



**ASSOCIATION LUXEMBOURGEOISE
POUR LE DIALOGUE INTERCULTUREL**

Erasmus + Training Course

Find The Fake

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Introduction

About the Project

This booklet has been carried out in the scope of the training course **Find The Fake**, which is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission.

The project took place in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg from the **17th to the 26th of August 2022**. It was hosted by the Luxembourgish organisation **Association Luxembourgeoise pour le Dialogue Interculturel** (ALDIC).

The idea was to bring together 32 youth workers from 8 European countries (**Albania, Armenia, France, Georgia, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Ukraine**) and improve their skills in critical thinking by getting familiar with tools, activities, and methodologies to combat fake news and disinformation, which can later be reproduced in their youth work.

The aim is to **contribute to preventing the intolerance and discrimination** caused by fake news and disinformation on social media and in the participating countries/communities through the youth work of the participants and their respective organizations.

The booklet provides information on fake news and critical thinking. It gives an **overview on specific tools, activities and legislations** that have been implemented to combat the spread of fake news in the participating countries.

If you are a youth worker this booklet is the perfect choice to empower your target group and make them fake news resilient and think critically.

The booklet has been created by the participants of the training course and has been designed by the team of trainers.

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- France [Youth ID](#)
- Georgia [Umbrella](#)
- Italy Innovative Social Hub – Impresa Sociale s.r.l.
- Luxembourg [ALDIC](#)
- Portugal [AEQUALITAS](#)
- Ukraine [Development & Initiative](#)

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The project has been funded with support of the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the authors. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

Defining Fake News

There are many types of fake news, below you can find a short description of the main eight types.

Fake news

Inaccurate, sometimes sensationalistic report that is created to gain attention, mislead, deceive, or damage a reputation.

Hoax

Falsehood deliberately fabricated to masquerade as truth.

Mis-information

False information disseminated without harmful intent.

Dis-information

Created and shared by people with harmful intent.

Clickbait

Stories that are deliberately fabricated to gain more website visitors and increase advertising revenue for websites. It uses sensationalist headlines to grab attention and drive click-throughs to the publisher website, normally at the expense of truth or accuracy.

Propaganda

Stories that are created to deliberately mislead audiences, promote a biased point of view or a particular political cause or agenda.

Sloppy Journalism

A story with unreliable information or without checking all of the facts which can mislead audiences.

Biased/Slanted News

News or stories that confirm their own beliefs and fake news can prey on these. Social media news feeds tend to display news and articles that they think we will like based on our personalized searches.

Fake News and their consequences

The extent to which Fake News can be spread and reproduced on social media is unimaginably huge. Information is what shapes our minds and our world. Therefore, we make **important decisions** based on the information we receive. There are many reasons why people create and spread fake news, and each of them has a hidden agenda. Whether it is for economic, political, ideological gain, or just for fun, fake news has a clear objective and a hidden purpose.

To get this right we will introduce you to a case study introduced during the project, *the pizza gate case* that happened in the USA in 2016. Pizza Gate was a conspiracy theory that linked the Comet Ping Pong restaurant, located in Washington D.C., to a child prostitution ring allegedly run by Hillary Clinton and her campaign manager.

