European
**MEDIA AND
INFORMATION**
Fund

ANNUAL
Progress
Report
2022 / 23

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION

EUI EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE

European MEDIA AND INFORMATION Fund

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EUI EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

INDEX

MESSAGE FROM THE *Management Committee*

Since March 2022, the European Media and Information Fund (EMIF) has centred its efforts around three main priorities.

Firstly, it has ensured a balanced growth and efficient management of its project portfolio. As detailed in the present report, the number of projects supported by EMIF increased to 40 during the reference period, covering all its main intervention areas, i.e., fact-checking, journalistic investigations into disinformation, research for a more resilient news media ecosystem, and media literacy initiatives for citizens' empowerment. With a committed total grant amount of around €6.15 million, EMIF was able to provide funding to one third of the project proposals received in the 2022-2023 period. This shows a continuing strong demand for funding in the areas covered by the Fund, as well as the relevance of the topics of EMIF's calls for stakeholders that are active in the counter-disinformation space. However, demand for funding was uneven across EMIF's four intervention areas, with a stronger stakeholder response to the call launched in the media literacy area. Therefore, by harnessing the flexibility built into its operational framework, the Management Committee decided to reallocate part of its annual budget to media literacy initiatives with the aim of matching current demand patterns.

Secondly, in keeping with its multi-donor nature, the Fund endeavoured to diversify its funding base by reaching out to a number of corporate and philanthropic actors. While discussions with potential new donors remained ongoing, EMIF sought to cater to different funding needs and organisational goals by establishing a refreshed and more flexible implementation framework for raising and deploying new funding.

Thirdly, EMIF has scaled up its communications and outreach efforts to establish itself as a key European player in the ecosystem of counter-disinformation funding. Its aim was twofold: on the one hand, to increase its visibility among potential grantees so as to attract best-in-class proposals; and, on the other hand, to attract potential new donors by making them aware of its mission and activities. As a result, EMIF's website recorded a significant number of visits over the reference period, and its presence on social networks was substantially boosted. Moreover, targeted outreach activities, including EMIF's participation in selected events (e.g., the Fighting Misinformation Online series, Web Summit 2022), have helped to raise the profile of the EMIF brand across communities of relevant stakeholders. The EMIF's Annual Event, which took place in Lisbon on 2 December 2022, showed a strong convergence of stakeholders around the Fund's forward-looking priorities, as well as the emergence of a community of grantees willing to operate as a network.

In addition to four funding rounds for fact-checking projects, three new calls were launched during the reference period in the other intervention areas. A number of improvements were introduced in this context in order to ensure a better design of each call and a clear alignment with EU policies, while also making a stronger contribution to the mission of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). Going forward, such improvements should contribute to an optimal allocation of the Fund's resources across areas and help ensure the durability of project results and the sustainability of grantees' activities beyond the duration of their project.

As most of the funded projects are still in their implementation phase, estimating the overall impact of EMIF's activities may be premature. Nevertheless, the Management Committee is pleased to note concrete positive signs of its contribution to the fight against disinformation. In terms of its geo-graphical scope, the coverage of funded projects now extends to 23 European countries, thereby enhancing knowledge transfer and broadening the European expert community engaged in countering disinformation. In terms of relevance, all projects share the same strong ambition to go beyond the state of the art, while addressing the most pressing challenges posed by disinformation. For example, following the outbreak of the Ukraine war, EMIF was able to fund significant projects focusing on this specific topic. Finally, in terms of capacity-building, it is worth noting that the funded entities represent a wide and diverse cross-section of small and bigger media outlets, academic institutions and think-tanks, as well as civil society organisations, each of them contributing with their own expertise while developing new capabilities thanks to EMIF's strong interdisciplinary approach.

1

Introduction

1.1

DISINFORMATION CONTEXT IN EUROPE

The disinformation environment in Europe in 2022 underwent constant and rapid change and was dominated by a number of recurrent themes, including the Ukraine war, Covid-19 and the effects of vaccines, as well as issues relating to climate change and migration flows. In particular, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine marked the start of a more intense phase of the ongoing information war waged by pro-Kremlin actors, designed to increase concern within the Ukrainian population, discredit the EU and NATO responses, and propagate false narratives in order to create greater confusion about the justifications of the war. EMIF's support for anti-disinformation efforts included launching a special fact-checking call dedicated to the war in Ukraine, shortly after its outbreak.

Moreover, China assumed a more prominent role and stepped up its information operations aimed at the EU, leveraging disinformation campaigns conducted during the peak of the Covid pandemic. Recent Chinese operations have mirrored their Russian counterparts, both in terms of contents and the use of manipulative techniques and tactics.

Although foreign interference has been at the core of recent discussions on disinformation, homegrown false narratives designed to distort the formation of public opinion at the domestic level have been thriving all over Europe. Such narratives constitute a significant percentage of disinformation within Europe, gaining particular momentum in the context of electoral processes. While it is not always easy to distinguish foreign-influenced operations from domestically driven disinformation, obtaining a clearer understanding of the actors, targets and tactics, techniques and procedures involved in the European sphere of disinformation remains one of the priorities for field research and journalistic investigations. Equally critical is research related to the use of new technologies such as Arti-

ficial Intelligence for producing and spreading disinformation, but also for tracking and countering this menace.

The past year also saw the adoption of landmark EU legislation, such as the Digital Services Act, as well as new legislative proposals aimed at enhancing the independence and economic sustainability of the European media ecosystem, namely the European Media Freedom Act. Such a new regulatory framework will help to secure a lasting impact for the actions taken on the ground, including project financing activities, to counter the threats posed by disinformation. In particular, through the Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation, major online platforms and other systemic actors have pledged to step up their efforts to combat harmful online content. These efforts involve granting access to relevant data to facilitate future research and ensure an independent oversight of the impact of disinformation and the effectiveness of the mitigating measures assumed under the Code.

ABOUT THE REPORT

1.2

Transparency and accountability are part of a larger process towards a more trustworthy digital information ecosystem and are also core values inspiring all of EMIF's activities. For this reason, EMIF is committed to providing information on its work through its annual progress reports, which are subject to an external assessment and made public via EMIF's website.

The present report provides an overview of the activities that took place from 25 March 2022 to 24 March 2023.

2

The Fund
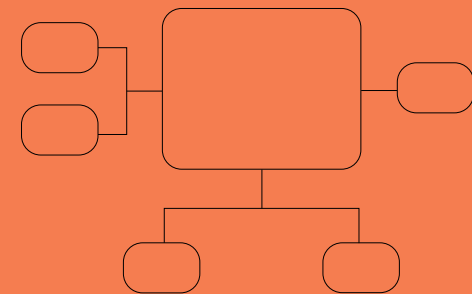
2.1 EMIF IN FIGURES

PROJECTS

40

COUNTRIES

23

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom

GRANTS APPROVED

€6,145,346.35

GRANTS DISBURSED

€1,990,984.86

TOTAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

NUMBER

122

REQUESTED AMOUNT

€21,500,000

CORE STRUCTURE/ ORGANISATIONAL MODEL
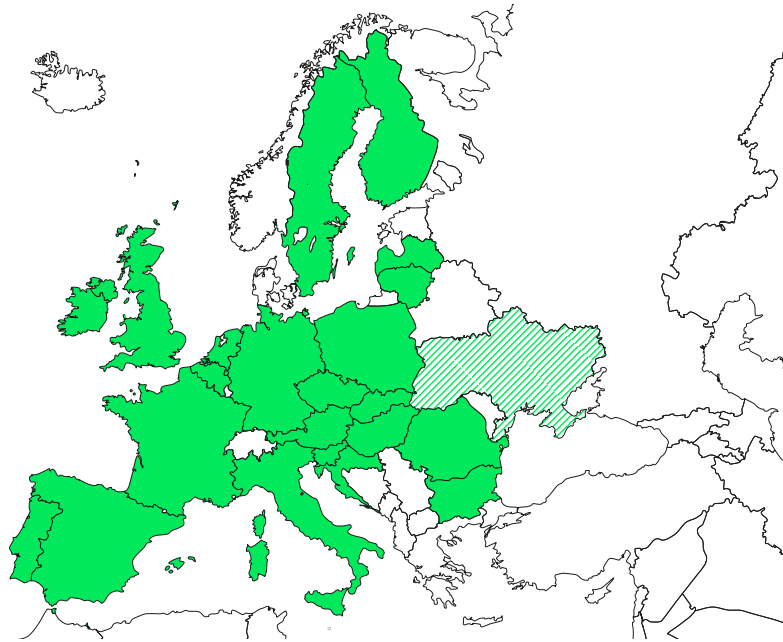
2.2

The European Media and Information Fund was established by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF) and the European University Institute (EUI).

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is a private and independent foundation created in 1956 by the last will and testament of Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian, a philanthropist of Armenian origin, who lived in Lisbon between 1942 and the year of his death in 1955.

Established in perpetuity, the Foundation's main purpose is to improve the quality of life through art, charity, science and education. The Foundation directs its activities from its headquarters in Lisbon and its delegations in Paris and London.

The European University Institute is the leading institute in Europe dedicated to social sciences and humanities. Founded in 1972 by the six original members of the then European Communities, the EUI has earned a reputation as a transnational hub of research and higher learning. The EUI offers PhD and Post-Doctoral programmes in Economics, Political and Social Sciences, History and Law, and is home to the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and the School of Transnational Governance (STG). Founded in 2017, the latter provides training in governance to current and future leaders from diverse backgrounds and implements various programmes and initiatives, one of which is the European Digital Media Observatory.

