new collaborative investigations** in the current reporting period (December 2023 -October 2024)⁴. All are available in the dedicated section and promoted through EDMO and affiliated social media.

PP/F also cooperates with EUI on the publication of EDMO's **Periodic Insights and Early Warnings**. These publications focus on the main disinformation trends, related to major events and crises. The aim of the series is to provide insights into the current situation of the disinformation circulating in Europe on the specific topic of interest as reflected by the articles published by the fact-checking organization, which forms part of the EDMO network. The briefs also include early warning signs of major false news and disinformation narratives to be expected in the near future. 9 new Periodic insights and Early Warnings have been published between January and September 2024 about disinformation during the EU elections campaign. All are available in a [dedicated section](#) of the EDMO website and promoted through EDMO and affiliated social media.

EDMO Task Force on 2024 European Parliament Elections

In order to closely monitor the evolution of disinformation threats in the run-up to the 2024 elections for the European Parliament, and ensure preparedness, EDMO set up several activities. The center of these efforts was the EDMO Task Force on the EU elections (TF), which was established in January 2023 to monitor mis- and disinformation and counter attempts to undermine public confidence in the democratic process.

⁴ *Wind turbines and poisoned animals: a “New Denial” popular disinformation narrative against renewable energy* (January 25, 2024). *A (false) song of Ice and Fire: disinformation narratives on electric vehicles* (February 1, 2024). *The attempted murder of Yulia Navalnaya’s public image through disinformation* (March 14, 2024). *How disinformation is supporting Kremlin’s narrative that blames Ukraine for the terrorist attack in Moscow* (March 29, 2024). *Georgian Draft Law on the Transparency of Foreign Influence is not an analogue of a EU Directive* (April 16, 2024). *Russian disinformation network “Pravda” grew bigger in the EU, even after its uncovering* (April 24, 2024). *Russian disinformation network “Pravda” tries a new route to influence EU public opinions few days ahead of the vote* (June 6, 2024). *Old cars, immigrants and war – how EU related misinformation is spread in the Baltics?* (June 7, 2024). *Zelensky and his wife spending Western money on luxury goods or squandering war resources: the cross-border disinformation campaigns circulating from Georgia to Argentina* (July 2, 2024). *Step-by-step: how the Kremlin launched a massive disinformation campaign against Kaja Kallas* (July 5, 2024). *In Hungary, sponsored disinformation ran rampant during the campaign for EU elections, and platforms made good money out of it* (August 19, 2024). *The Pizzagate of Zelensky’s wife, and other cross-border hoaxes that use women and children to delegitimize Ukraine* (August 20, 2024). *Army preparing to enter Ukraine, politicians leaving the country – how fear of being dragged into war is spread in the Baltics* (September 11, 2024). *What lies about Europe is Belarus propaganda feeding to its citizens?* (September 19, 2024). *Disinformation narratives on migration during the summer in Spain* (October 2, 2024). *Killing candidates’ characters, and more: an EDMO analysis of the Us election-related disinformation circulating in the EU* (October 10, 2024). *“Confrontation with Russia leads to poverty”. How a Russian troll factory planned to turn public opinion in Latvia against Ukraine* (October 14, 2024). *Anonymous FB Account Spreads Out-of-Context Quotes from Georgian Politicians About War* (October 7, 2024). *Did Zelensky Say That if the “United National Movement” were In Power They Would Start a War?* (October 10, 2024). *The fearmongering “Global War Party” and other tools of the Georgian ruling party’s propaganda to discredit the US and the EU* (October 14, 2024).

The work of the Task Force was built on the capabilities of the EDMO community at large. Its very composition reflected the structure of regional and national Hubs, as well as the varied expertise represented in the EDMO community (fact-checking, research, media literacy). To cover disinformation incidents emerging across the whole European infosphere, EDMO relied on the work of over 50 independent fact-checking organizations part of the fact-checking network and 14 Hubs monitoring disinformation at the local level and providing insights and context that only local practitioners and researchers can supply with the highest accuracy possible. Cooperation between local journalists, fact-checkers, and researchers was instrumental to spot all the main threats to a huge electoral process, which actually consists of 27 different voting procedures and campaigns held on a national basis.

The Task Force was charged with the hard duty of summarizing all these experiences and focusing its attention on the EU elections campaign. Thanks to the constant monitoring that EDMO carries out with its Monthly briefs and the independent work, publications, inputs, and feedback of the EDMO community at large, it was possible for the Task Force to detect the major ongoing false narratives pushed into the various national public debates and manipulative tactics used to this end. This led to the production of [several initiatives and publications](#), aimed at raising awareness about relevant disinformation incidents (and notable activities to counter them) across key stakeholders and the wider public. The main outputs of these activity are:

- [EU Elections - Daily Disinfo Bulletin](#)
- [Weekly Insights and Early Warnings](#)
- [Reports, Statements and Tips](#) – These include a report on [Disinformation narratives during the 2023 elections in Europe](#) published in December 2023 and [an updated version was published](#) in March 2024. A specific analysis was dedicated to [Prebunking AI-generated disinformation ahead of EU elections](#), while another extensive report was dedicated to a [Preliminary Risk Assessment ahead of the EU elections](#).

All of the activities and findings produced by the EDMO TF on the EU elections are presented in detail in a Final Report which [was published](#) in July 2024 on the [dedicated page](#) on the EDMO website.

EDMO was also part of the working group on elections within the Code of Practice Task Force, where it had a key role bridging the work done by fact-checkers with the operation of the Rapid Response System, in line with the Commission Guidelines on Election Integrity. Additional information in this regard can be found [here](#).

Moreover, in order to strengthen preparedness in the last and most crucial phase of the electoral campaign, the 2024 Yearly Conference for fact-checkers was organised

in the context of the 2024 EDMO week, on 17 May 2024. Titled *EU and Disinformation: Last Checkpoint before the Vote*, the event gathered 45 participants belonging to the fact-checking communities of EDMO, as well as other relevant stakeholders from EU institutional bodies.

Mapping of fact-checking activities and Protection Scheme

The EDMO repository of fact-checking activities provides a comprehensive and constantly updated overview of the main [Fact Checking Organisations In The EU \(And In The UK\)](#), and their characteristics. The repository features a map with names and locations of all the organizations (zoomable) and a table with extended information (membership of major fact-checking networks, country, and language in which the content is published).