Here is the story

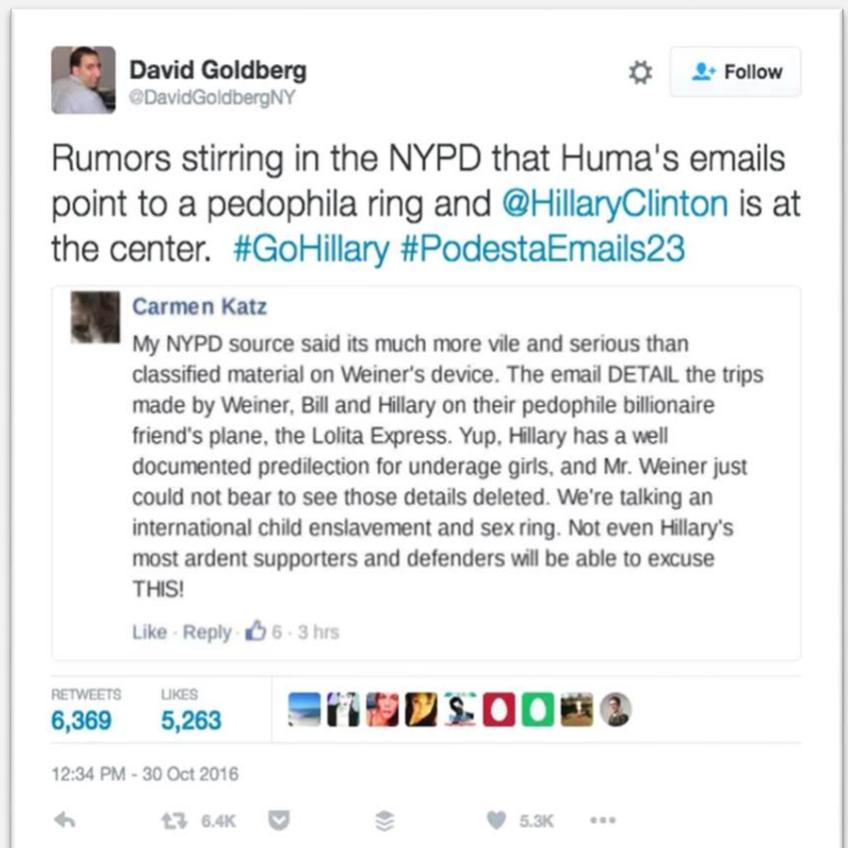


In March 2016, the personal email account of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, was hacked in a spear-phishing attack. Right afterward, Wikileaks released emails from John Podesta, a month before the presidential election, falsely claiming the emails contained coded messages that connected several high-ranking

Democratic Party officials and U.S. restaurants with an alleged human trafficking and child sex ring. One of the establishments allegedly involved was the Comet Ping Pong pizzeria in Washington, D.C.. Trump

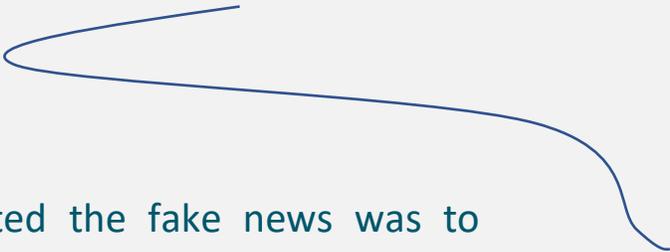
supporters spread the news over social media from Reddit to 4chan. A participant from 4chan claimed that cheese pizza referred to pedophiles because the website shorthanded the code 'c.p' as a shortcut for child pornography. Later, the emails revealed conversations between Podesta and the owner of Comet Ping Pong who openly had conversations with the Democratic Party. #pizzagate started trending on Twitter and Facebook.

On December 4, 2016, Edgar Maddison Welch, a 28-year-old man from Salisbury, North Carolina, arrived at Comet Ping Pong and fired three shots from an AR-15-style rifle that struck the restaurant's walls, a desk, and a door. Welch later told the police that he had planned to "self-investigate" the conspiracy theory. Welch saw himself as the potential hero of the story—a rescuer of children. He surrendered after officers surrounded the restaurant and was arrested without incident. No one was injured and Welch was sentenced to four years in prison.



What is the aim of fake news?