EMIF comprises a Management Committee, an EMIF Unit, a Policy Team and a Steering Committee, and embodies the scientific guidance of EDMO in its activities.
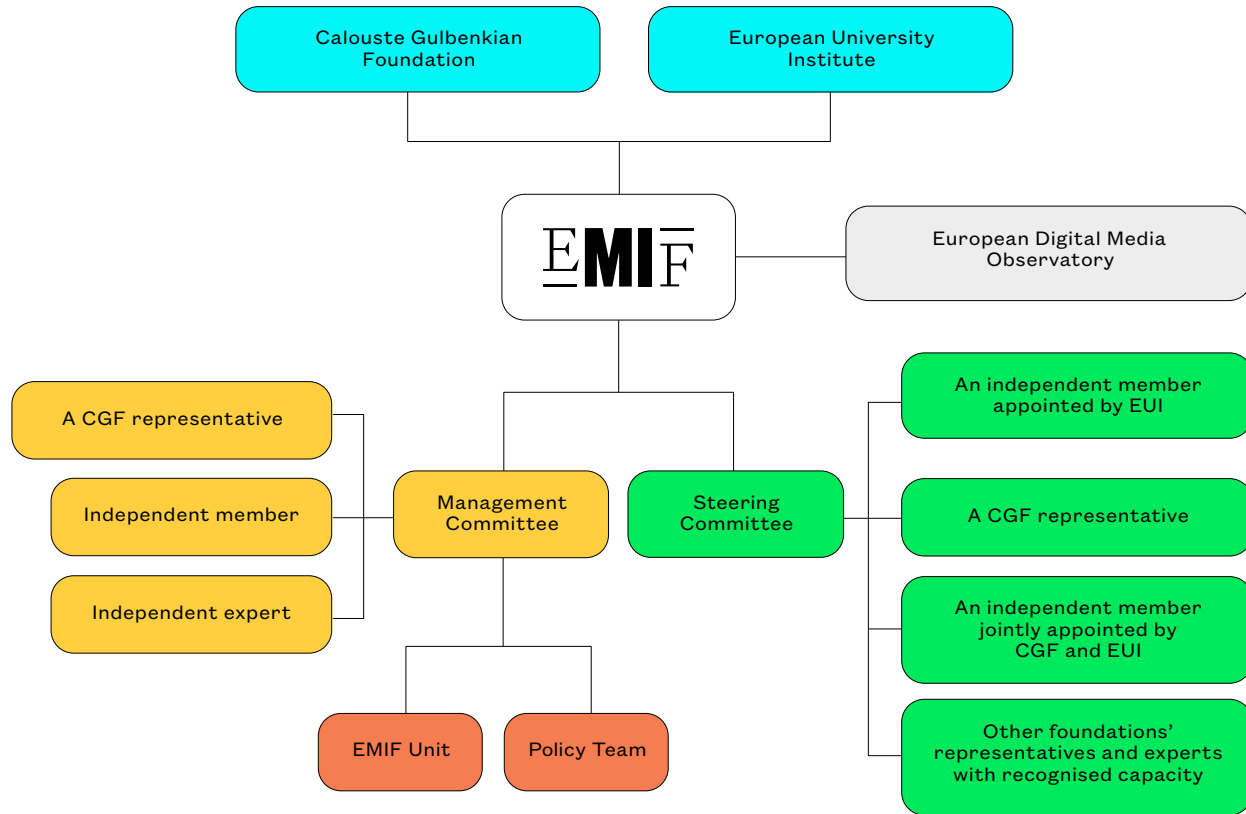
The Management Committee is the Fund's decision-making body and comprises three members: a representative of the CGF, who chairs the Committee; an independent member appointed by the EUI; and an independent expert appointed jointly by the CGF and the EUI. The Management Committee establishes the Fund's action methods, validates all necessary measures to guide the Fund's activities, designates beneficiaries and determines potential partners.

The Fund is managed by the CGF, which ensures its day-to-day management and executes the decisions taken by EMIF's Management Committee. In addition to the involvement of the CGF's institutional structure, which includes legal, financial, communication and IT departments, a management support unit – the EMIF Unit – was created at the Foundation and operates under the supervision of the Chair of the Management Committee.

The EUI is responsible for coordinating academic oversight and the dissemination of project findings to academics, specialists, policymakers and the general public, in the form of a Policy Team.

The Steering Committee provides general guidance and oversight to the Management Committee, notably by overseeing the external independent review and assessment of the Fund's activities. This Committee is chaired by a representative of the EUI. It is composed of representatives of the EUI and the CGF and also includes representatives of other Foundations recognised for their work on matters of importance for the news media sector, media and information literacy and societal resilience and/or EU policies, as well as other renowned experts.

The European Digital Media Observatory acts as a scientific advisor to EMIF and performs its role with complete independence from the Fund and its donors. EDMO's Scientific Focus, in particular, provides a framework to guide the priorities of EMIF's interventions in all relevant areas, with a view to addressing the phenomenon of online disinformation in Europe. Based on EDMO's Scientific Focus, EDMO's Advisory Board sets the scientific priorities for EMIF's interventions, specifically in the areas of "Investigations into Disinformation", "Research – Studies & Sandboxes" and "Actions in Support of Media Literacy". The Chairs of EDMO's Advisory Board and Executive Board are responsible for validating the texts of calls for proposals ahead of their publication. EDMO advises on the evaluation process and indicates a roster of expert evaluators, from which EMIF's Management Committee selects the experts for each call and funding round.

2.3

MEASURES ENSURING GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

GOOD FAITH AND COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS

The governance of the Fund is regulated by Portuguese legislation. The Legal Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation oversees compliance of the documentation produced in connection with the Fund's activities, in accordance with the relevant legislation and the principles of good faith.

Separation of duties at the management level is ensured by a division of responsibilities within the CGF, namely at the level of financial management. The Financial Department of the CGF is responsible for payments, disbursements and receivables. The EMIF Unit is responsible for providing support to the daily management of the Fund, treating stakeholders with diligence and providing high standards of performance and full cooperation in order to achieve the best possible results.

FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The mechanisms defined for the management of the calls for proposals are designed to ensure equal treatment of all applicants and broad access to relevant information about the process.

Basing the submission, admissibility and evaluation procedures on a digital platform enables EMIF to standardise how information is collected, treated, and disseminated. This system also allows for full GDPR compliance.

EMIF uses external experts to evaluate and score all applications, subject to Declarations of Interest. This ensures fair and equal treatment of all applicants and guarantees a division of duties.

All information about the Fund is permanently available on its website.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE ABSENCE OF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

EMIF's decision-making processes rely on the independence of the several bodies within the Fund and an adequate division of duties.

The Management Committee functions according to its established and approved internal rules, including safeguards for ensuring the absence of any conflict of interests among its members.

Decisions are taken at the level of EMIF's Management Committee, while the EMIF Unit at the CGF, which forms the secretariat, executes these decisions.

Decisions are made independently of any outside influence, including that of the donors. Donors do not participate in the Fund's governance, nor do they have the right to appoint any person to the Fund's Steering Committee or Management Committee. They do not have any role in the setting of research priorities, nor in the setting up of selection committees or the implementation of projects. Donors do not benefit from intellectual property rights in relation to any ideas or projects funded through EMIF, which does not offer services to donors (e.g., the outsourcing of philanthropic services). Donors commit to multi-year contributions, thus protecting the independence of the Fund in the long term. To further strengthen this independence, the Fund pursues a multi-donor policy, seeking to increase the number of donors beyond the single donor in the period covered by this report.

The European Digital Media Observatory indicates independent experts to serve as evaluators of projects submitted under EMIF's calls for proposals and will assume responsibility for evaluating the outcomes of the projects.

A strict conflict of interest policy is observed. In accordance with this policy, EMIF does not allow experts evaluating one call to be part of entities applying to that same call. Also, the EUI is not allowed to participate in calls for proposals organised by the Fund.

A Declaration of Interest is binding upon all members of the Management Committee and staff of the EMIF Unit.

3

EMIF Activities
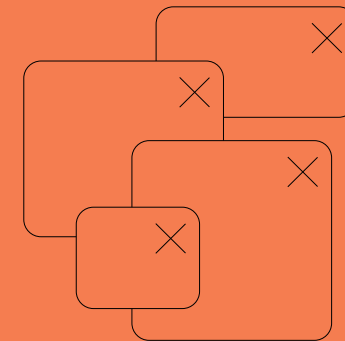
3.1 FUNDING APPROACH

The European Media and Information Fund makes funding available through open calls for proposals. The Fund started with an initial allocation of €25,000,000, which is to be distributed over five years, across 32 eligible countries.

EMIF's activities are structured around four priority areas:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING
To strengthen new and established independent fact-checking organisations.

INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION
To support activities designed to reduce the impact of disinformation, including in electoral processes.

STUDIES & SANDBOXES
To fund academic research into media, disinformation and information literacy across the region.

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY
To enhance public awareness about disinformation by strengthening media literacy initiatives and critical thinking across the region.

EMIF bases its funding mechanism on the following key principles:

+ Attract and support proposals that are innovative and have a multiplier effect (e.g., scalable approaches to disinformation detection, analysis and exposure; networked knowledge exchanges; solid dissemination plans that foster information sharing and follow-on research).

+ Support activities in a manner that preserves the editorial and scientific independence of the beneficiaries. Projects should focus on specific aims and expected outcomes.

+ Tailor the size of fundable projects to the absorption capacity and operational abilities of eligible beneficiaries. EMIF's funding operations will cater for small, medium and larger-sized projects.

+ Ensure a wide geographical coverage (minimum 12 Member States each year), while supporting projects that foster diversity and help build networks of specialists at national and EU levels. Given the diversity and specific vulnerabilities of national information environments, EMIF will fund a wide and well-balanced portfolio of projects.

+ Provide agile and flexible funding mechanisms to enable operations that keep pace with fast-evolving disinformation narratives and manipulation tactics and allow monitoring of events as they unfold.

+ Ensure wide visibility and public awareness of the funded activities, across all four priority areas.

In the reporting period of 2022/23, EMIF launched four funding rounds in the area of fact-checking and three calls in the other intervention areas. These were prepared reflecting the experience provided, the external assessment of its activities for the previous year, and the discussions with stakeholders that took place at EMIF's first annual event at the CGF in Lisbon. The process led to strategic modifications being made to the calls for proposals in the four areas of interventions.

+

In order to ensure gender balance in projects, the Fund incorporated an indicator in the selection criteria specifically relating to the project team's diversity and gender balance.

+

The Fund reviewed its approach in the research area to create a clearer link with specific objectives stemming from EU policies and reflecting EDMO's scientific focus.

+

Based on stakeholders' feedback, EMIF improved its electronic platform to facilitate the submission of applications.

+

The Fund broadened the objectives of the media literacy call, also capturing proposals building on and aimed at expanding previous successful initiatives, to ensure their continuity and longer-term sustainability.

+

In order to better match stakeholders' needs, EMIF increased the grant amount and shortened the duration of projects in the area of "Investigations into Disinformation", while creating a special track for follow-on research or media literacy proposals building on successfully completed projects.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

3.2

In its second year of operation, EMIF has scaled up its communications and outreach efforts by launching its social media channels, participating in international events and increasing its online advertising. The primary objective was to establish the Fund as a key European player in the counter-disinformation space, consequently generating greater interest among potential grantees and attracting new donors to support the cause.