The map includes 148 fact-checking initiatives and organizations that meet the following criteria:

- There is a focus on fact-checking and verification
- Stories/posts/explainers etc. are digitally accessible to the public
- Their focus is on mis- and disinformation circulating in one of the 46 member States of the Council of Europe, plus Kosovo and Belarus

Moreover, GLOBSEC, operating under a subcontract with Pagella Politica, was in charge of defining and identifying civil society organisations conducting open-source investigations in EU member states, which were included in a specular map and an easy-to-read database. Information included in the database is publicly available, including whether organisations follow recognised ethical standards or are members of the EFCSN. The database, as well as a map visualising the data, are accessible on [EDMO's website](#).

In connection with such an activity, and in consideration of the heightened risks of attacks faced by the fact-checking community, PP/F, as coordinator of the EDMO fact-checking network, has developed a Protection Scheme for its members to provide a safety net, allowing organizations to operate freely and independently.

In February 2024 a Working Group⁵ was created in the context of the EDMO fact-checking network to build on existing experiences and develop a Protection Scheme aimed at equipping fact-checkers with knowledge and advice on how to preemptively

⁵ The members of the working are Stamos Archontis (FactReview), Thanos Sitistas (Greece Fact-Check), and Loukia Taxitari (Fact-check Cyprus).

avoid and respond to harassment. The Scheme incorporates a secure online automated mechanism for support requests, categorizing them by severity and type, and establishing channels for collaboration with local institutions for legal and psychological support, while ensuring data protection. Additionally, it trains fact-checkers to handle common types of harassment—such as doxing, verbal threats, and diminishment—and organizes sessions for sharing experiences, best practices, and strategies to tackle legal and psychological issues.

To achieve the objectives of the Scheme, several concrete steps have already been taken, advancing the project toward its pilot phase.

- The automation system is fully developed and ready for trial, while the guidebook is in its final drafting stages, with a review and final edition expected in the coming months.
- Collaboration has been secured with psychology professionals from the University of Cyprus to assist in managing harassment and trauma cases and provide counseling as needed.
- A comprehensive database of legal and psychological professionals is also in place, ensuring sufficient resources for the pilot phase.

Data collected during the pilot phase will help refine and optimize the program's operations. Additionally, EDMO went on exploring the possibility of structured cooperation with the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR).

Developments of the Code of Practice on Disinformation repository

The European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN) has been entrusted with the task of creating a fact-checking repository as a tool to support the implementation of the Code of Practice. A dedicated task force has been created within the EFCSN and EDMO is expected to facilitate coordination and synergies with its fact-checking work.

The taskforce has elaborated a general scheme for the repository, defining its main characteristics. The scheme was presented to the EFCSN Governance Body in October 2023, and discussed and approved by the EFCSN Wide Group in November 2023.

In September 2024, the scheme is still under discussion and review, in particular with social media platforms. EDMO is constantly informed about the developments, and actively contributes to the works by providing inputs and suggestions through PP/F.

Task 4 – Support and coordination of Academic Research

This section of the report outlines EDMO efforts to support and coordinate academic research and open-source investigations across Europe over the 2024 reporting period. The key actions related to this task are being carried out by EDMO partners University of Amsterdam (UvA), Aarhus University (AU) and GLOBSEC.

Activities

Data collection of scientific articles

Led by UvA, this task involves the continuous collection of scientific articles for an academic research repository on disinformation "at scale" in the EU. This repository is updated every six months with new, relevant articles. The most recent update of the repository consists of 734 entries and features articles published up until September 2024 and can be found on the EDMO website: <https://edmo.eu/scientific-publications/>. In March 2024, a [report](#) on the status of academic research was also published on the EDMO website, outlining the various trends and emerging topics in research articles published in 2023.

EDMO Scientific Conference 2024

The EDMO Scientific Conference took place on 26th and 27th February 2024 at the University of Amsterdam, gathering over 120 multidisciplinary researchers and providing a platform for future research directions. Plans are underway to reach a wider audience and contribute to ongoing efforts to combat disinformation through a special issue on Generative AI and disinformation, to be hosted on the International Journal of Communication. A call for papers was published on the [EDMO website](#). Moreover, a [blog series](#) dedicated to the EDMO Scientific Conference 2024 was started in May.

Mapping, Knowledge Exchange and Match-Making Sessions

As collaboration among academic researchers is crucial to counter disinformation, Aarhus University conducted a survey among researchers to ensure, in collaboration with ATC, that TrulyMedia provides an updated overview of researchers affiliated with EDMOeu and all EDMO Hubs. The exercise will be repeated in the ongoing project phase.

As further initiative to foster research activities and collaborations within the EDMO community and beyond, Aarhus University organized workshops and sessions for knowledge exchange and provided matchmaking opportunities. These sessions and workshops were integrated into the EDMO Scientific Conference in Amsterdam in February 2024, and into the International Communication Association Conference (ICA) at the Gold Coast in Australia in June 2024.

CSOs Networking Meetings

As further initiative to foster research activities and collaborations within the EDMO community and beyond, Aarhus University organized workshops and sessions for knowledge exchange and provided matchmaking opportunities. These sessions and workshops were integrated into academic conferences to promote participation. One venue was the EDMO Scientific Conference in Amsterdam in February 2024. Another venue was the International Communication Association Conference (ICA) at the Gold Coast in Australia in June 2024, along with a dedicated post-conference in Brisbane focusing on the theme *P3 – Power, Propaganda, Polarisation*.

At the Amsterdam conference, the knowledge exchange session focused on trends and characterization of disinformation and included presentations on ongoing research projects conducted in EDMO Hubs, addressing topics such as disinformation narratives within different European countries and with regard to specific social groups such as gender. The event also hosted two matchmaking sessions during which participants could exchange information on current research endeavors, make new contacts across different institutions and countries, and evaluate potential new collaborations.

At the ICA post-conference, one knowledge exchange session addressed challenges to democracies and was conducted as a plenary session highlighting topics such as tech firms' responsibilities within global democracies and counter-knowledge orders. A second session addressed the issue of data for platform research, featuring presentations that addressed specific case studies on analysing and collecting platform data. This event also hosted a matchmaking session fostering one-to-one discussions and the establishment of new contacts and collaborations.