Fake news has its concrete aim, which could consist in damaging the reputation of a person or an entity or making money through advertising revenue and changing people's behavior. In the case of the #pizzagate



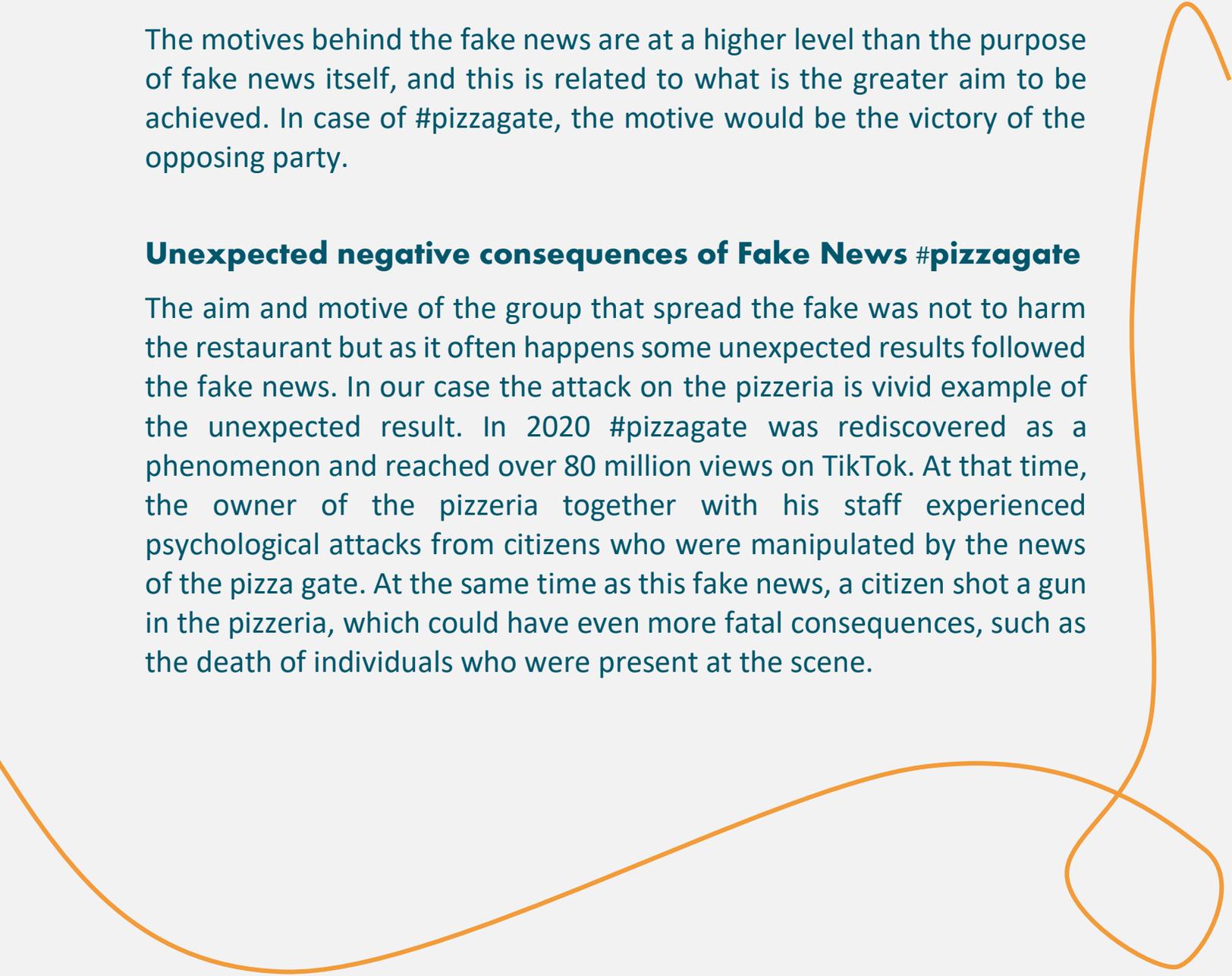
study, the main goal of those who created the fake news was to denigrate the figure of the Democratic Party by involving them in a scandal and playing with a very delicate and sensitive topic such as the trafficking of children. They expected that less US citizens would vote for Hilary Clinton, while at the same time spoiling the reputation of the Democratic Party by including other members as part of this scandal.

What are the motives of fake news?