EMIF WEBSITE

EMIF's website, emifund.eu, serves as the main gateway for showcasing the Fund's calls for proposals, highlighting its ongoing work, and enabling prospective grantees to apply to the calls. In 2022, the website underwent significant updates, including the creation of dedicated project pages, showcasing each of the grantees' unique projects.
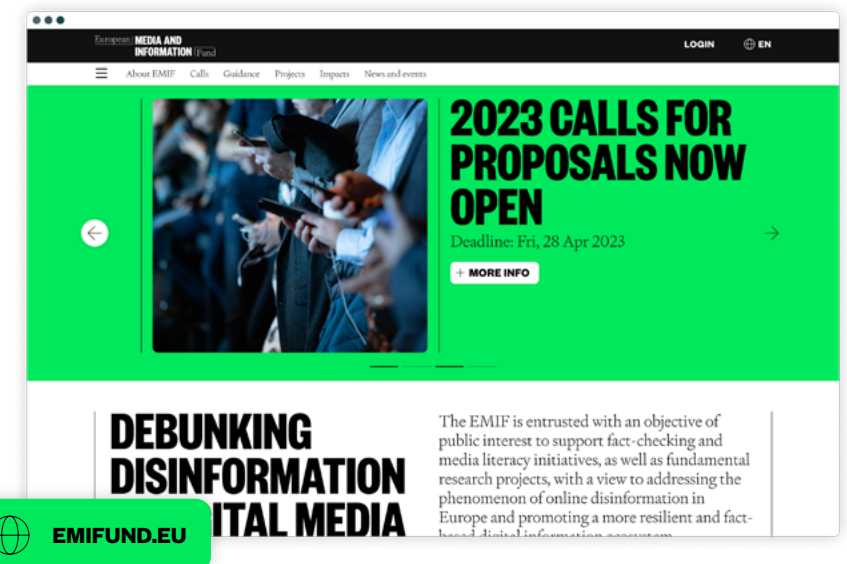
Over the course of its second year, the website recorded 88,181 website sessions, especially through organic traffic. However, the website experienced notable spikes in activity due to highly effective online advertising campaigns promoting different calls.

WEBSITE MONTHLY SESSIONS 2022/2023   ✕
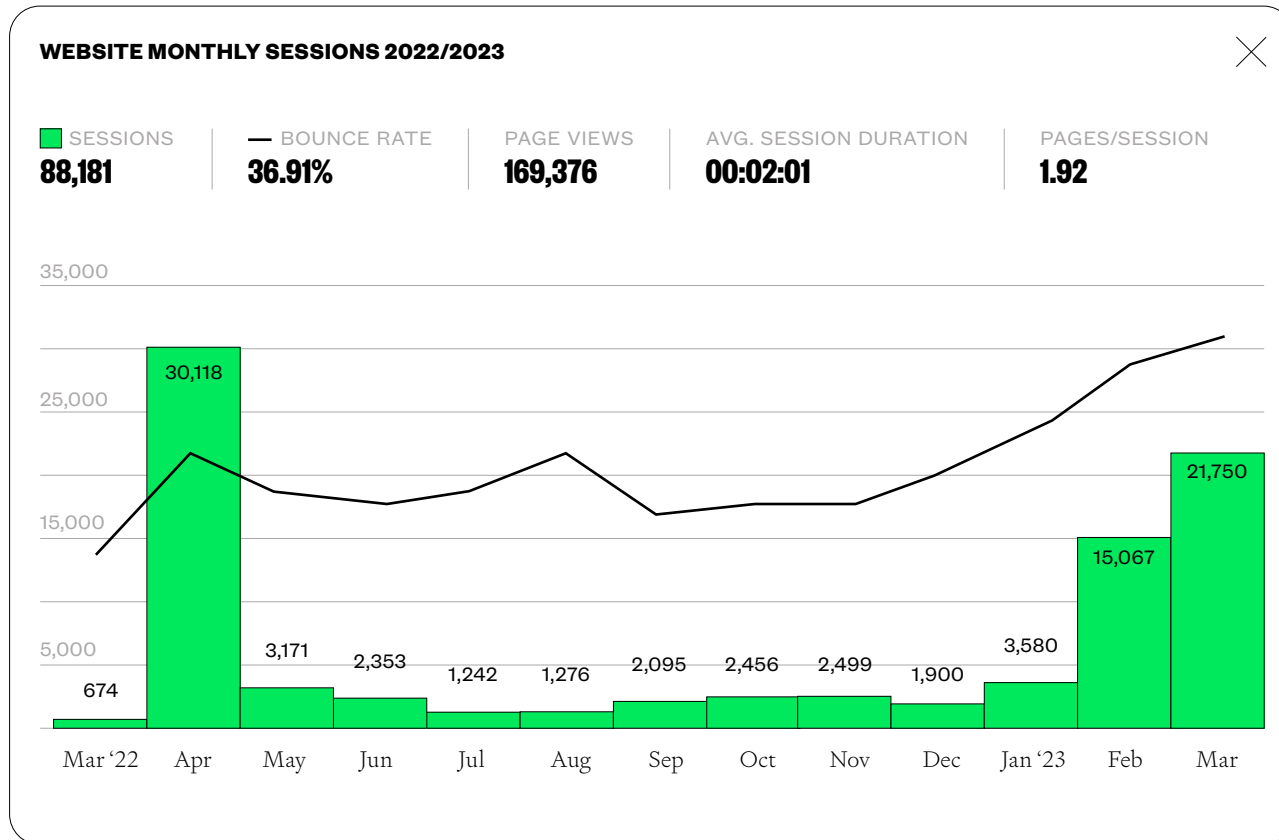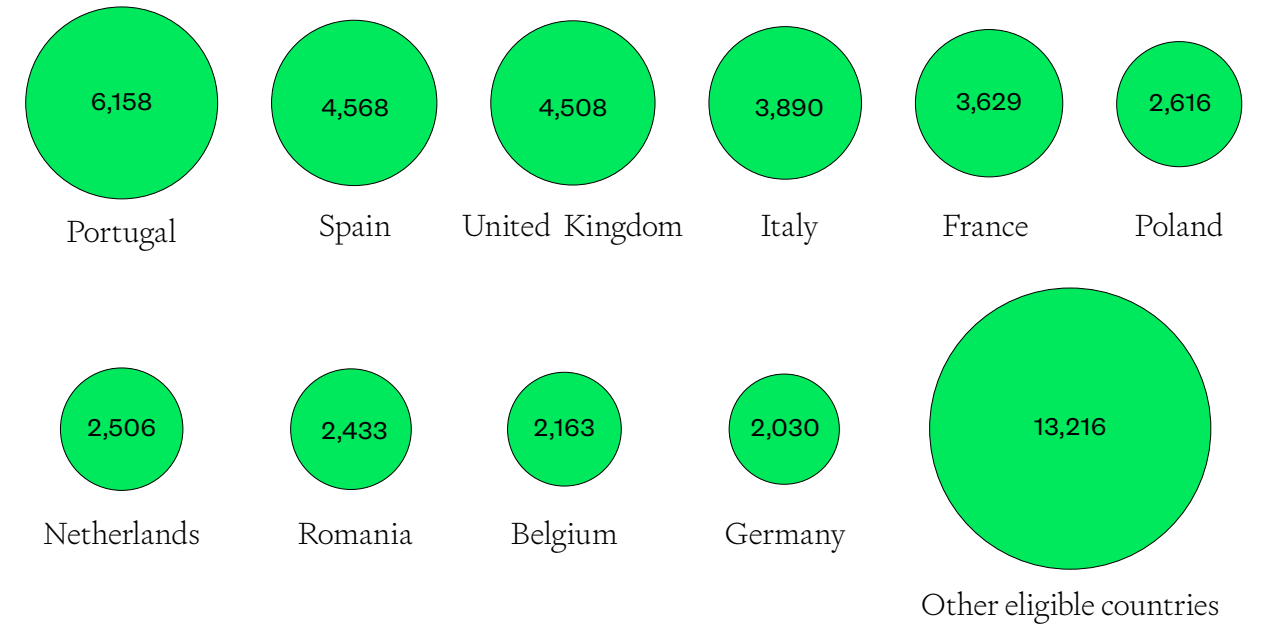
■ SESSIONS	— BOUNCE RATE	PAGE VIEWS	AVG. SESSION DURATION	PAGES/SESSION
88,181	**36.91%**	**169,376**	**00:02:01**	**1.92**

674	30,118	3,171	2,353	1,242	1,276	2,095	2,456	2,499	1,900	3,580	15,067	21,750
Mar '22	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan '23	Feb	Mar

The EMIF team resolved the issue of unwanted spam ad clicks from non-target countries, and the website experienced an increase in the number of sessions originating from the intended target countries.

Henceforth are the top ten EMIF's eligible countries by number of sessions.

WEBSITE SESSIONS PER EMIF TARGET COUNTRY   ✕

Portugal	Spain	United Kingdom	Italy	France	Poland
6,158	4,568	4,508	3,890	3,629	2,616

Netherlands	Romania	Belgium	Germany	Other eligible countries
2,506	2,433	2,163	2,030	13,216

NEWSLETTER

With regard to EMIF's newsletter, as the data below shows, there was an increase in both the number of subscribers and the number of newsletters sent, but this was accompanied by a slight decrease in the number of people who effectively opened the newsletter.

	2021-22	2022-23
Newsletters sent	9	14
Subscriptions	772	1,005
Open Rate	62%	56%

SOCIAL NETWORKS

In June 2022, EMIF launched its social media presence, including both a LinkedIn and a Twitter page. To date, EMIF has 755 LinkedIn followers and 1308 Twitter followers.

These platforms are regularly used to promote the Fund's calls for proposals, share updates on day-to-day activities and showcase the work of the grantees. On Twitter, EMIF actively engages with the Fund's stakeholders and provides live-tweet coverage during events. Impressions and interactions on the Twitter page vary from month to month, depending on noteworthy events or campaigns, such as the annual event in December 2022 or the campaign for the fact-checking call campaign in January and February 2023. These fluctuations can be seen in the graph below. Both the EMIF's LinkedIn and Twitter accounts were created in June 2022.

