CERIS[1] FCT[2] WORKSHOP:
Disinformation, fake news and hate speech
11 May 2023 – BAO Le bouche à oreille, Brussels
Rue Félix Hap 11, 1040 Etterbeek

DG HOME is organising this workshop to bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to discuss the complexity of societal and technological aspects of disinformation, fake news and hate speech, with a focus on, but not limited to, the internal security angle.

Countering disinformation and fake news with implications for security is an important issue where modern information analysis is needed. Bots are increasingly used to manipulate the public opinion and spread fake news on the internet. One example is causing a mass panic by spreading fake news. Dimensions of this problem increase even more in crisis situations, where spreading disinformation and fake news, by infusing uncertainty and fear, aims at harming people's life, intensifying the crisis situations, weakening the European societies and aggravating the divisions. This topic asks for an interdisciplinary approach based both on societal capabilities to withstand such a threat (such as education on trustable sources of information, research on the impact of uncertainties caused by disinformation on public crisis management and society overall) and on technological means of fighting against it.

Similarly, hate speech has harmful impacts on the individual victims, or groups of victims, but also on our society at large, undermining the fundamental values of the EU, such as respect for human dignity, freedom and equality. Under EU law, racist and xenophobic hate motivated crime and speech are illegal. Like disinformation and fake news, hate crime and hate speech evolve and have their sparks in times of social or economic crises. Addressing hate speech from all angles (so not only technological but also local, national and international dimensions, civil society perspectives, and analysis of good practices) increases the chance of combating it in a sustainable manner, by deriving effective responses and improving the understanding of the cultural and societal aspects of hate speech and hate crime, as well as of the key challenges for combating it.

The main goal of the EU security research programme and of its projects in the area of fighting crime and terrorism is to make crime and terrorism more effectively tackled, while respecting fundamental rights, thanks to more powerful prevention, preparedness and response, a better understanding of related human, societal and technological aspects, and the development of cutting-edge capabilities for police authorities and other practitioners. EU security research being an applied research programme, a clear strategy on the uptake of the outcomes, defined in consultation with the involved stakeholders, is a key to success of the projects.

EU security research projects funded notably under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe have been gathering field insights and developing tools to enhance EU actions in fighting disinformation, fake news and hate speech. This workshop strives to ensure that the research carried out under these projects is built on the evidence-based policy responses and can be fully exploited. The aim of this workshop is to facilitate the sharing of experiences and

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[1] Community for European Research and Innovation for Security
[2] Fighting Crime and Terrorism

research findings in order to identify current achievements, possible synergies, and inspire each other while strengthening collaboration on European level. Moreover, this workshop would provide an opportunity to:

- Learn about the policy and practitioners' developments in the field, on the one hand, and showcase research results to the policy DGs and other stakeholders, on the other hand. This would also respond to calls within the EU Security Union Strategy and The Commission Staff Working Document on Enhancing security through research and innovation, which seek to consolidate knowledge and research. It would allow projects to be informed of upcoming policy priorities and ensure that research responds to them.

- Create further synergies between projects, beyond those selected under the same calls for proposals, or those managed by the same Units.

- Ensure that upcoming projects can benefit from existing research, in order to build on existing efforts.

- Respond to DG HOME and REA priorities in terms of strengthening exploitation and dissemination, as well as policy feedback.

Agenda

08.30 – 09.30 Registration and Welcome Coffee

09.30 – 09.40 Welcome and introduction

09.40 – 10.10 Keynote speech

10.10 – 10.30 Policy developments in fighting disinformation and fake news

10.30 – 11.30 Panel 1: disinformation and fake news

11:30 – 12.30 Panel 2: disinformation and fake news

12.30 – 13.30 *Walking lunch*

13.30 – 14.00 Practitioners' angle in countering disinformation, fake news and hate speech

14.00 – 14.30 Policy developments in fighting hate speech

14:30 – 15:30 Panel 3: hate speech

15.30 – 15.45 *Short coffee break*

15.45 – 16.30 Discussion with the audience

16.30 – 17.00 Conclusions and way forward