The motives behind the fake news are at a higher level than the purpose of fake news itself, and this is related to what is the greater aim to be achieved. In case of #pizzagate, the motive would be the victory of the opposing party.

Unexpected negative consequences of Fake News #pizzagate

The aim and motive of the group that spread the fake was not to harm the restaurant but as it often happens some unexpected results followed the fake news. In our case the attack on the pizzeria is vivid example of the unexpected result. In 2020 #pizzagate was rediscovered as a phenomenon and reached over 80 million views on TikTok. At that time, the owner of the pizzeria together with his staff experienced psychological attacks from citizens who were manipulated by the news of the pizza gate. At the same time as this fake news, a citizen shot a gun in the pizzeria, which could have even more fatal consequences, such as the death of individuals who were present at the scene.



Offline Experiment

The participants conducted an offline socio-educational experiment, which aimed at raising awareness of fake news among the local population in Luxembourg City. Participants were grouped in four different experiment groups and had to spread fake news, which they invented themselves, according to the respective topics they selected in their groups. Each group was divided into two sub-groups. The first one was meant to spread the fake news convincingly among pedestrians in the city center of Luxembourg. The second one was meant to approach the misled people and reveal the truth.

Groups and Topics

	1 Water	2 Masks	3 Public Transportation	4 Car-free City
Head- lines	'Aluminum polluted tap water due to constructions in the city of Luxembourg'	'Implementation of a new regulation for mandatory mask use from the beginning of the new school year'	'New regulation aimed at making transportation in Luxembourg not free anymore in 2023'	'Luxembourg bans the use of private cars in the city center'
Aim	Motivate people to buy bottled water from a particular water company / buy masks from a particular mask producing company (economic)		Raise people against the ruling party (political)	

Results

- In **all 4 groups most of the people approached believed the news** without even checking the information. In some rare cases, however, people were suspicious and said that they would get more information at home.
- People believed what they were being told as participants pretended to come from trustworthy institutions such as local research institutions or the government.
- Particularly in the case of the politically motivated fake news, people believed the news if it corresponded to their own political beliefs. Such was the case in the **Car-free City Group**, where people expressed further ecological annoyances that the government should take care of.
- In the **Public Transportation Group**, however, people were more suspicious, which was probably due to the topic. As public transportation was only recently made free in Luxembourg, the government wouldn't make a step back and even if, the rumors would have spread faster among the population.



Conclusion

As a result of the offline experiments participants experienced how easily news can be manipulated and falsely spread. Hence, they became aware of the importance of critically consuming news that can be found on the internet. As most of the people approached remained surprised once the fake news was revealed, the experiment might have also contributed to making some of the local people more aware about the issues on fake news and disinformation.

Online Experiment

The purpose of the online experiment was to raise the competences of the participants of the project to **track, check and verify the news** and the details (text, links, photos, videos) it contains. At the same time, participants learned how real news are manipulated into fake news, which allowed them to get a better sense and awareness for detecting fake news.

Instructions

The participants were divided into two overarching groups (with two subgroups). The first group, the *bad guys* created fake news by inventing completely new fake news or by changing facts of existing news. In total the group had to present three news – one fake news and two true news. After receiving the three news from the first group, the second group, the *good guys*, had to check and verify the information with tools provided during the training course (such as Google Image Search, Google Lens, Yandex, Baidu etc.) and debunk the



fake news.

The task consisted in first **analyzing the aim of the news** and thinking about the purpose and interest of manipulating the information and facts in question.

In a second step, participants were asked to **analyze specific elements of the news** (title, facts (dates, statistics), photos, videos, personalities mentioned in the news; source). Thus, they could find out which parts of the news were fake (e.g. which numbers or names have been changed;

which pictures have been decontextualized etc.). To improve the experience, the *bad guys* paraphrased and changed the headlines of the two real news, which made it harder for the *good guys* to find the correct answer.

Most of the news was taken from different websites but one the fake news was totally made up, based on rumors and the feelings of the possible readers.