TWITTER IMPRESSIONS AND ENGAGEMENTS   ▢ Impressions ── Engagement Rate
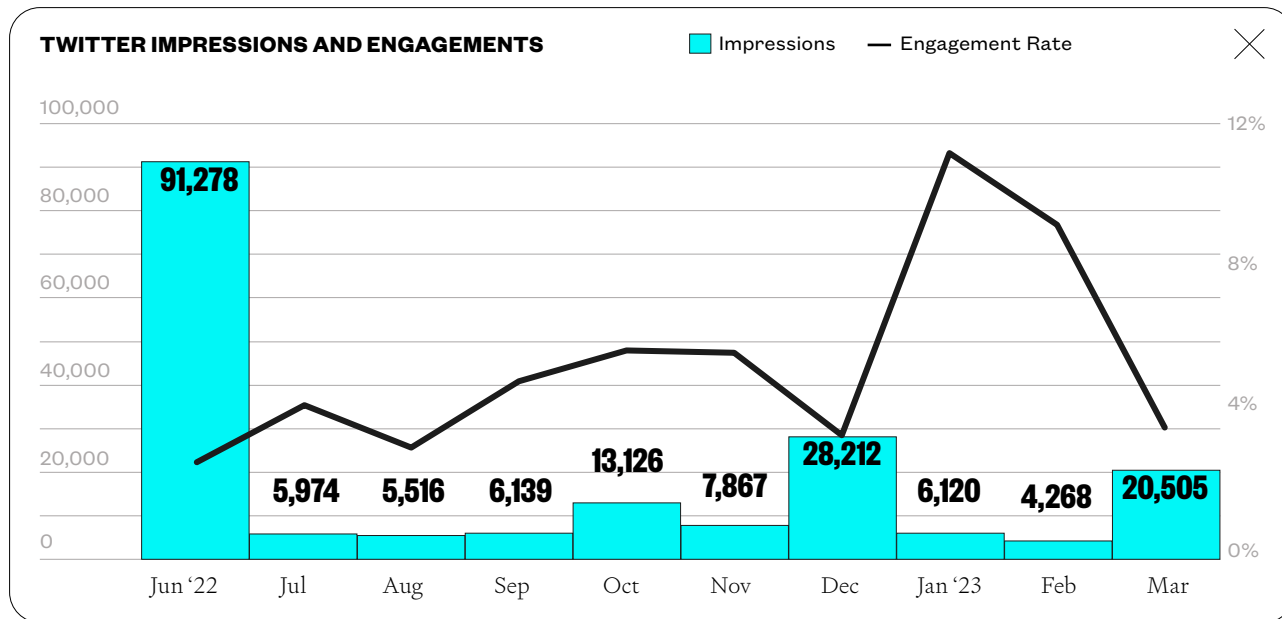
EMIF strategically leverages LinkedIn as a platform to effectively engage with professionals working within the information ecosystem throughout Europe. This approach serves to promote the Fund's calls to prospective grantees, while simultaneously establishing EMIF as a key supporter of initiatives relating to media literacy, fact-checking research, and investigations into disinformation in Europe.

LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS
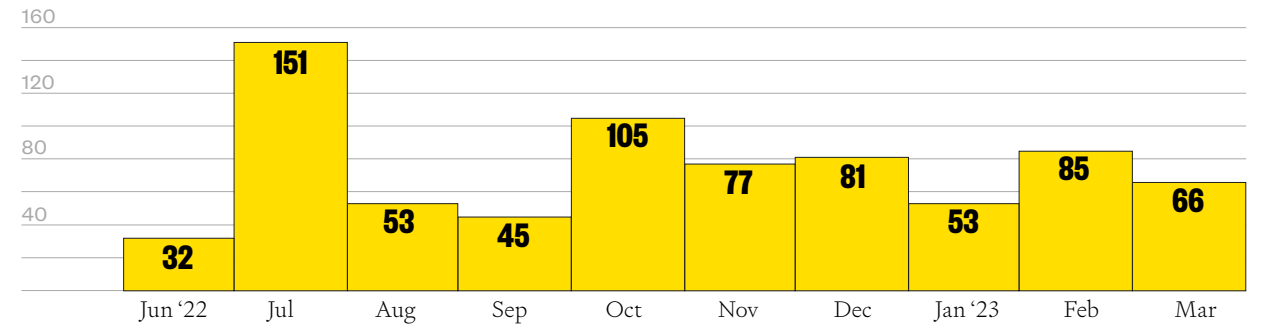
LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS BY INDUSTRY
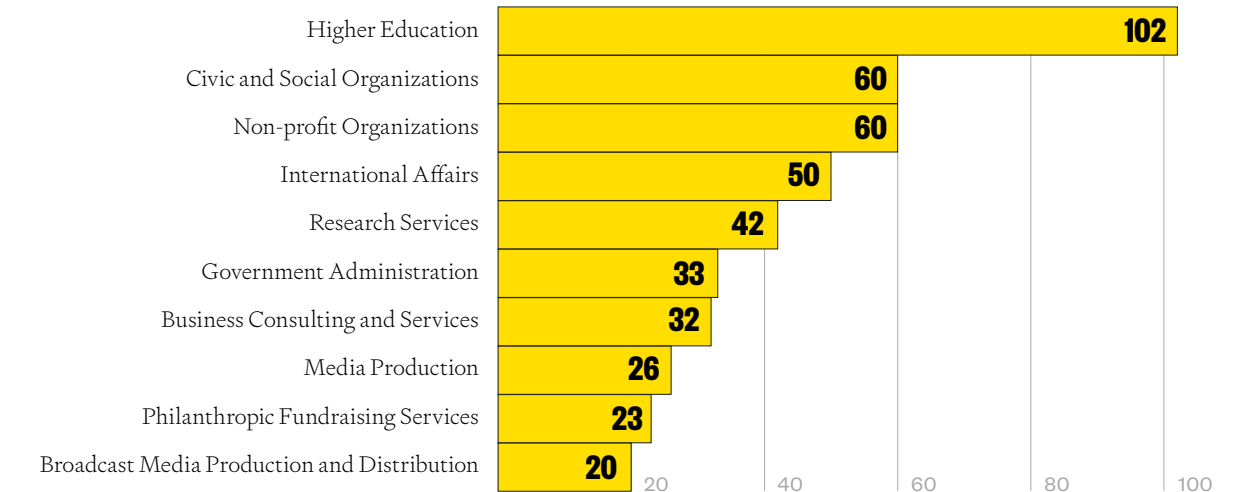
LINKEDIN IMPRESSIONS AND ENGAGEMENTS   ▢ Impressions ── Engagement Rate

ONLINE ADVERTISING

During the first quarter of 2023, in conjunction with its main calls for proposals for three areas of intervention, EMIF launched an online advertising campaign. This successful campaign used a variety of platforms. including LinkedIn Ads, Google Display, Google Ads and Politico.eu (webs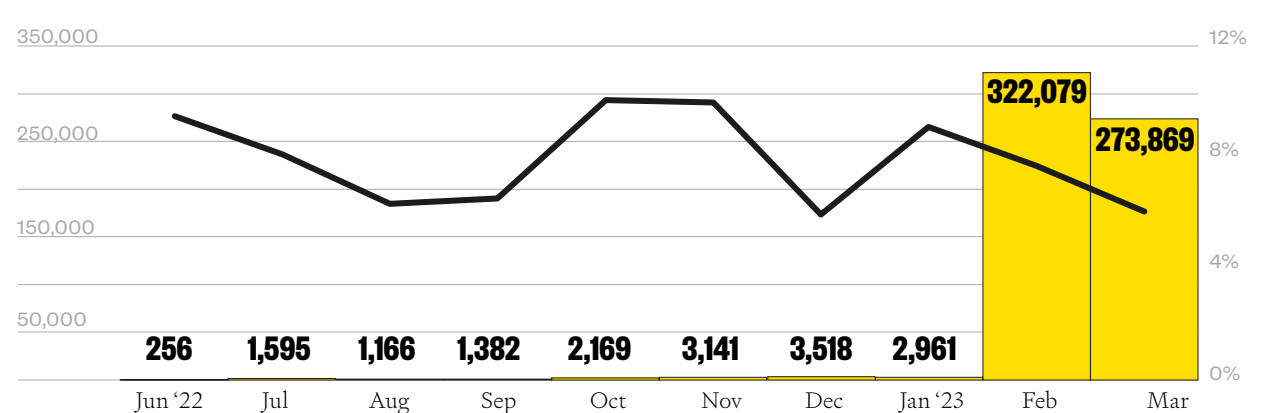ite and Daily Tech newsletter). The campaign resulted in a total of 23,420 website clicks and 4 million impressions in the Fund's intended target countries.

The LinkedIn ad campaign for the calls for proposals, launched in the first quarter of 2023, resulted in a significant increase in impressions on the LinkedIn page during February and March 2023 (as shown in the graph above). While the primary objective of the campaign was to direct website traffic to the calls for proposals pages and increase the number of applicants, it did not aim to increase the number of page followers, which continued to grow consistently. Nonetheless, the campaign successfully generated awareness and interest in the calls for proposals, resulting in a notable rise in engagement. Despite a slight decrease in the engagement rate due to the high number of impressions, the quality and relevance of engagements remained consistent. Overall, the LinkedIn ad campaign for the calls for proposals was successful in achieving its objectives, resulting in 3,294 website visits.

Additionally, the Fund launched a targeted Twitter campaign to promote the fourth round of its fact-checking call for proposals, which closed on 28 February 2023 and resulted in 1,629 website visits. Given its superior targetability, efficiency and broader reach, online advertising will continue to play a crucial role in promoting EMIF's calls for proposals throughout Europe.

Online advertising campaign

BOOSTING FACT-CHECKING ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE
OPEN*Call*
Apply before **28 FEB 2023**
Apply **NOW**

ONLINE ADVERTISING

Channel	Impressions	Clicks
Twitter	635,525	1,629
LinkedIn	583,751	3,294
Google Ads	806,769	10,583
Google Display	2,402,612	9,282
Politico	165,000	261

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

EMIF has been proactive in broadening its reach within the European information ecosystem, participating in numerous international events to connect and engage with other stakeholders. At these events, EMIF has exchanged valuable knowledge and expertise, while also showcasing its innovative projects and gaining insightful feedback to continuously enhance its mission of combating disinformation in Europe.

FIGHTING MISINFORMATION ONLINE SERIES

The Fighting Misinformation Online series, launched by the Google News Initiative in partnership with CGF and EUI, is a collaborative effort that unites various stakeholders, including European policymakers, NGOs, media organisations, academics and tech companies. Together, they seek to share knowledge and devise effective strategies to combat online disinformation.

EMIF contributed to this series by providing valuable scientific knowledge and highlighting its already granted projects that are working on the ground to combat disinformation across Europe. During its second year, EMIF actively participated in three noteworthy events of the series, including the Ideas Exchange in Prague, in June 2022, the Fighting Misinformation Online Summit in Brussels in November 2022 and the last event in the series "What Finland has uncovered", which took place in February 2023 in Helsinki.

WEB SUMMIT

In November 2022, Lisbon hosted the Web Summit, the largest digital conference in Europe. Given EMIF's mission, the Fund seized the opportunity to participate and increase its visibility within the digital industry, promoting its calls and mission and expanding its network of potential collaborators and grantees. EMIF had a booth at the event, where the team introduced attendees to its mission. Additionally, Paolo Cesarini, a member of EMIF's Management Committee, spoke on the Future Societies stage, addressing the challenges facing our communities. Mr. Cesarini emphasised the significance of regulation in fighting disinformation and suggested how EMIF can support this goal.