In addition, Aarhus University co-organized a panel at the ICA conference addressing new strategies, methods, and technologies for tracking and countering misinformation and disinformation.

Network CSOs and regular meetings of CSOs

Exchange of know-how, coordination of best practices, and driving joint initiatives or research is important for civil society organisations and researchers in order to effectively counter-disinformation and utilise the scarce financial resources available. Since there are a number of initiatives and platforms at which CSOs researchers regularly meet, for example, Open Information Partnership, Beacon Project of the International Republican Institute, FIMI-ISAC and Rapid Alert System before the EU elections established by the EU Commission, Elections FIMI-ISAC, Influence Operations Researchers' Guild or various working groups within the Code of Practice on Disinformation, GLOBSEC has tried to utilise these platforms and upcoming regional conferences to exchange know-how on disinformation trends and best practice on how to counter them, while organizing various online/offline meetings of CSOs by itself. The need for better coordination, understanding of different interests and priorities as well as better coordination of these different working groups, since there is a lot of overlap, has been identified.

In 2024, various representatives of CSOs have met at least 12 times at various online and in person meetings and conferences. For example, on February 5, GLOBSEC organised a webinar titled *Election Era 2024: Navigating the Digital Divide - AI's Dance Between Threats and Defences* generating lessons learned on the use of AI-generated content during the elections. GLOBSEC brought together speakers from various regions of the world who shared their valuable insights in a super-election year. On April 8, GLOBSEC organised an event titled *From Resilient Information Ecosystem to Resilient Democracy* in Brussels bringing together representatives of CSOs, EU and social media to discuss resilience of EU's information space before the upcoming elections to the EU parliament. On May 15, Data Access Workshop, which was organised by EDMO representatives during EDMO Week 2024 and brought together around 50 researchers and CSOs representatives both in person and online. On June 26, GLOBSEC organised a webinar for CSOs titled *Innovative Uses of AI by Civil Society in Europe*.

The aim of the webinar was to foster good practices in the utilisation of AI by civil society organisations and exchange best practices. The event generated a list of AI-driven tools that could be utilized by CSOs and researchers in their work. In August during an international conference GLOBSEC Bratislava Forum, 4 special side sessions were organised bringing together over 120 experts and civil society representatives to discuss topics and share best practices on topics of countering disinformation, foreign malign influence, the use of AI, and processes decreasing societal polarisation. In addition, researchers and CSOs exchanges know-how and networked during numerous international conferences including EDMO's Annual

Conference in May, Open Information Partnership annual conference in September or EU DisinfoLab's conference in Riga in October.

Trends in disinformation

A report summarising key tactics and tools observed by CSOs during their meetings was [published](#). Its delivery was delayed due to all the activities CSOs were conducting prior the elections to the EU Parliament aiming at protecting information space.

In addition, GLOBSEC produced a [special report of recommendations for the new EU Commission](#), which was based on extensive consultations CEE experts, CSOs representatives and other stakeholders. The areas covered in the report include topics of hybrid threats and social media regulation. Both reports have been actively promoted by GLOBSEC at various events including the GLOBSEC Forum in Prague at the end of August 2024 and during [event in Brussels](#) in September.

Since access to data from social media platforms to researchers has changed within the past year and was significantly influenced by the shutdown of CrowdTangle, in September-October 2024 GLOBSEC mapped the access of data of CSOs representatives via a [special survey mapping](#) the access to data for researchers, which also maps out the access to data of researchers prior to the elections to the EU Parliament. The survey was disseminated among over 200 researchers and CSOs representatives and collected responses of 55 representatives of major CSOs conducting research on disinformation and FIMI. The survey follows up on special workshop on access to data, organised on May 15 within EDMO's week in Brussels. The results of the survey will be published in the November 2024.

Database of open-source investigations

GLOBSEC prepared a database of open-source investigations/ research conducted by identifying civil society organisations in EU member states. The easy-to-read database was published on [EDMO's website](#) in December 2023 with the other updates/re-structuralisation of the website. The database of investigations along with database of CSO are regularly.

Ethical and professional standards for organisations conducting open-source investigations.

Within this project ethical standards for organisations conducting OSINT were Within this project ethical standards for organisations conducting OSINT were supposed to be produced. However, such guidelines were prepared and launched in March 2023

within [ObSINT project](#), another EU-funded project. GLOBSEC has been in touch with the representatives of EU DisinfoLab that led ObSINT project and brought the attention of the EU Commission to the existence of such ethical standards within the Inception report and sought guidance on how to proceed. In addition, representatives of EU DisinfoLab have participated in various EDMO activities where they have presented the ObSINT ethical standards to the wider research/CSOs community. For example, in January 2024 an online training on the [Guidelines for Public Interest OSINT Investigations](#) was organised by EDMO.

Task 5 – Coordination of Media Literacy Activities

This task led by the Media and Learning Association (MLA) and the European University Institute (EUI) aims to support and coordinate existing and new media literacy efforts across Europe. Key objectives include mapping the media literacy landscape, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange, and raising standards throughout the sector.

Mapping efforts aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the fragmented and dispersed media literacy sector in Europe by producing detailed country profiles for each EU member state. Monthly interviews and digests further enhance understanding by offering updates on the development of media literacy hubs and activities across regions. Collaboration and Knowledge exchange are encouraged through the establishment of a trusted forum, an internal repository, joint initiatives, and training programs tailored to EDMO national and multinational hubs and the broader media literacy community. Raising standards involves providing guidance and identifying best practices through initiatives such as the Guidelines for Effective Media Literacy Initiatives, supported by the Council for Guidelines.

During the report period from January to December 2024, Task V exceeded expectations. Mapping efforts made a lot of progress, the launch of the Guidelines in October 2024 was a success, and the strong media literacy community developed under EDMO continues to foster collaboration.

Activities

Mapping the media literacy sector

Significant progress was made in producing country profiles, with 9 out of 27 profiles published, others finalised ready to be published, and some undergoing updates. These profiles provide information on key stakeholders in each of the member states and critical insights into the fragmented nature of media literacy efforts across Europe. To supplement this work, monthly interviews and digests were produced, offering regular updates on the activities of the regional hubs and key initiatives across Europe.