How to Debunk?

Debunking fake news may not be as easy as it seems from the beginning. However, if you follow some useful tips, you will find it more interesting.

1) Learn basic photo-checking

e.g. TinEye, Google image search, Yandex images

2) Be critical - Check paraphrasing

e.g. Google search; National fact-checking; Website link

3) Video Moments

Some pictures are purposely cropped from videos to confuse the audience

e.g. YouTube Data Viewer and InVid

4) Always check the context

Sometimes misuse of the context makes the fake news easy to convince people. In major cases, you may search for the specific characteristic of the environment to check the news.

Challenges to verify fake news

Data, statistics, and lots of numbers can be used as a way to make fake information believable. The difficult part was also to check which sentences were paraphrased but still true. The change in the headlines of real news also made it complicated to verify what was real and what was fake. Since the game includes the real existing news, the team of the “bad guys” have also dedicated some time to finding real news, which might look as fake or made up. However, it is worth keeping in mind, that team must follow some steps, so it would be hard to find this news on the Internet. For instance, to delete metadata from the pictures (make a screenshot or change it manually), do not include the title of the news or date or time of it.

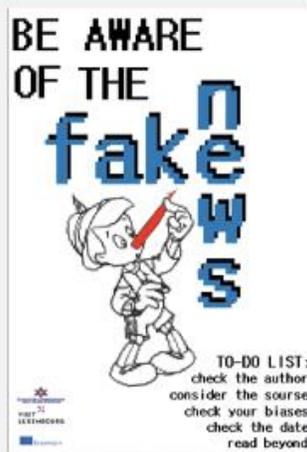


Conclusion

During the online experiment participants learned, on the one hand, how easily information can be manipulated, which allowed them to get a better sense and awareness for detecting fake news. On the other hand, they got familiarized with the basic elements that should be checked when reading any news and applied various tools provided during the training course to verify and check information contained in the news.



Developed tools for dissemination



yeghvard Erasmus+

REAL	Or	FAKE
HAPPY (smiley face)	X SAD (frowny face)	
SURPRISED (wow speech bubble)	X FRUSTRATED (angry face)	
TRUSTED (handshake)	X DECEIVED (person running away)	
RELAXED, CALM (relaxed person)	X WORRIED STRESSED (stressed person)	
INFORMED (magnifying glass)	X DISINFORMED (crossed-out magnifying glass)	

Erasmus+ ASSOCIATION LUXEMBOURGEOISE POUR LE DIALOGUE INTERCULTUREL

Is this the real world? Is this just fantasy?

FIND THE FAKE
17-26 AUGUST 2022 LUXEMBOURG

- Develop a Critical Mindset
- Fact-checking
- Check the source
- Check the date
- Check your own biases
- Check the author



Erasmus+ #findthefake

You can find these and more posters developed during the training for download by clicking [HERE!](#)

International tools

Text Tools / Fact checking

Facts that you read about on social media can easily be checked by using [Google Fact Checking](#) or by consulting the website of the [International Fact Checking Network](#) at Poynter.

In both tools you can type in keywords of news you have read or heard about, and they will list related news that are categorized on a scale from true to false. If categorized as false, the fake news is corrected, and the true version is explained.

Reverse image engines

Different search engines exist to do a reverse image search such as **Google**, **Yandex**, **TinEye**, **Baidu** or **Bing**. You can simply upload an image or in some of the engines you can also copy the URL of an image. Once uploaded or URL-copied the engine provides further information on the image such as the source or on which websites it was published. Even if you only have an extract of the image, the engines may provide the whole image.

To use all the engines in a very easy way, you can download a Chrome extension called **RevEye**. Once downloaded, you can simply right-click on a specific image on the internet and do the reverse image search with all of the search engines.

Try them for yourself by clicking on the icons!



Yandex



Baidu 百度



Video Tools

Videos can easily be identified and checked by using the [YouTube Dataviewer](#). The website has been created by Amnesty International and is provided by the Citizen Evidence Lab.