EMIF's presence at the WebSummit 2022 in Lisbon

ANNUAL EVENT

EMIF held its first Annual Conference, "Funding the Fight against Disinformation", on 2 December 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal. The conference served as a platform for the presentation of the EMIF's Annual Report, which highlights the organisation's accountable approach to the media ecosystem. Additionally, the event featured a keynote lecture from Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the European Commission, and a presentation of the external assessment report's conclusions.

The conference also provided an opportunity for knowledge and expertise sharing, as grantees showcased their projects and networked, and two panel discussions were held. The first panel emphasised


EMIF Annual Conference at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

the importance of understanding disinformation and finding effective methods to combat this without infringing on citizens' fundamental rights. The second panel explored ways to sustainably fund independent media and civil society organisations in Europe. The conference was a success and reinforced EMIF's commitment to combating disinformation and promoting accountability within the media ecosystem.

ONLINE INFORMATION SESSION

EMIF successfully hosted a second information session on calls for proposals on 24 February 2023. Chaired by EMIF's Management Committee, the session presented the calls for proposals and offered attendees the opportunity to have their questions answered.

Registered
139

Questions
64

Ateendees
82

Live answers
52

Written answers
7
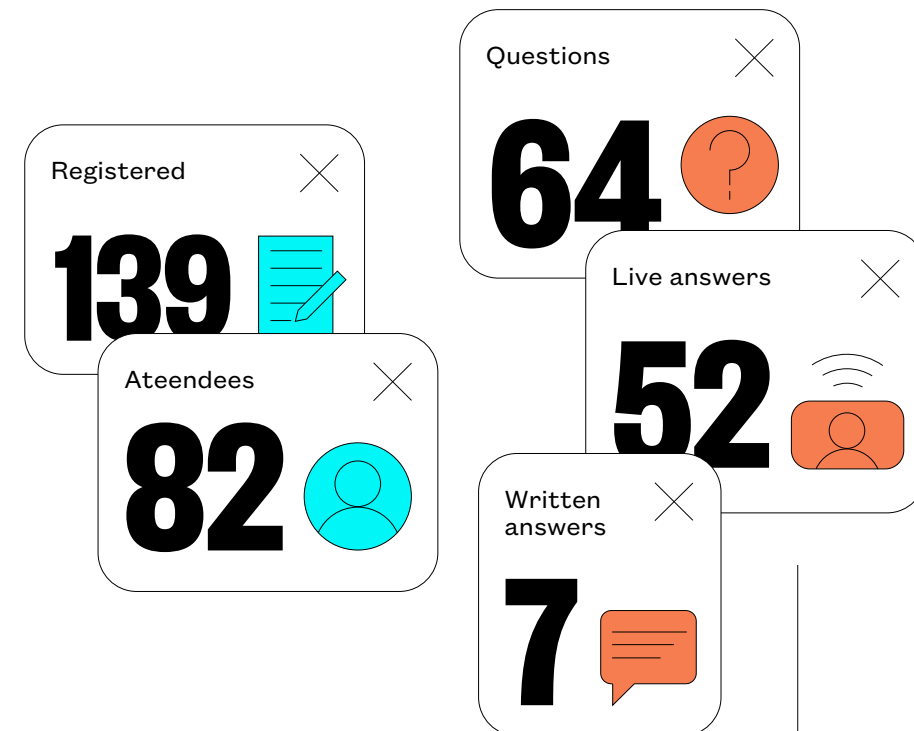
The session attracted 82 participants from various organisations and institutions across Europe, who posed 64 questions to the EMIF team. The recordings of the session are available on EMIF's website.

3.3 RESEARCH SUPPORT

FUNDRAISING 3.4

As part of its mission to aid the fight against disinformation in Europe, EMIF supports selected students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Transnational Governance and mid-career professionals who are selected to be part of the Policy Leader Fellowship Programme, both administered by the European University Institute's School of Transnational Governance. Selected individuals in both categories must demonstrate an interest in disinformation in order to be eligible for EMIF support. Starting in September 2022, the Fund is currently supporting four Master students and two Policy Leader Fellows (PLFs) at the EUI.

The Master students will write their thesis or capstone project on a topic relating to disinformation. Through the Fund, they will have the chance to have their research published, as well as to become familiar with the ecosystem of (counter-)disinformation within Europe.

The PLFs receive support for developing, implementing and publishing their projects on disinformation, media literacy and/or fact-checking, and they take part in discussions on these topics at the EUI and at events organised by the Fund.

Currently supporting

4 Master students

2 Policy leader fellows (PLFs)

The Fund received its initial donation from Google, which enabled it to commence its activities. Designed to be open to multiple donors, the Fund seeks to establish a diverse funding base that includes private, philanthropic and public sector organisations committed to promoting a more resilient, fact-based digital information ecosystem in Europe.

Donors need to subscribe to the Fund's principles of scientific autonomy and freedom and are not — nor will they be — involved in the management of the Fund.

The funding principles developed in May 2022 provide a refreshed framework for raising and deploying new funding while maximising the impact of the Fund's activities. The Fund focuses on four areas of intervention: Actions in Support of Fact-checking; Investigations into Disinformation; Research – Studies & Sandboxes; and Actions in Support of Media Literacy. New donors may allocate funds to support these areas, strengthen one or more specific areas or expand the Fund's geographical scope. Specific focus areas may also be proposed by contributing organisations through an annual public forum.

In the last year, the Fund reached out to Signatories of the 2022 Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation, which allowed for fruitful exchanges on the importance of the Fund's mission. Unfortunately, the current geopolitical context, together with the negative economic downturn affecting companies in the digital space, hindered potential new investments in the Fund.

The Fund continues to reach out to philanthropic foundations, guaranteeing its presence at important international meetings (e.g., the Journalism Funders Forum hosted by Philea in February 2023) in order to spearhead collaborative efforts in Europe's funding ecosystem.

4
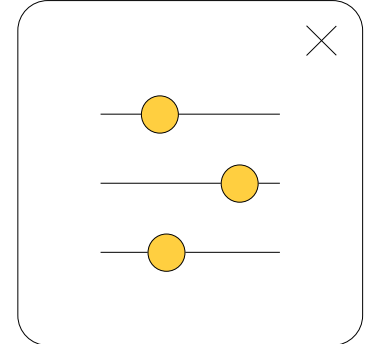
Grant Areas
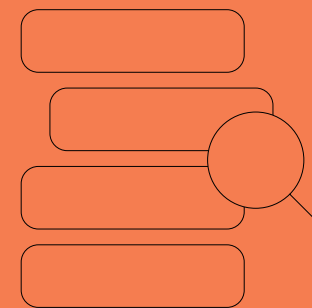
4.1 ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING

PROJECTS

24

COUNTRIES

16

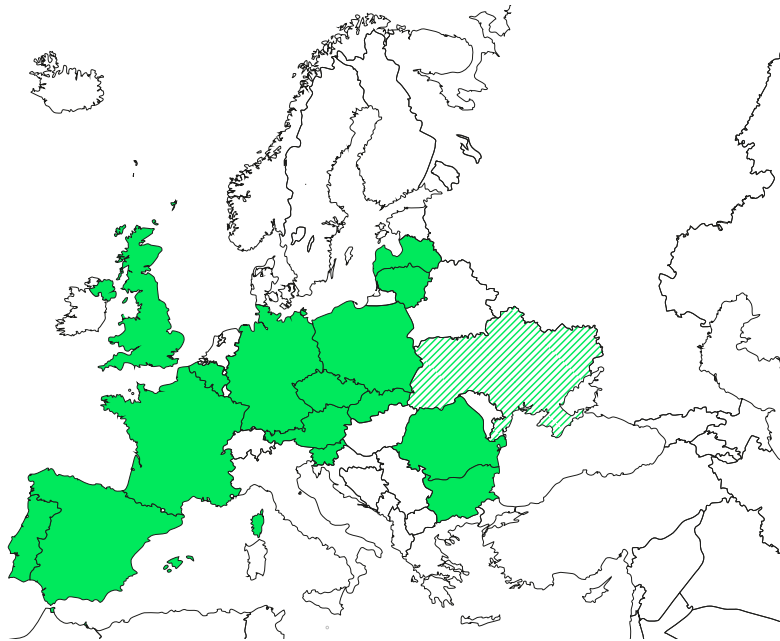Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom

GRANTS APPROVED

€1,463,435.18

GRANTS DISBURSED

€534,904.68

SPECIAL FUNDING ROUND: URGENT ACTIONS - UKRAINE

On 25 February 2022, EMIF published an update to the "Boosting Fact-checking Activities in Europe" call to elicit fact-checking projects addressing the increasingly complex Russia-Ukraine war at a time when military actions are being sustained by large-scale, coordinated, state-controlled disin-formation campaigns and influence operations targeting both the Russian population and the public opinion in neighbouring countries, the European Union and beyond.

Considering this situation, on 4 March 2022, EMIF launched a Special Funding Round for Urgent Actions within the "Boosting Fact-Checking Activities in Europe" call for proposals, with the deadline for applications being set for 29 April 2022.

All rules applicable to the priority area of Urgent Actions also applied to this special funding round, except for the one relating to geographical coverage in those cases where it was possible to implement projects relating to Ukraine.

SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH FUNDING ROUNDS

The second funding round started immediately after the first cut-off date and closed on 30 June 2022, and the third funding round remained open until 31 October 2022. The fourth funding round closed on 28 February 2023, receiving 14 applications, and was, at that time, under analysis with a view to its approval by the end of the reporting period.

The fifth funding round is currently ongoing and will close on 30 June 2023.

The three funding rounds undertaken in the Actions in Support of Fact-checking area resulted in 24 approved projects. Thirteen of these were in the urgent actions category, with an average duration of six months and an average financial allocation of €50,996.57, while 11 belonged to the scale-up category, with an average duration of 12 months and an average financial allocation of €72,770.89.

AVERAGE PROJECT DURATION

URGENT ACTIONS CATEGORY

6 Months

AVERAGE PROJECT DURATION

SCALE-UP CATEGORY

12 Months

Through these projects it is possible to identify the predominant areas of action:

1

POLITICS, ELECTIONS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA

2

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

3

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION (E.G., CLIMATE, HEALTH)

Funded activities and deliverables follow three main threads:

THREAD 1

FACT-CHECKING ON SPECIFIC PLATFORMS OR MEDIA (E.G., TIKTOK, RADIO, PODCASTS, YOUTUBE VIDEOS, SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS ARTICLES, LONG READS).