Promoting Knowledge Exchange

In May 2024, EDMO published a comprehensive list of existing national media literacy repositories on its website. Three in-person meetings and eight bi-monthly closed meetings were organised, fostering dialogue among media literacy practitioners within the EDMO Hubs. A shared internal space was created on TrulyMedia for the community, with 80 resources uploaded for easier access and reuse. Four training sessions on targeted topics were also delivered, supporting the knowledge and skill development of stakeholders.

Raising Standards

Efforts to raise standards continued, with the Working Group for Guidelines for Effective Media Literacy Initiatives meeting monthly. These meetings culminated in the public release of the [final version of the guidelines](#) during UNESCO MIL Week in October 2024. To enhance impact, an endorsement campaign was launched before the release, resulting in endorsements from over 75 organisations across 28 countries (As of November 2024). The guidelines, which aim to improve the effectiveness of media literacy initiatives, were made available in multiple formats, including an interactive webpage, a downloadable PDF, and a visual summary. A call for case studies, resources was also issued to illustrate best practices in line with the principles outlined in the guidelines.

Visibility and Additional Actions

The second round of the "Digital Media Literacy in EDMO Round Table" interview series continued, with 20 interviews published by November 2024, including two special editions focused on the European Elections and the Guidelines for Effective Media Literacy Initiatives. Eight editions of the Monthly Media Literacy Digest were released, providing ongoing updates.

Discussions with UNESCO led to EDMO's participation in UNESCO MIL Week, hosting two key events: the launch of the guidelines and a training session on collaboration between NGOs and influencers.

Further efforts to enhance visibility included the promotion of EDMO's initiatives through various networks such as EMIL (EPRA), the ERGA Action Group on Media Literacy, MLEG, EUN (European Schoolnet), and the Safer Internet Centres.

Task V also supported EDMO's social media campaign [#BeElectionSmart](#), a six-week initiative in collaboration with all EDMO hubs to raise awareness about the 2024 EU Elections. From 29 April to 3 June EDMOeu and the EDMO Hubs ran this first EU-wide campaign, with an editorial committee in charge of designing messages to be published each Monday on social media and on the Network websites, along with practical tips for citizens to discern accurate and reliable online information. Dissemination efforts extended to conferences, workshops, webinars, and other events, ensuring EDMO's activities reached a wide audience.

Task 6 – Access to Data for Researchers

This task is concerned with EDMO efforts to support the implementation of the Code of Conduct under Article 40 of the Digital Services Act (DSA). EDMO's responsibilities include promoting the Code of Conduct, obtaining approval from the relevant supervisory body for the draft code, and ensuring its widespread adoption. Additionally, EDMO's role entails facilitating and financially supporting the establishment of an independent body tasked with overseeing platform-to-researcher data access in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Activities

Design and adoption of intermediary body governance structure and procedures

With the launch of the Working Group responsible for the implementation of the independent intermediary body (IIB), subcommittees of the Working Group, along with staff of George Washington University's Institute for Data, Democracy & Politics, have completed initial drafts of the bylaws and financial modelling plans, as well as guidance and recommendations for the location of the IIB and the types of experience and expertise to be embodied on the Board of Directors. The Working Group has reviewed

all of these documents and has voted to approve the location (the Netherlands) and Board of Directors experience/expertise recommendations. It was also agreed that EDMO will be acknowledged as the initiator of this initiatives, while retaining ownership thereof and being assured an appropriate representation in the future IIB governance structure.

The report of the EDMO's DSA data access pilot, launched in October 2023, can be accessed [here](#). This exercised was designed to test potential processes and procedures for implementation of researcher data access provisions under Article 40 of the EU Digital Services Act.

[Agreement to participate in the intermediary body's activities secured from various companies, universities, and civil society organisations](#)

Discussions with all such organizations are currently underway. However, platform representatives, in particular, have indicated that they cannot commit to participating in the IIB until the delegated act has been finalized. Furthermore, the platforms participating in the Working Group have signaled that they do not want to commit unless and until the other VLOPs/VLOSEs are brought on board. When the delegated act is finalised, an update on this activity will be provided.

[Hiring of Initial Staff](#)

The more than 6-month delay in the release of the delegated act has necessarily delayed these plans. Next steps are to 1) hire a law firm in the Netherlands to finalize the bylaws and advise on any other legal and operational matters necessary to establish a non-profit organization in the Netherlands and 2) recruit a Board of Directors. Once these two steps are in place, the Board of Directors can take over and work to begin hiring staff.

[Workshops on data access for researchers](#)

During EDMO Week 2024, which followed the Annual Conference in Brussels, the EDMO Data Access Workshop was held at the EUI's Florence School of Transnational Governance. Here, Dr Tromble provided a detailed framing of the issues surrounding data access for research and current platform APIs. This workshop was well attended and provided a state-of-play regarding the current data access procedures and an overview of what could be expected in the upcoming months with the DSA and CoP as well as the implementation of the IIB. During ECREA 2024, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, another workshop was conducted by Dr Aqsa Farooq (UvA) during the conference to provide the research community with an overview of these new updates. This

workshop was also met with keen interest and will set the foundations for a community-led network regarding these new procedures for accessing platform data.

Task 7 – Support to relevant policy activities

The policy activities of EDMO fall into four streams: (1) independent academic monitoring and assessment of the national, EU, and industry policies against disinformation, as well as cooperation, knowledge exchange amongst stakeholders; (2) expert support to the 2022 Code of Practice on disinformation permanent Taskforce in relation to structural indicators; (3) assessment on platform Signatories' reporting on specific measures under the CoP (joint consortium effort); and (4) participation in policy discussions and events. This work is carried out by the EUI, notably the CMPF and STG, and is assisted by a sub-contractor, the Integrity Institute which brings in first-hand experience about the internal functioning of online platforms.

