Code of Practice on Disinformation – Report of Science Feedback for the period January 2023 – December 2023

Table of Content

Executive summary

As the Code matures and Signatories are learning to work together under a common framework, Science Feedback's engagement remains centered on our organization's two key areas of focus:

- Involvement in the fact-checking subgroup and related activities, notably the discussions around Crisis Response and Elections.
- Research into large-scale disinformation dynamics, so as to help identify priority areas of action where intersignatory cooperation can make a difference.

With the Code of Practice transitioning to a Code of Conduct in 2024, we are looking forward to keep engaging with other Signatories, the Commission, ERGA and EDMO.

V. Empowering Users	
Commitment 18	
Relevant Signatories commit to minimise the risks of viral propagation of Disinformation by adopting safe design practices as they develop their systems, policies, and features.	
Measure 18.3 – As a non-platform organization carrying out *inter alia* research on disinformation, we adapted the Measure to reflect the fact that we do not have any decision-making power over product design	Relevant signatories will invest and/or participate in research efforts on the spread of harmful Disinformation, will make findings available to the public and report on those to the Code's taskforce. They will disclose and discuss findings within the permanent Task-Force.
QRE 18.3.1	SF conducted various research pieces relevant to harmful Disinformation: - An assessment of the influence of misinformation superspreaders in the weeks following Twitter/X's takeover, - A large-scale study on YouTube channels' monetization status by credibility category, - A report on Facebook's content moderation system in the context of the Slovak general election, presented to the Elections Subgroup. In addition, SF contributed data to various disinformation-relevant research projects (such as NARDIV, NODES).

VI. Empowering the research community	
Commitment 26	
Relevant Signatories commit to provide access, wherever safe and practicable, to continuous, real-time or near real-time, searchable stable access to non-personal data and anonymised, aggregated, or manifestly-made public data for research purposes on Disinformation through automated means such as APIs or other open and accessible technical solutions allowing the analysis of said data.	
QRE 26.1.1	Science Feedback operates and manages Open Feedback, a database that aggregates misinformation claims, the web addresses where they are found, and related fact-checking information. In order to avoid misuse, we manually review and approve access to the data individually. API access and single-instance data exports are provided upon request.

QRE 26.1.2			
	A sample of the data points can be viewed by the public at the https://open.feedback.org website. Technical API documentation is provided to approved users upon request.		
SLI 26.1.1 – uptake of the tools and processes described in Measure 26.1	Methodology of data measurement [suggested character limit: 500 characters]		
	Nr of users of public access	Other quantitative information on public access	
Data	2 API Users	244,949 API calls	

VII. Empowering the fact-checking community
Commitment 31
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.

QRE 31.3.1	Discussions on the establishment of the repository have started in the "Empowerment of fact-checkers" subgroup, in which SF takes part. As of the end of the reporting period, a first proposal by the EFCSN for the features of the repository has been shared with the sugbroup.
QRE 31.4.1	Not applicable as the specific features of the repository are not yet finalized.

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.		
Measure 33.1		
QRE 33.1.1	SF is an IFCN certified signatory (currently undergoing renewal) as well as an EFCSN member.	
SLI 33.1.1 – number of European fact-checkers that are IFCN-certified	Methodology of data measurement [suggested character limit: 500 characters]: 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 of March 2024	
	Nr of fact-checkers IFCN-certified	Nr of members of EFCSN
Data	50 signatories 27 organisations under renewal 8 organisations with certification expired	38 verified members 14 under assessment after applying

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.	
Measure 34.1	
Measure 34.2	
Measure 34.3	
Measure 34.4	
Measure 34.5	

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.	
Measure 35.1	
Measure 35.2	
Measure 35.3	
Measure 35.4	
Measure 35.5	
Measure 35.6	

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 36	
Signatories commit to updating the relevant information contained in the Transparency Centre in a timely and complete manner.	
Measure 36.1	
Measure 36.2	

Measure 36.3	
QRE 36.1.1 (for the Commitments 34–36)	No relevant action taken during this reporting period as this QRE applied only to the initial reporting period.
QRE 36.1.2 (for the Commitments 34–36)	The administration of the Transparency Centre website has been transferred fully to the community of the Code's signatories, with VOST Europe taking the role of developer.
SLI 36.1.1 – (for Measures 34 and 36) meaningful quantitative information on the usage of the Transparency Centre, such as the average monthly visits of the webpage	
	The common Transparency Center has received around 35.000 views between July 1st 2023 and December 31st 2023. The average engagement time on the website is 1m11s and reports have been downloaded more than 9.000 times.
Data	

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.	
Measure 37.1	
Measure 37.2	
Measure 37.3	
Measure 37.4	
Measure 37.5	
Measure 37.6	
QRE 37.6.1	SF is an active participant in the Monitoring and Reporting Subgroup, in the Fact-Checking Subgroup as well as in the Crisis Response Subgroup (where we participate in both the Crisis and Elections Steering Committees).

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.	
Measure 38.1	
QRE 38.1.1	SF has two representatives, including its President, directly involved in the various Code of Practice

	discussions, ensuring full compliance with relevant Commitments taken under the Code.

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.

Measure 40.1	
Measure 40.2	
Measure 40.3	
Measure 40.4	
Measure 40.5	
Measure 40.6	

Reporting on the service's response during an election
European Elections

Threats observed or anticipated at time of reporting: Science Feedback anticipates an amplification of previously-observed disinformation content and tactics:
 	
   – Algorithmic promotion of polarizing content at the expense of more moderate, less engaging content
   – Hack-and-leak operations,
   – Targeted malicious deepfakes amplified by adverse actors,
   – For-profit deepfake farms that publish on all topics likely to generate views, including elections.

Mitigations in place – or planned - at time of reporting: Science Feedback will keep on publishing reviews ("fact-checks"), monitor social media platforms for the emergence of disinformation content or coordinated behaviour and participate in the Rapid Response System under the Code. As an active member of the EFCSN, Science Feedback will also take part in EFCSN projects related to the European elections.
[Note: Signatories are requested to provide information relevant to their particular response to the threats and challenges they observed on their service(s). They ensure that the information below provides an accurate and complete report of their relevant actions. As operational responses to crisis/election situations can vary from service to service, an absence of information should not be considered a priori a shortfall in the way a particular service has responded. Impact metrics are accurate to the best of signatories' abilities to measure them].
Empowering the Research Community

Science Feedback regularly publishes disinformation-related research and aims to produce one report focus on the European elections.

Specific Action applied (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention: Commitment 29/Measure 29.1: data access permitting, Science Feedback will conduct a study on the election-related online information environment in the weeks leading to and following the EP elections.
	Indication of impact (at beginning of action: expected impact) including relevant metrics when available : one report published

Empowering the Fact-Checking Community

Science Feedback will continue its usual verification operations during the European elections. Given the predicted importance of climate-related topics in the election, we might encounter more related claims and therefore publish more EU-related reviews.

Specific Action applied (with reference to the Code's relevant Commitment and Measure)	Description of intervention
	Indication of impact (at beginning of action: expected impact) including relevant metrics when available