The tool has a very simple and user-friendly interface. You can copy the URL of a YouTube Video in the search bar and the engine will give you a small description of the content, the date and time of the publication, and the name of the author.



Another useful tool for videos is [InVID](#), which is provided by the InVID European project to help people verify and fact-check content on different social media platforms. You can find information on videos, perform reverse image searches to find useful data.

...more tools



Translate news or results from search engines (such as Baidu or Yandex) with the help of **Google Translator**



Localise places on images with the help of **Google Earth's** Street view

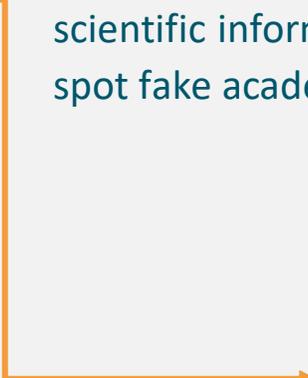


Take a picture with your phone and find useful information by googling your photo with the help of **Google Lens**

Scientific tools

Oftentimes, when reading (fake) news, you can find references to scientific studies and papers. Although this makes an article more credible, it does not mean that what is claimed in the article is true. Also, it does not give any information on the quality of the study undertaken.

During the Training Course the two tools **Google Scholar** and **Scimago** were presented in order to provide a better understanding of scientific information among the participants. The tools can be used to spot fake academic papers and detect scientific disinformation.



Google Scholar

In **Google Scholar** you can research scientific articles.

Type in the name of a study in the search bar or search for some key words to find the paper mentioned in the (fake?) news.

SJR

Scimago Journal & Country Rank

Scimago checks the quality of scientific journals.

The tool tells you, for example, how often a journal has been cited and indicates how good the quality was in different years. The quality is indicated in a colored table – green means good and red means bad.

Local tools

Click on the images to find out more about the tools!!

Albania

Faktoje is a non-political, transparent and independent organization that provides an online platform with a fact-o-meter which exposes fake articles about national and international politics.



Talmil
-org

Teach and learn media and information literacy

Talmil is an online platform that provides educational resources in the several Balkan countries to teach media and information literacy to young people from the age of 15-19.

France

The newspaper Le Monde created a search engine called **Décodex** to check the credibility of different sources.

Le Monde



Des-infox is a pedagogic guide made by the network of MJC (House of Youth and Culture) for youngsters on what fake news are and how to debunk them.

Hoaxbuster is a collaborative platform that exposes hoaxes and fake news in French media to fight against disinformation.



hoaxbuster.com
La plateforme collaborative contre la désinformation

Portugal

Polígrafo

O primeiro jornal português de Fact-Checking

Polígrafo is a Portuguese newspaper, which is certified by the IFCN. It has its own fact checking department and shows the variable levels of truth behind each article.

Observador, similarly to Polígrafo, categorizes news articles according to their accuracy. It has, however, fewer categories than Polígrafo.

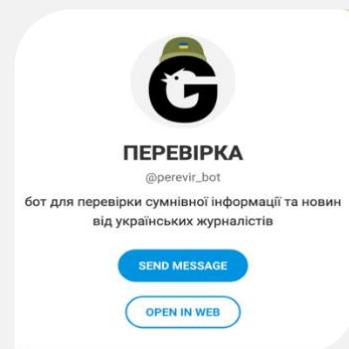
OBSERVADOR

Ukraine



StopFake is a fact-checking organization founded by Ukrainian teachers and students in 2014 to refute Russian propaganda and fight fake news.

In the first days of the war in Ukraine, a fact-checking bot was launched on telegram: **VERIFICATIONS**. You can send dubious and shocking information and get verification from journalists from Kharkiv.



Georgia



FactCheck Georgia is a Georgian website that displays news in a metric system according to their accuracy.

Mediachecker.ge is a media platform covering the state of press and the media landscape in Georgia and providing journalists with resources.