To carry out these tasks, EDMO has created a dedicated Policy Working Group, aimed at facilitating discussions between hubs to find suitable topics for collaborative research projects and pool resources. For example, EDMO invited all the Hubs to share insights on the implementation of the Code of Practice, as well as information on ongoing research projects and data on disinformation policies across the EU. Moreover, meetings with the Integrity Institute were organized to inform Hubs representatives about data access and data usage relevant for their work, including for the assessment of structural indicators. Last but not least, two joint research projects, based on shared methodological approaches, were also launched in Q4 2024 to further strengthen EDMO analysis of the implementation of the Code of Practice and to provide a first assessment of platforms' transparency measures for political advertising across Member States.

Activities

Second EDMO proposal for Structural Indicators under the Code of Practice on Disinformation

The 2022 Code of Practice on Disinformation seeks to adopt structural indicators to examine characteristics of the online disinformation phenomenon and gauge the effectiveness of the Code in mitigating its effects both in individual EU Member States and in the EU as a whole. Following an initial proposal setting out approaches and metrics for building such structural indicators, EDMO consulted with a number of

experts to strengthen its approach and finalised a set of structural indicators, which was [published](#) in March 2024. The main novelties in the latest proposal consist in an adjustment of metrics – based on expert feedback and the experiences of a first beta assessment by a third-party – a shift from an analysis of large datasets to data collection based on API-access, as well as an initial assessment of the feasibility of additional structural indicators.

The core indicators in the new proposal relate to prevalence, sources and audiences of disinformation, as well as collaboration and investments in fact-checking – with improved metrics to provide a fuller picture of the problem. Further, more limited metrics are provided to assess the monetisation of disinformation, the cross-platforms spread of disinformation, as well as cooperation across platforms – but these need to be further assessed and debated by stakeholders and experts. Regarding (de)monetisation of disinformation, the team of experts consulted expressed concerns about the feasibility of the exercise, in light of the limited research and limited data on the topic. Finally, the researchers looked at the possibilities of proposing indicators that assess algorithmic amplification and the resilience of audiences.

For a fuller picture, the team proposes to complement the data collection with surveys and ask platforms and researchers to provide updates on data access, collaboration with researchers, the state of disinformation research in the EU, as well as platforms' investment in fulfilling the Code's commitments. It is also important that the scope of assessments increases – both in terms of indicators and the number of countries covered – with every new pilot. In the long run, a systematic implementation of structural indicators, which would include their testing, reporting, and improvements, is best placed in a multi-year research project that is adequately financed and assures the independence of the researchers in the process.

[Insights of the structural indicator Expert Group](#)

EDMO formed an Expert Group to continue supporting the process of developing sound, adjustable, and feasible methodology for the Structural Indicators in cooperation with a wider array of experts, as foreseen by the Code of Practice. Between June and October 2023, EDMO conducted interviews with the experts to find ways to strengthen the approach and identify additional areas to be assessed through structural indicators, including cross-platform cooperation, media literacy, content analysis, and users empowerment. The findings were summarised in the [EDMO experts' feedback on structural indicators for the EU code of practice on disinformation](#).

Support to the CoP Taskforce

EDMO participates in the discussions with signatories, the Commission and ERGA within the taskforce of the Code of Practice (as foreseen by the Code). Under this umbrella it also worked on the development of structural indicators. It also provided feedback to the two rounds of assessment by TrustLab, and collected further ideas for a strong methodology, in cooperation with the Integrity Institute and with EDMO Expert Group.

Reports on key issues related to disinformation

As a member of Task VII and renowned expert in online platform transparency, the Integrity Institute published a report with a methodology to assess the technological aspects of disinformation. The [report](#) *Proposal for an Assessment of Risk Mitigations for Algorithmic Amplification of Disinformation, the Role of Platform Business Models & Demonetization* was made available in the summer of 2024. It looks at possible indicators that could assess the transparency of algorithms, the role the business models of platforms play in the amplification of disinformation, as well as the different ways in which the (de)monetisation of disinformation can be measured.

Another research paper was prepared by the CMPF at the EUI: “Defining Disinformation across EU and VLOP Policies”. The paper analyses the ways in which disinformation and related concepts are defined in relevant European policies, focusing, among other things, on the Digital Services Act and the Code of Practice on Disinformation at the EU-level, as well as national legislations. By analysing these different, yet intertwined, policies, the paper finds that platform policies are often not in line with these definitions. This can lead to both under- and over-regulating certain aspects of the problem, thereby either limiting users’ freedom of expression or threatening information integrity.

In the context of the Policy working Group, EDMO works with Hubs to develop an assessment of national policies and local disinformation landscapes. Following up on the questionnaire to assess policy developments in Member States, these reports are now in their finalisation stage.

Assessment of platform Signatories’ reporting on specific measures under the CoP (joint consortium effort)

EDMO and its 14 regional and national Hubs are well-placed to contribute to the systematic collection of relevant insights on the implementation of the CoP and provide useful feedback on platforms’ Transparency Reports.

In December 2023, and building upon previous analysis of the transparency report conducted by some members of the Network, EDMO decided to test a new approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions reported by VLOPSEs, notably in those areas of the CoP where the expert communities connected to, or operating within the EDMO Network have both field-specific expertise and practical experience. EDMO's assessment focused on the CoP commitments relating to media literacy (commitments 17 and 21) and the empowerment of researchers (commitments 26, 27 and 28) and fact-checkers (commitments 30, 31 and 32)⁶. Three main messages emerged from this analysis. Firstly, despite recent launches of new tools for researchers, access to data remains an unfulfilled condition and quick progress needs to be made by all platform signatories of the Code to ensure transparency and accountability of their risk mitigation measures. Secondly, structural support and funding of fact-checking, research and media literacy expert communities remain inadequate. Thirdly, progress towards the integration of independent experts' feedback into platforms' user-facing tools is still patchy and insufficient. The final report was published on 13 June 2024 and is available [here](#).

Going forward, a dedicated CoP Reports Analysis Sub-group of the Hubs Policy Working Group was created to define a common methodology and shared framework for a whole network approach to the monitoring of future transparency reports. In particular, it was agreed to further engage with a wider array of relevant organisations in the consultative phase and deepen the analysis to gain more granular and robust insights at the Member State level. To this end, a CoP questionnaire to survey the relevant experts within the Hubs and the wider community at national and local levels has been finalised in November 2024.