THREAD 2

IDENTIFICATION OF PATTERNS LINKING NARRATIVES, ENABLERS AND MECHANISMS OF DISINFORMATION.

THREAD 3

DISSEMINATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING OF FACT-CHECKING ORGANISATIONS AND PROFESSIONALS THROUGH TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND EVENTS.
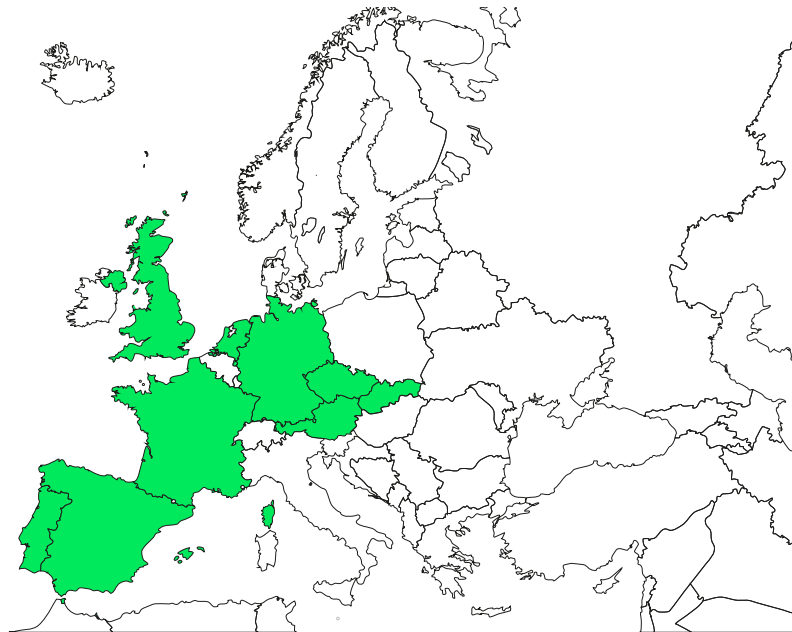
4.2 INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION

PROJECTS

4

COUNTRIES

9

Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom

GRANTS APPROVED

€515,068.89

GRANTS DISBURSED

€206,027.54

The "Multidisciplinary Investigations into Disinformation in Europe" call for proposals was the first call under this area of intervention, opening on 1 February 2022 and closing on 29 April 2022.

EMIF is supporting four projects in this intervention area, allocating a total grant amount of €515,068.89. The project coordinators are established in Austria, Czechia, Spain and the United Kingdom. These projects seek to identify current policies on media and disinformation, map good practices for responding to disinformation, identify the trends and methodologies of disinformation campaigns, and undertake analyses of online platforms.

The projects have an average duration of 11 months and an average financial allocation of €128,767.22.

Recently, the "Investigations into Disinformation Dynamics" call for proposals opened on 27 January 2023 and closed on 28 April 2023.

Under this call, EMIF created a more appealing thread of funding by increasing the maximum grant amount and reducing its duration, and by creating a fast lane for follow-on projects.

AVERAGE PROJECT DURATION ✕

11 Months

KEY AIM OF LATEST CALL ✕

Address the existing knowledge gaps in relation to the scale and scope of disinformation in Europe and to foster a better understanding of the phenomenon and its impact on European audiences.
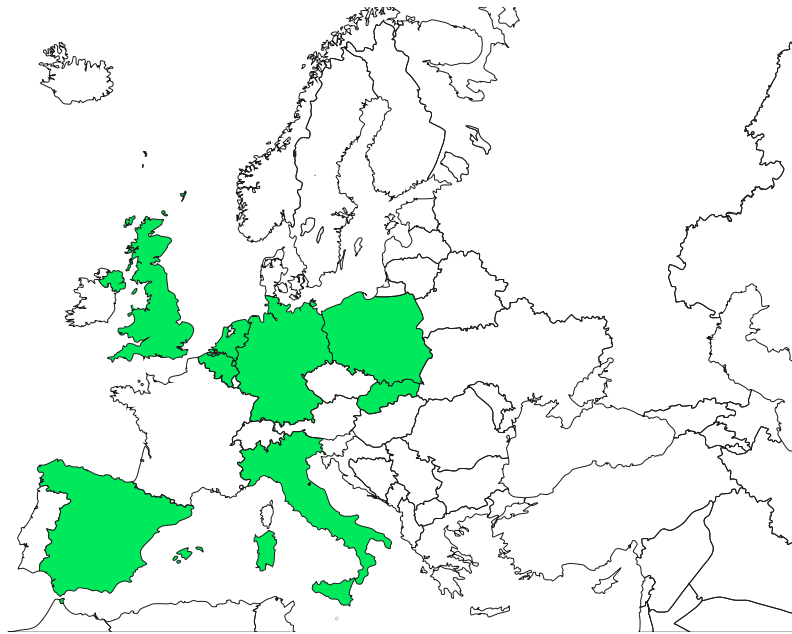
4.3 RESEARCH - STUDIES & SANDBOXES

PROJECTS

4

COUNTRIES

8

Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom

GRANTS APPROVED

€1,419,917.75

GRANTS DISBURSED

€425,975.31

The "Supporting Research into Media, Disinformation and Information Literacy Across Europe" call for proposals opened on 1 February 2022 and closed on 29 April 2022.

Under this call, EMIF is supporting four projects with a total grant amount of €1,419,917.75. The project coordinators are established in Austria, Czechia, Italy and Spain. These projects aim to develop new methodologies and tools for detecting disinformation, tracing the origins of disinformation campaigns and actors, and understanding the impact of disinformation on society.

The projects have an average duration of 18 months and an average financial allocation of €354,978.44.

The "Research for a Transparent and Resilient Information Ecosystem" call for proposals opened on 27 January 2023 and closed on 28 April 2023.

AVERAGE PROJECT DURATION   ✕

18 Months

KEY AIM OF LATEST CALL   ✕

Supporting wide-ranging and in-depth scientific studies on the disinformation phenomenon, encompassing its causes, societal impacts and possible responses and solutions, so as to generate more and better knowledge through innovative collaborations between different disciplines and entities, including academic researchers, technology providers, media and/or civil society organisations.
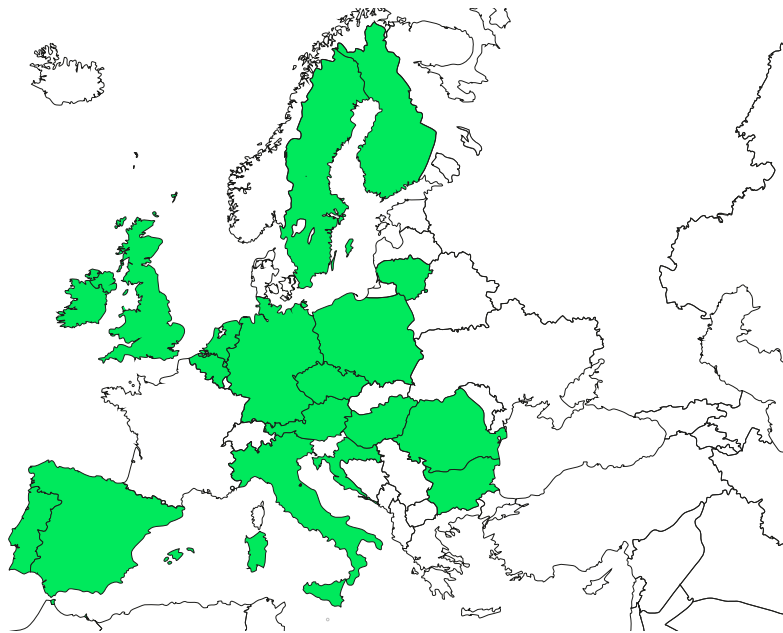
4.4

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY

PROJECTS

8

COUNTRIES

17

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

GRANTS APPROVED

€2,746,925.61

GRANTS DISBURSED

€824,077.33

In the reporting period of 2022/2023, EMIF had two calls for proposals in this area of intervention. The first, on "Media and Information Literacy for Citizens' Empowerment", opened on 1 February 2022 and closed on 29 April 2022.

The call resulted in eight approved projects, covering 17 countries and with a total financial allocation of €2,746,925.61.

Given that there were not enough positively scored projects in the Investigations into Disinformation area of intervention, EMIF decided to reallocate funds from this area to the Actions in Support of Media Literacy area, leading to an increase in the number of supported projects from 4 to 8.

The projects have an average duration of 18 months and an average financial allocation of €343,365.70. They share a common focus on improving educators' skills, according to a Training of Trainers (TOT) model, whether through direct training programmes or through the development of toolkits & educational materials, which can easily have further multiplier effects.

Another predominant trend in these projects is the creation of game-based learning platforms for a privileged target group, namely children and youngsters, to be used in mainly educational environments.

The second call under this area of intervention, "Media and Information Literacy for Societal Resilience", opened on 27 January 2023 and closed on 28 April 2023.

AVERAGE PROJECT DURATION ✕
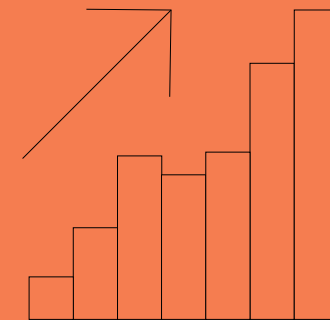
18 Months

KEY AIM OF LATEST CALL ✕

Support initiatives that improve technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities, thus enabling citizens to access the media, develop a critical understanding of it and interact with it.

5

Results and Impacts

The European Media and Information Fund launched its opening call in November 2021 and the first projects started in March 2022. Of the 40 approved projects, 33 have been contracted, but only five projects had completed implementation by the end of the reporting period. Thus, it is too early to obtain a general overview of the impact of these Fund-supported projects.

At this stage, however, it is possible to find some indications of the expected results of the 33 contracted projects, by referring to grantees' stated targets and ambitions. These figures do not reflect EMIF's impact on the ecosystem, but rather the incremental changes for grantees resulting from the projects approved under the Fund and based on their own specific baseline scenarios.

In the Actions in Support of Fact-checking area of intervention, the aggregated incremental change estimated by the projects contracted up to the present points to an increase of 55% in terms of the audience reached and 84% in the number of fact-checks published by the grantee organisations. Other relevant indicators of impact include creating press kits and other pedagogical materials for media professionals, influencers

ESTIMATED IMPACT
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING

55% Increase in the size of the audience reached, directly or indirectly, through fact-checks.

84% Increase in the number of published fact-checks.