Luxembourg

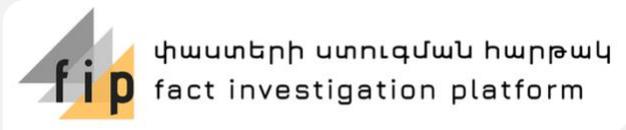


Propaganda Guide guides you through ten questions to help you reflect on whether news might be manipulated. The tool was presented during a local visit at **ZDB** – check out their work!

Disinfocheck is a website from a research hub that monitors disinformation in Luxembourg and Belgium. You can find the hub's latest fact checks, investigative reports, academic research, media literacy, and media literacy.



Armenia



The **Fact investigation Platform (FIP)** has a fact-o-meter which evaluates facts according to their veracity. It is also possible to report disinformation on their website.

CivilNet is an online television and media source with a focus on human rights and democracy in Armenia. They have their own fact-checking department that monitors content on social media and check claims and statements made by public and political figures.



Italy



Bufale.net is a free online service for fact-checking and debunking. The mission consists in making people 'read responsibly' (*'Leggi responsabilmente'*).

Legislation

Despite the risk of censorship and limitation of freedom of speech many countries have adopted regulations on fake news spreading. Our participants brought the experience from their countries to the project. Below you can find some of them.



Italy



Italian Penal code, art 656¹ punishes the publication and dissemination of false, exaggerated, or biased news which may undermine public order and provides detention penalties or monetary penalties up to 300 Euro.

(Source: <https://www.rcmediafreedom.eu/Tools/Legal-Resources/Tackling-fake-news-the-Italian-way>)

Law n°27 from May 2021 is a big step for human rights on the internet. **Article 6**, especially, is focused on the right for protection against disinformation. *'The state ensures compliance in Portugal with the European Action Plan against disinformation in order to protect society against individuals or groups that create, share or disseminate a narrative considered disinformation. Disinformation any demonstrably false or misleading narrative created, presented and disseminated to obtain economic advantages or to deliberately deceive the public, and which is likely to cause public damage'*.

(Source: <https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/lei/27-2021-163442504>)

Portugal



France



The law against manipulation of information also called "**loi infox**" (contraction of *information* and *intoxication*) aims at better protecting democracy from diverse forms of fake news. Since voted in parliament in November 2018, this law defines false information as *'allegations or inexact imitation or deceptive to affect the sincerity of the vote, broadcasted intentionally, artificial or automatically and massively'*. The Constitutional Council recognizes the importance of this law, especially during elections, but at the same time its limits: therefore

¹ (approved in October 1930), third book "special misdemeanors", title I "misdemeanors of police competences" section I "special misdemeanors concerning public safety and public tranquility".

opinions, parodies, partial inexactitudes, and simple exaggerations are not included in it. Only allegations that can be proved to be false or manifestly misleading. However, some might consider this law to threaten the freedom of press.

(Source: <https://www.justifit.fr/b/guides/droit-informatique/fake-news/>; [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loi contre la manipulation de l%27information](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loi_contre_la_manipulation_de_l%27information))

In 2020, a draft law on combating disinformation was proposed in Ukraine. The authorities wanted to introduce new rules for the work of journalists, limit access to social media, and introduce an Information Commissioner, which would have its own apparatus. Each mass media and disseminator of information would be given a 'trust index' with his consent. **The bill could, however, not be adopted because it did not get enough votes. In 2021, it was brought up again for consideration and again rejected.**

However, in Ukraine there are some decent media organizations that are engaged in the fight against fake news. The main organization, the **Center for Democracy and the Rule of Law** is engaged in both media literacy and creation of truthful analytics and the exposure of fraudulent and disinformation materials.

(Source: <https://cedem.org.ua/news/protydiya-fejkam/>; <https://espreso.tv/prorosiy-skiy-zakon-pro-media>; <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-51268503>)

Ukraine



Albania



Albania currently does not have a specific law on regulating fake news. Meanwhile, the main legislative acts regulating the situation on fake news as a manifestation of defamation is the **Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania** and the **Law on Media**. According to the Criminal Code defamation is considered a criminal offense. In this context, the intentional dissemination of false statements or any other kind of false information that violate the honor and dignity of a person is punishable by a fine. The latter depends mainly on the damage that a certain type of defamation brings to society.