Task 8 – Training

The EDMO training offer for 2024 was developed by the EUI STG along the main lines of EDMO's areas of activity, and in coherence with the themes of the sessions delivered in 2023, envisaging training streams in the areas of media literacy, fact-checking and OSINT, research, and policy. In addition to this, a series of modules aimed at better understanding and responding to disinformation from a multi-disciplinary perspective were developed.

⁶ Regarding the latter, EDMO relied upon the EFCSN report “Fact-checking and related Risk-Mitigation Measures for Disinformation in the Very Large Online Platforms”, published in January 2024

The training calendar for 2024 was developed in consultation with the EDMO Governance, the EDMO Advisory Council and the EDMO Hubs.

By the end of 2024, EDMO delivered the training modules envisaged following the five streams originally set. Trainers included members of the EDMO.eu consortium, members of the EDMO network, and external experts from a variety of fields, including EU institutions, national regulatory authorities, academia, civil society and platform representatives. Selected training modules were open to members of the EDMO network only, while the majority were open to a broader range of stakeholders. Participants ranged from a variety of stakeholders including journalists, researchers, media literacy practitioners, fact-checkers, government representatives and other policymakers, ensuring a varied and interested audience. While the majority of applications came from European countries, an increasing number of applications were received from a wide variety of extra-European countries, showing a growing interest in EDMO's work beyond Europe. Between December 2023 and December 2024, over 650 participants received training through the sessions organized by EDMO.

Following the renewal of the EDMO website, a section at the end of the [EDMO training webpage](#) was further developed for training resources, including recordings, summaries, and clips from past sessions. A special output on the EDMO Training Series on Elections Integrity was published on the training resources webpage. The relevant news item, including recordings from the two sessions of the series, integrated EDMO's work and publications ahead of the European Parliament elections of June 2024. Overall, an emphasis was put on post-training promotion and communication regarding the main outcomes and key takeaways of each session. For this purpose, recordings from past training are in the process of being edited and uploaded on the webpage, to offer a comprehensive training experience that goes beyond the session *per se*. Going forward such resources will be further expanded and developed to maximise the reach and impact of EDMO training modules open to a broader public.

List of training modules

Between December 2023 and December 2024, 12 training modules were successfully delivered, with over 650 attendees.

- **19 January 2024:** *OSINT Uncovered: Enhancing Investigations with the ObSINT Guidelines* – A presentation on how to delve into open-source intelligence (OSINT) through the lens of the "OSINT Guidelines".

- **26 January 2024:** *Getting the most out of your Media Literacy Campaign* – Experienced practitioners shared their experiences in the design, delivery and assessment of large-scale media literacy campaigns.
- **22 February 2024:** *The Economics of Disinformation: trends, mechanisms and actors* – The training aimed at providing awareness of the different economic flows that surround disinformation, as an additional knowledge needed to understand and counter disinformation.
- **11 March 2024:** *Training Series on Elections Integrity - Elections Integrity on Online Platforms: What to Expect and How to Engage* – First session of the module focused on the European Parliament elections, organised in collaboration with the Integrity Institute and aimed at offering valuable information for civil society and regulators to understand what to look for from platforms around elections.
- **18 March 2024:** *Training Series on Elections Integrity - Training for journalists ahead of the European Parliament elections* – Second session of the series ahead of the European Parliament elections, mainly targeting an audience of journalists, and providing an overview of EDMO’s tools and publications, as well as of potential challenges in EP news coverage.
- **17 April 2024:** *Training series for researchers: TikTok* - Part of a training series for researchers launched in 2022 with platforms presenting currently available resources and datasets for researchers.
- **15 May 2024:** An in-person training module on Platform Data Access was originally planned by EUI STG in the context of EDMO week in collaboration with Globsec. However, given the current limitations in accessing and using platform APIs, the training module was converted into a workshop for exchange among the research community on the current opportunities and challenges with regard to accessing platform data, including the newly developed APIs for research.

The workshop took place at the Brussels School of Governance in a hybrid format (more than 50 in-person attendees+25 online), including representatives from the EDMO Network, civil society organizations, EC and VLOP representatives. Speakers from the research community (including representatives from the EDMO.eu and its governance bodies, the Integrity Institute, DFRLab, and the Center for Digital Governance, Hertie School) provided key insights and shared concrete experiences with regard to data access for researchers, including newly developed APIs, as well as potential opportunities and challenges for research. A report from the workshop was published on the EDMO website in September 2024.

- **23 May 2024:** *New tools in the InVID-WeVerify verification toolbox* - A follow-up training organized in collaboration with the vera.ai project, aimed at training participants on how to detect AI manipulations through new tools in the toolbox.
- **5 June 2024:** *Effective Media Literacy Methods and Approaches: Hits & Misses* – Speakers who have led media literacy initiatives aimed at specific target groups provided insights into most effective techniques and approaches to delivering media literacy.
- **2 July 2024:** *The Information Laundromat* – This training aimed to better prepare stakeholders to rapidly detect, document, and expose threat actor attempts to “launder” propaganda into the digital information environment by introducing them to the Information Laundromat, a lead generation tool used to determine if and how websites share architecture and content.
- **25 October 2024:** *Beyond the hype: practical strategies for successful influencer collaborations in media literacy* - The session covers identifying and engaging the right influencers, establishing beneficial partnerships, choosing suitable social media platforms and formats, and measuring impact, providing attendees with actionable advice to enhance media literacy efforts.
- **15 November 2024:** *Training series for researchers: Meta Content Library and its API (Data Access for Researchers)* - Part of a training series for researchers launched in 2022 with platforms presenting currently available resources and datasets for researchers.

The results of post-training surveys sent to the participants overall show very positive feedback on the training experiences.

The final part of the EDMO Training Programme will be devoted to two thematic areas, in the form of two two-part training series, namely disinformation about health, and disinformation about climate. Additionally, an EDMO Training module for researchers on LinkedIn's API for research is scheduled to take place in January 2025 and an additional module on Media Literacy is scheduled to take place in February 2025.