IMPACT PLEDGE
INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION

76% Increase in the size of the audience reached, directly or indirectly, through the dissemination of project results.

15 Increase in the number of mechanisms, tools, and techniques created or improved to strengthen the evidence base regarding disinformation in Europe.

and the general public.
In the Investigations into Disinformation area of intervention, projects pledge to achieve an increase of 76% in mass media

and social media mentions compared to the grantees' baseline scenarios, while creating or improving 15 mechanisms, tools or techniques to detect and analyse disinformation, compared to the grantees' pre-project capabilities. Projects in this area also pledge to provide a deeper understanding of disinformation threats and to empower journalists and local communities.

In the Research – Studies & Sandboxes area, projects are expected to develop or improve 10 methodologies or approaches for addressing disinformation, while increasing by 20 the number of conferences, workshops and other research-related collective events and activities.

IMPACT EXPECTATION
RESEARCH - STUDIES & SANDBOXES

10 Increase in the number of potential use cases in which the new methodology/approach can be applied.

20 Increase in the number of conferences, workshops and other collective events and activities where the research was featured.

The approved Media Literacy projects pledge to increase by 21% the number of media literacy actions conducted by grantees, compared to the pre-funding period. Among the objectives set by grantees, a common aim is the capacity-building of educators and non-formal education practitioners, in order to maximise the multiplier effect of their actions and reach a wider public, notably young people and the most vulnerable segments of the population. For this purpose, projects seek to enhance the quality of educators' training programmes and develop new and more appealing methods, mainly through gamification. Replicability is also a shared concern of the approved projects, which is expected to be addressed through the creation of toolkits, the translation of materials into different languages and promotional events.
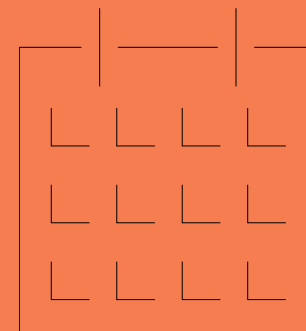
IMPACT PLEDGE
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY

21% Increase in the number of media and information literacy actions deployed.

6

Ongoing & Future Calls and Funding Rounds

The 100 applications submitted to the 2023 calls for proposals for the areas of Investigations into Disinformation, Research - Studies & Sandboxes, and Actions in Support of Media Literacy on 28 April 2023 represent a substantial increase to 2022 calls demand. The oversubscription rate was of 679,67%, showing the strong demand and the pertinence of the continued work of EMIF on the ecosystem.

Regarding the year to come, three funding rounds are planned for the Actions in Support of Fact-checking area of intervention - June, October, and February - and three new calls to be launched during January 2024 for the remaining three areas of intervention.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
April 2023 – March 2024

	OPEN	CLOSE
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING		
5TH ROUND	28 February 2023	30 June 2023
6TH ROUND	30 June 2023	31 October 2023
7TH ROUND	31 October 2023	29 February 2024
8TH ROUND	29 February 2024	28 June 2024
INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION		
2ND CALL	27 January 2023	28 April 2023
3RD CALL	January 2024	April 2024
RESEARCH - STUDIES & SANDBOXES		
2ND CALL	27 January 2023	28 April 2023
3RD CALL	January 2024	April 2024
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY		
2ND CALL	27 January 2023	28 April 2023
3RD CALL	January 2024	April 2024

7

Financial Statements
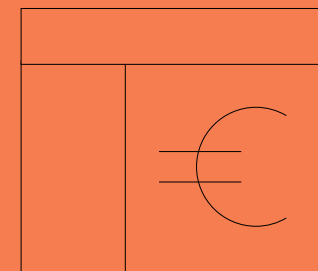
7.1 ALLOCATION vs GRANTS

BALANCE SHEET 7.2

	Planned Allocation	Grants Approved	Difference
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING	1,522,500.00 €	1,463,435.15 €	- 59,064.85 €
INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION	1,600,000.00 €	515,068.89 €	- 1,084,931.11 €
RESEARCH - STUDIES & SANDBOXES	1,600,000.00 €	1,419,917.75 €	- 180,082.25 €
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY	1,600,000.00 €	2,746,924.53 €	1,146,924.53 €
TOTALS	6,322,500.00 €	6,145,346.32 €	- 177,153.68 €

	24/03/2023
1. ASSETS - CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	6,972,980.48 €
2. ASSETS - DEBTORS	15,000,000.00 €
2.1 Debtors due within the year	5,000,000.00 €
2.2 Debtors due after the year	10,000,000.00 €
TOTAL ASSETS	21,972,980.48 €
3. LIABILITIES	4,482,062.95 €
3.1 Grants approved to be disbursed within the year	2,890,311.52 €
3.2 Grants approved to be disbursed after the year	1,264,049.88 €
3.3 Other Payables	327,701.54 €
4. EQUITY	17,490,917.54 €
4.1 Contributions	25,000,000.00 €
4.2 Execution from previous years	- 313,851.62 €
4.3 Execution from financial year	- 3,040,869.44 €
4.4 Grants approved and not disbursed	- 4,154,361.41 €
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	21,972,980.48 €

7.3 FINANCIAL EXECUTION

	Notes	24/03/2023	Budget	Difference
Total of Grants Disbursed		1,990,984.86 €	2,143,750.00 €	152,765.14 €
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING		534,904.68 €	543,750.00 €	8,845.32 €
INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION	1	206,027.54 €	640,000.00 €	433,972.46 €
RESEARCH - STUDIES & SANDBOXES		425,975.31 €	480,000.00 €	54,024.69 €
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY		824,077.33 €	480,000.00 €	- 344,077.33 €
European University Institute	2	796,685.00 €	1,189,716.25 €	393,031.25 €
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	3	159,576.40 €	218,500.00 €	58,923.60 €
Management Committee Expenses		93,623.18 €	92,400.00 €	- 1,223.18 €
= Execution for financial year		3,040,869.44 €	3,644,366.25 €	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 7.4

The first table shows the planned allocation for the four calls that were in operation during the reporting period, compared to the total approved grant amount. The difference in the Actions in Support of Fact-checking call was marginal and will be used in upcoming funding rounds. As for the other three areas, given that there were not enough positively scored projects in the Investigations into Disinformation area of intervention – which can be seen by the difference of €1.08m – EMIF decided to reallocate funds from this area to the Actions in Support of Media Literacy area, leading to an increase in the number of supported projects from 4 to 8, as well as to a positive difference of nearly €1.15m in the grants approved under this area.

The balance sheet reflects the financial position as of 24/03/2023, showing the disbursements incurred during the year and the total amount of contributions to the Fund – only the €25m contribution until this moment.

The differences in the financial execution are explained in the notes below.

1   The differences in the disbursement of the grants reflects the reallocation explained above. All the disbursement schedules are proceeding according to plan.

2   The EUI's expenses did not exhaust the planned budget, mostly due to the necessary recruitments taking place during the period covered in this report.

3   The CGF's expenses did not exhaust the planned budget, mostly due to changes in human resources. Additionally, the reduced amount spent by the CGF on monitoring activities from 25 March 2022 until 24 March 2023 was due to the fact that projects under three of the four areas of intervention were still at an initial phase, which meant that an in-depth monitoring procedure was not relevant. This expense will increase in the next reporting period, given the established plan to hold quarterly meetings with grantees for the monitoring of projects, and the participation in project closure meetings across Europe.

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LIST OF SUPPORTED PROJECTS BY INTERVENTION AREA IN THE REPORTING PERIOD OF 2022/23.
The full description of each project is available on the EMIF website.

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF FACT-CHECKING

TRUE INFO

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
EURACTIV Media Network B.V

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Belgium

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Ukraine Special Funding Round

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 31/03/2023

AMOUNT
€54,928.00

SHORT SUMMARY
TRUE INFO: Trustworthy Reporting on Ukraine Empowering Independent News Outlets, Fighting Disinformation, and Observing Long-term Impact" is a project developed by the EURACTIV Media Network. Its aim is to provide trustworthy reporting on Ukraine while supporting the voices of local journalists, feeding the EU policy-making process through upscaling fact-checking activities, and building connections with local networks.

UKRAINIAN NEWS AGENCY TO INTEGRATE FACT-CHECKED CONTENT WITH THE HELP OF AFP AND APA

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Agence France-Presse (AFP)

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
France

PARTNER APPLICANT
Austria Press Agency (Austria), UKRINFORM (Ukraine)

FUNDING ROUND
Ukraine Special Funding Round

PERIOD
01/09/2022 - 28/02/2023

AMOUNT
€55,000.00

SHORT SUMMARY
The war in Ukraine has unleashed a "tsunami" of disinformation campaigns. This project aims to provide an answer by training the Ukrainian news agency Ukrinform to become a recognised fact-checking organisation, thus raising public awareness about this danger.

FACT-CHECKING TO IMPROVE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE ARCTIC IN EUROPE

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Polar Research and Policy Initiative Limited

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
United Kingdom

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
01/11/2022 - 30/04/2023

AMOUNT
€80,000

SHORT SUMMARY
The Fact-Checking to Improve Media Coverage of the Arctic in Europe project by Polar Research and Policy Initiative aims to promote a greater understanding of the Arctic through accurate and nuanced reporting. It will publish fact-checked content through its own platform and provide fact-checking services for Arctic media outlets. The project also involves media literacy initiatives, training local residents to fact-check news stories and recruiting Russian speakers and subject matter experts to verify stories and photographs.

FACT-CHECKING THE UKRAINIAN WAR IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Expert Forum Association

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Romania

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
01/11/2022 - 30/04/2023

AMOUNT
€49,956.88

SHORT SUMMARY
The project aims to combat propaganda and disinformation in the Black Sea Region, particularly in Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine. The project will publish a final report and create training for NGOs and high-school students. Expert Forum is leading the project, and they are working with a network of experts to create a standardised approach and exchange best practices.

SCALE-UP SCIENCE FACT-CHECKING IN SPANISH PODCASTS AND YOUTUBE

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Association Verificat

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Spain

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 30/06/2023

AMOUNT
€76,710.12

SHORT SUMMARY
The project aims to pilot AI and speech-to-text technologies to enable more efficient audio and video fact-checking. It focuses on podcasts and YouTube channels, expanding Verificat and Chequeado's collaboration on climate disinformation to include other scientific issues. The project will monitor and fact-check 2,500 hours of podcasting and up to 5,000 hours of YouTube videos, increasing the understanding of disinformation in Spain.