There is no specific legislation against disinformation in Georgia. There are, however, organizations and media platforms, which combat the fake news and try to reveal the truth. One of the organizations is the **Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics**. On December 4, 2009, 137 journalists signed an agreement to observe general professional standards, and with this signature became the founders and members of the aforesaid organization. The goal of the charter concerns the development of journalistic norms and professional standards, which includes their implementation and protection as well as the fight against fake news.

(Source: <https://www.qartia.ge/en/about-us>)

Georgia



Armenia



There is no specific legislation in Armenia against disinformation, the closest law article is regarding modifying computer information (Criminal status book, Article 252): Altering information stored on a computer, computer system, network or machine media or inserting false information into them, in the absence of characteristics of stealing another's property, or causing property damage by fraud or abuse of trust, which caused significant damage shall be punished by a fine of the amount of two hundred to five hundred times the minimum wage.

(Source: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=69646>)

Fake news is not a crime in Luxembourg. The **Freedom of Expression in the Media Act** (Law of June 8, 2004, Chapter V. Article 10,11) adopted by the government and legislators, contains provisions concerning both freedom of expression and the responsibilities that flow from it such as the duty of accuracy and truthfulness. Nevertheless, journalists are obliged by Luxembourgish law to report the facts truthfully and accurately, and they also have a duty to voluntarily correct any inaccurate information as soon as they become aware of it.

(Source: <https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2004/06/08/n4/jo>)

Luxembourg



Online Games

If you want to learn even more about fake news after all that reading in a more fun way, you can try different games and quizzes on the website of EUvsDisinfo, which aims at increasing public awareness and understanding of the Kremlin's disinformation operations.

These games introduce you to real-life situations, while developing your critical thinking and teach to be suspicious about any information that you receive. It is so much fun that you don't even know you are learning.

Find some examples below and try them for yourself by visiting [EUvsDisinfo!](#)

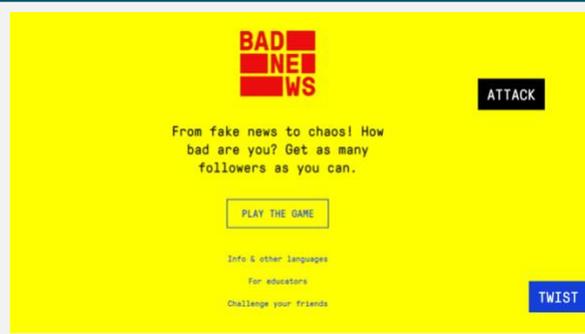
Harmony Square is a psychological game against disinformation. It is supposed to improve people's ability to spot manipulation techniques on social media posts and increase the confidence in spotting such techniques

Objective: understand the root of spreading misinformation by taking the perspective of a bad guy



In **Bad News** you take the role of a fake newsmonger, which allows you to build a cognitive resistance against common forms of manipulation that you may encounter online.

Objective: involve more people in a fight by spreading fake news



Conclusion of the brochure



The spreading of fake news remains a serious issue of the online world that has very real consequences in the offline world. As the activities carried out during the training course have shown, a lot of people easily believe manipulated news without checking for more information.

There is, however, a variety of tools, activities, and methodologies that can be used to counteract the spread of fake news and raise the awareness of young people for fake news and disinformation.

As a result of the training course youth workers gained some valuable competences that they can use not only for themselves, but more importantly that they can disseminate through their youth work in their respective countries by reproducing some of the tools, activities and methodologies presented during the training and recapped in this booklet.

Feel free to spread this booklet via your social media channels to give opportunities to as many young people as possible to improve their competences in critical thinking and combating fake news.





**Thank you for
reading and sharing
this booklet!**