Task 9 – Coordination of the hubs

When the European Digital Media Observatory was launched in June 2020, its mission was clear: the creation of an interdisciplinary cross-border network that would enhance

Europe's understanding of – and collective efforts against – online disinformation. With the establishment of 14 national and regional Hubs, EDMO has become a comprehensive EU-27-wide network against disinformation with the unique potential to unite efforts across languages and borders to tackle online disinformation. EDMO central platform – here EDMOeu - aims to:

- Foster a knowledge-sharing community with inclusive governance
- Facilitate joint projects (area/focus) and identify emerging collaborative opportunities
- Integrate Hubs' activities in the EDMO website and disseminate key achievements
- Harnessing insights from the EDMO experts on the ground with targeted surveys

The following section will focus on the fourteen EDMO Hubs and the main activities conducted by EDMOeu in the context of the above goals.

Activities

EDMO in numbers

In July 2024, the [EDMO in Numbers](#) fact sheet was published, offering a quantitative overview of the EDMO Network's outputs up to Spring 2024 in areas such as fact-checking, media literacy, research, social media performance, and outreach activities. Compiled from contributions by all 14 hubs and EDMOeu, it shows how the Network's activities have played a significant role in advancing societal responses to disinformation, especially during unforeseen crises, underscoring the importance of continuing this work in the future.

EDMO Hubs coordination meetings and Working Groups

EDMO Hubs meetings are hosted quarterly by a different Hub on a rotating location or held online, bringing together representatives from all the Hubs and EDMOeu. In 2024, the aim of such meetings was to enhance cooperation, advance the analysis of platforms' transparency reports and the impact of Gen-AI on disinformation, ensure preparedness ahead of the European Elections, coordinate media literacy campaigns and joint research projects, and map out adversarial behavior targeting researchers and fact-checkers. Moreover, collaboration per area and focus is fostered through

four horizontal Working Groups (WG)⁷ and three vertical Sub-Groups⁸. The overall aim is to build expert communities for discussion and knowledge exchange covering different information environments, thereby creating fertile grounds for collaborative initiatives and joint research when appropriate and relevant.

Network's actions around 24' EP Elections

Ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections, EDMO has focused on ensuring freedom and fairness in the information ecosystem by detecting, exposing and issuing warnings on disinformation-related threats. In May 2023, EDMO established a Task Force on the 2024 elections, comprising representatives from each hub and the EDMO Advisory Council, to monitor the information ecosystem and facilitate communications in research, media literacy, and fact-checking. Key activities of the EDMO 2024 Election Taskforce are reported in detail in chapter III of this report. Additionally, as pointed out in chapter V above, the [Be Election Smart campaign](#) was launched to support citizens in finding reliable election information, with promotion from major platforms like Google, Microsoft, Meta and X⁹. The messages and tips were disseminated extensively across EDMO's networks and translated by local EDMO Hub experts into the different EU languages, ensuring accessibility and relevance to local contexts, nuances, and cultural references.

The online survey and Report

Two thematic surveys were conducted during the reporting period, notably i) the EDMO Hubs Survey on the CoP Sept 23 'Transparency Reports and ii) the EDMO Survey mapping adversarial behaviour, prevention and protection.

The first was carried out between December 2023 and February 2024. A questionnaire was sent to all regional and national EDMO Hubs, focusing on media literacy

⁷ namely the Research WG (coord. Claes de Vreese & Aqsa Farooq), the Policy Research and Analysis WG (coord. Konrad Bleyer-Simon), the Media Literacy Bi-Monthly Closed Meetings (coord. by Sally Reynolds) and the Communications WG (coord. by Paolo Cesarini).

⁸ the GenAI and Disinformation Internal Expert Group (chaired by Claes de Vreese and Aqsa Farooq), the CoP Reports Analysis Sub-group (chaired by Paolo Cesarini) and most recently the Sub-group on Transparency of Political Advertising (chaired by Paula Gori).

⁹ Given the commitments of the VLOPs and VLOSEs under the CoP to empower users by promoting activities to support media literacy, and to collaborate with EDMO, and in light of the Commission Guidelines on Election Integrity, EDMO reached out to all platform signatories and X. Google, Microsoft and X agreed to promote the Be Election Smart campaign: Google featured it in [its pre-bunking website](#), Microsoft in the [Check.Recheck.Vote](#) website and Meta committed to include it in its transparency centre on the EU elections. X made available advertisement credit to boost independent posts by EDMOeu and Hubs accounts. An evaluation of the performance of the campaign was conducted to understand the impact and learn from this experience for potential new network-wide campaigns.

(commitments 17 and 21) and research (commitments 26, 27 and 28), and integrated with the findings emerging from a parallel exercise carried out by the EFCSN, focused on fact-checking (commitments 30, 31 and 32)¹⁰. The final report from the survey titled EDMO Report “Platforms’ Implementation of the CoP Commitments on Media Literacy, Research and Fact-checking” was published on 13 June 2024 and is available [here](#).

In light of the heightened risks faced by the counter-disinformation community, the second survey was conducted between 25 July and 2 Oct 2024. The aim was to understand past and potential future attacks against individual members of the network and the protection mechanisms currently in place. Following consultations with the Hubs, the [survey results](#) were published end of November 2024. The findings reveal that 66% of respondents reported experiencing adversarial actions, including online harassment, threatening and intimidating emails, brigading), physical threats or harm, and doxing. Further consultations will be carried out to identify both preventive and protective measures that could contribute to mitigating the risks faced by the EDMO community of practitioners.

Enhancing information exchange and visibility

EDMOeu has already put in place several instruments and practices for knowledge and information-sharing including the *How to Contribute Guide* ([available here](#)). It lays out simple steps for hubs to share with EDMOeu news, events, publications, and other resources to feature them on the EDMO Website. Most recently, to automate the existing workflow and ease the process of showcasing Hub’s work on the EDMOeu website, an RSS feed is being introduced across the EDMO Network. Enhanced cooperation and information exchange have also been supported by other processes and tools, including the introduction of a tag harmonization system for the collection and categorization of election-related fact-checking articles.

Task 10 – Communication and outreach

2024 was a year of considerable progress in terms of establishing EDMO as a public reference point and widening the pool of individuals who benefit from EDMO’s work both directly and indirectly. Complementing the key communication activities

¹⁰ EFCSN report “Fact-checking and related Risk-Mitigation Measures for Disinformation in the Very Large Online Platforms”, published in January 2024

described in the thematic sections of this report (in particular, see section 3 for activities around the Task Force on the 2024 EU Parliamentary Elections and section 5 for the #BeElectionSmart Campaign as well as the Launch of the EDMO Media Literacy Guidelines), this section provides an overview of this year's range of communications activities.

Activities

Website relaunch

In line with the communication strategy adopted in late 2023, a revamped version of EDMO website was successfully launched in February 2024, which entailed an overall visual upgrade and substantial improvements in terms of user orientation, strategic display of content, clarity and mobile compatibility. The site features a more consolidated and more intuitive menu structure and an entirely overhauled content logic. While further enhancements are pending, EDMO's new website already experienced remarkable increase in traffic and overall usage.

Newsletter

Since the first issue in October 2020, EUI STG has set up an editorial board responsible for drafting the newsletter and gathering input from all partners. The newsletter is hosted on the European Commission's tool Newsroom. Each edition of the newsletter is published on the EDMO dedicated webpage and shared through social media. The sixteenth version of the newsletter will be published in December 2024. It is currently envisaged to restyle the newsletter to exploit its full potential.

Social media

EDMO has significantly increased and professionalized the use of its social media outlets to keep its growing community engaged and share both its own activities and the work carried out by the 14 EDMO hubs with a wider audience. In addition to its X account (9.400 followers in December 2024 compared to 7.300 in December 2023) and LinkedIn account (4.300 followers compared to 2.000), a new Bluesky account was activated in December 2024. The main types of content that are produced and shared on the EDMO channels include monthly fact-checking briefs, updates to the best of fact-checking map and new investigations, monthly media literacy digest and roundtable interviews with the most recent highlights from the hubs, new posts on the new EDMO Blog, regular announcements of EDMO training opportunities and more.

Press

A key priority for EDMO was to enhance visibility in a diverse set of widely consumed journalistic outlets, based on relevance rather than paid partnerships. One of the tenets of EDMO communication strategy was to use journalistic interest ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections, as well as major national elections, to spotlight the work carried out by EDMO and the Hubs and share their expertise as widely as possible.

Direct outcomes from outreach efforts by EDMO include prominent coverage in Politico (EU Election Playbook, Brussels Playbook, Tech Pro Newsletter, further Politico reporting), including in direct relation to promoting the 2024 EDMO Annual Conference in Brussels; EDMO furthermore engaged with key outlets such as Euronews, Deutsche Welle, the BBC, The Guardian, CNN (US), CNN (Portugal), El País, Radio Free Europe, RAI, DW News, LUSA, and was featured by media including The New York Times and Washington Post, which both directly linked to EDMO publications on the EDMO website, CBS, HuffPost, EUobserver, Euractiv, EUnews, France 24, Le Figaro, France info, TV5 Monde, El País, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Trouw, De Standaard, RAI, RTL, Česká televize, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, and more. In sum, EDMO was featured in over 350 journalistic outputs in 2024.

New EDMO Blog

Launched in December 2023, the EDMO Blog aims to encourage discussion about key topics relating to understanding and building societal resilience against disinformation, provide actors especially from within the EDMO network with an additional, low-barrier platform to showcase their work and reach a wider audience, and to further solidify EDMO as a key source of expertise, thought-provoking ideas and latest developments in the field. As of December 2024, 15 posts have been published on a rich spectrum of topics¹¹. Importantly, the Blog also serves as a home for ideas, content and projects that are direct results from the 2024 EDMO Scientific Conference.

2024 EDMO Annual Conference

From 13 to 17 May 2024, the 2024 EDMO Week reunited in Brussels stakeholders of the EDMO Network and beyond to foster collaboration. This included a two-day opening Conference, where the European Commission Vice-President Věra Jourová delivered a keynote speech. The conference featured more than 40 expert speakers addressing topics like role of AI in disinformation, media literacy, the 2024 European

¹¹ Blog posts are accessible [here](#).

Parliament elections and more. Engaging Q&A sessions and real-time social media updates enhanced engagement throughout the event.

Task 11 – Cooperation with third party organisations

Cooperation with third-parties aims to provide horizontal support to the other tasks, most notably governance, strategy (including diversification of funding), policy activities, outreach and communication.

EDMO is by its very nature a multi-stakeholder body and can rely on members of its Governance Bodies to nurture connections with multiple communities in the field of countering disinformation in the EU and beyond, including through participation in external events. Additionally, EDMO can rely on EUI's strong international reputation and network to build cooperation with different external stakeholders.

Within the remit of this activity one of the main points was to discuss the long-term financial sustainability of EDMO. Being self-reliant would allow EDMO to keep its independence and ensure longevity to its activities, beyond the time and remit of EU funding. The aim is for EDMO to continue receiving EU funding and at the same time receiving support from other private and public organisations. This structure ensures full independence. This Task is led by the European University Institute (EUI) Florence School of Transnational Governance (STG) in collaboration with Europe's MédiaLab.

EDMO enhanced its international profile by fostering relationships with third-party organisations across the globe, notably with speaking slots at international events addressing the disinformation phenomenon and press mentions, while not focusing on signing partnership agreements. The EDMO calendar lists all events EDMO participated in.

These activities increasingly enabled EDMO to showcase its research, tools, and success stories, thereby establishing its international credibility. This engagement helps EDMO to stay abreast of global trends and challenges in disinformation, allowing it to refine its strategies and tools accordingly, while positioning itself as a leading authority in its field. Additionally, participating in these events enables EDMO to contribute to the development of global standards and best practices in countering disinformation, thus reinforcing its role as a pivotal player in this critical area.

Efforts to identify third party international organisations to cooperate with and ensure long-term sustainability, EDMO is implementing a more structured approach that

involve a variety of research, networking, and collaboration activities:

- Stakeholder Mapping and Research
- Engage with International Forums and Conferences
- Collaborate on Research Projects
- Leverage Existing EU Networks
- Consulting with Platform Operators and Regulators
- Outreach to Civil Society Organisations
- Formal Network Creation
- Participation in Marketplace sessions at Stars4Media
- Support activities that are complementary to the activities financed by the Commission to broaden research

Such efforts will be further rolled out in the coming months



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The European Digital Media Observatory has received funding from the European Union under contract number LC-01935415