TACKLING FALSE NARRATIVES IN ANTI-CORRUPTION AND THE RULE OF LAW MEDIA REPORTING

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Transparency International Slovakia

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Slovakia

PARTNER APPLICANT
Adapt Institute (Slovakia)

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
20/11/2022 – 19/11/2023

AMOUNT
€79,999.40

SHORT SUMMARY
The "Tackling false narratives in anti-corruption and the rule of law media reporting" project in Slovakia aims to combat disinformation and increase media literacy through fact-checking and monitoring social networks. Led by Transparency International Slovakia and Infosecurity.sk, the project includes various activities, such as analyses, fact-checks, events, polls, and podcasts.

SCINET – NETWORK ANALYSIS TOOL TO AUTOMATICALLY RATE WEB DOMAINS ON THEIR SCIENTIFIC CREDIBILITY

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Science Feedback

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
France

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 30/09/2023

AMOUNT
€79,645.00

SHORT SUMMARY
The manual evaluation of the risk of disinformation on every online domain is impossible due to the vastness and fragmentation of the online information space. The SCENT project aims to address this issue by manually reviewing websites and training AI algorithms to automate the evaluation process. The goal is to provide a list of websites across all EU languages with a risk assessment estimate for disinformation.

FACTBOOST: STRENGTHENING THE FACT-CHECKING SKILLS OF JOURNALISTS

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Eurocommunication

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Romania

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
01/01/2023 – 31/12/2023

AMOUNT
€80,000.00

SHORT SUMMARY
"FactBoost" aims to strengthen the fact-checking skills of journalists in Romania by building a European network of experts to share best practices. The project will offer webinars, workshops, tutorials and educational materials to improve skills and stimulate industry collaborations. All materials will be free and available on a web platform open to the public

CZECH ELECTIONS IN THE ERA OF DISINFORMATION: THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Prague Security Studies Institute

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Czechia

PARTNER APPLICANT
Demagog.cz (Czechia); Ústav nezávislé žurnalistiky, z. ú. – HlídacíPes.org (Czechia)

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 28/02/2023

AMOUNT
€20,357.10

SHORT SUMMARY
The project aims to counter disinformation during the Czech presidential elections in January 2023. The Prague Security Studies Institute will team up with Demagog.cz and HlídacíPes.org to monitor online media and produce fact-checks in the form of blog posts and social media updates. PSSI will provide monthly analytical reports, and the consortium will publish a long report with recommendations and a short report after the second round of elections. A public roundtable will be organised to present the findings to government institutions, media and the expert community.

MEDIA AGAINST DISINFORMATION

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
European Media Ltd.

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Poland

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
01/05/2023 – 31/10/2023

AMOUNT
€54,999.96

SHORT SUMMARY
Media Against Disinformation is a project aimed at detecting false information targeting the EU and its impact on EU policies among Polish citizens. The project includes a podcast featuring experts discussing how disinformation affects the EU and a "Fake of the Week" format to debunk myths. The project also offers an online seminar and free toolkits on verifying information to encourage citizens to fact-check on their own.

FAST: FACT-CHECKERS ACTING TO STOP EARLY-DETECTED DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Maldita.es Foundation Against Disinformation: Journalism, Education, Investigation and Data in New Formats

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Spain

PARTNER APPLICANT
Servimedia S.A. (Spain)

FUNDING ROUND
Second Funding Round

PERIOD
23/01/2023 - 31/12/2023

AMOUNT
€79,897.52

SHORT SUMMARY
FAST is a system that combines technology and innovative approaches to help fact-checking organisations to rapidly identify and respond to emerging disinformation campaigns, particularly during crises or in relation to topics such as climate, gender and migration. The system includes an early detection algorithm and an emergency task force of journalists and engineers, working together to debunk and prebunk disinformation. The debunked content will then be disseminated via multiple platforms to reach a wider audience. The aim is to mitigate the impact of disinformation and create a model for early response fact-checking in Europe

LUCIDNEWS & INVESTIGATIONS

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Belarusian Investigative Centre z.s.

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Czechia

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
01/05/2023 - 29/02/2024

AMOUNT
€54,989

SHORT SUMMARY
The project imposes extra costs on corruption and sanctions evasion, as well as countering false narratives in the media. LucidNews & Investigations focuses on investigating and debunking more subtle and challenging fake news, rather than obvious propaganda. These investigations expose the inefficiencies of current global sanctions mechanisms and are used to make sanctions more effective.

EXPOSING THE SLOVENIAN DISINFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Oštro, Centre for investigative journalism in the Adriatic region

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Slovenia

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
01/04/2023 - 30/09/2023

AMOUNT
€50,172.66

SHORT SUMMARY
The team behind Razkrinkavanje.si, a fact-checking project in Slovenia, will investigate the funding of disinformation through advertising revenues. The project aims to expose the enablers of disinformation, especially state-owned advertisers, and to train young journalists and local reporters in fact-checking and investigative skills. The team believes that refocusing the fight against disinformation on the enablers, rather than just the content, is crucial in dismantling the democratic public debate

FAKE NEWS WAR - FIGHTING THE FAKE NEWS REGARDING THE WAR IN UKRAINE

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
QSOUND SOFT LTD.

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Romania

PARTNER APPLICANT
Partner: Simply Tricky Ltd. (Romania)

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
01/04/2023 - 30/09/2023

AMOUNT
€55,000

SHORT SUMMARY
The FAKE NEWS WAR project aims to combat fake news regarding the war in Ukraine by providing reliable news and information through fact-checking and by educating people in identifying fake news. The project works on three levels: identifying false news; educating the public; and raising awareness to discourage the sharing of unverified information

"DESINFORMIERT" - SEASON 1: AN INFORMATION WAR

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
CORRECTIV - Investigative Journalism in the Public Interest

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Germany

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
01/03/2023 - 31/08/2023

AMOUNT
€54,072.50

SHORT SUMMARY
The German language fact-checking podcast "Desinformiert" by CORRECTIV's Faktencheck team examines viral disinformation related to the Russian war in Ukraine. At least six episodes will be produced, each with its own topic, and the project targets adults between the ages of 29-45 in German-speaking countries. The podcast provides space for contextualisation and convenience for listeners on the go.

MADE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA: FIGHTING DISINFORMATION WITH FACT-CHECK GRAPHICS

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
dpa-infocom GmbH limited liability company

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Germany

PARTNER APPLICANT
The Baltic Centre For Investigative Journalism "Re:Baltica" (Latvia), InTheBaltic (Lithuania), Pravda Association (Poland), Funky Citizens (Romania), Association of European Journalists (Bulgaria)

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
01/05/2023 - 29/02/2024

AMOUNT
€69,986

SHORT SUMMARY
The project brings together fact-checkers from Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Germany to create fact-check graphics for social media in multiple languages. The tool enables the visualisation of fact checks and animated videos, making this accessible to a broader audience. The collaboration includes joint monitoring of false claims and editorial planning, enabling fact-checkers to reach new target groups and combat the spread of disinformation.

MADE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA: FIGHTING DISINFORMATION WITH FACT-CHECK GRAPHICS →

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Madrid University Carlos III

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Spain

PARTNER APPLICANT
NA

FUNDING ROUND
Third Funding Round

PERIOD
17/06/2023 - 17/12/2023

AMOUNT
€54,405.68

SHORT SUMMARY
Building resilience of Ukrainian fact-checkers in the fight against disinformation about the EU. The project is using research, education, and outreach aims to improve fact-checking skills and media literacy and strengthen the capacity of EU and Ukrainian organisations to counter disinformation in target regions. It is a collaboration between UC3M Medialab, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and the Media Reforms Centre.

INVESTIGATIONS INTO DISINFORMATION

OMEDIALITERACY. OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF MEDIA LITERACY POLICIES IN EUROPE →

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Autonomous University of Barcelona

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Spain

PARTNER APPLICANT
Nova University of Lisbon (Portugal); University of Vienna (Austria); University of Amsterdam (Netherlands)

PERIOD
01/02/2023 - 31/12/2023

AMOUNT
€129,499.52

SHORT SUMMARY
"OMEDIALITERACY" is a project led by the Autonomous University of Barcelona in collaboration with other European universities to analyse disinformation and media literacy policies in Europe. The project aims to identify good practices and provide policy recommendations by reviewing scientific literature and documentation on disinformation and media literacy policies.

DECODING THE DISINFORMATION PLAYBOOK →

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
International Press Institute

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Germany

PARTNER APPLICANT
Faktograf – Association for the Informed Public (Croatia); TAZ Publishing and Distribution Ltd. (Germany)

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 30/09/2023

AMOUNT
€129,528.86

SHORT SUMMARY
Decoding the Disinformation Playbook" is an IPI, TAZ and Faktograf initiative to identify common patterns in disinformation campaigns against fact-based media in Europe through a series of case studies. The project combines investigative journalism, fact-checking and content analysis.

VRBETICE CASE STUDY: EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
European Values Centre for Security Policy

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Czechia

PARTNER APPLICANT
EuroPolicy, o.z. (Slovakia)

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 30/09/2023

AMOUNT
€126,406.20

SHORT SUMMARY
In-depth analysis of a specific disinformation campaign in the Czechia and Slovakia. The study will be performed by new software for online analysis by Gerulata technologies (SK company). Identifying the key actors and main narratives in both countries and creating a set of recommendations for decision-makers on how to act in similar cases.

UISCE FAOI THALAMH: AN INVESTIGATION INTO ONLINE DISINFORMATION IN IRELAND

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Institute for Strategic Dialogue

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
United Kingdom

PARTNER APPLICANT
CASM Technology LLP (United Kingdom)

PERIOD
01/11/2022 - 31/07/2023

AMOUNT
€129,997.70

SHORT SUMMARY
This project aims to examine the who, what and where of Irish disinformation for the first time. Through a mixed methods approach, ISD will provide interested parties with the knowledge they need to understand and challenge the Irish arm of a force that is rocking the very foundations of democracy.

RESEARCH - STUDIES & SANDBOXES

THE DISINFORMATION LAUNDROMAT: AN OSINT TOOL TO DETECT DISINFORMATION AND AMPLIFICATION NETWORKS

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Transatlantic Foundation

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Austria

PARTNER APPLICANT
Institute for Strategic Dialogue gGmbH (Germany); University of Amsterdam (Netherlands)

PERIOD
01/12/2022 - 30/05/2024

AMOUNT
€399,558.82

SHORT SUMMARY
The project will develop, test and deploy an open-source intelligence tool designed to systematically map out the nexus of malicious websites, distribution and laundering channels, and monetisation mechanisms, in order to detect disinformation and amplification networks. Academic partners will conduct empirical research.

DISINFORMATION & TRUST (DISINFTRUST)

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Blanquerna Foundation

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Spain

PARTNER APPLICANT
Cardiff University (United Kingdom); Newtral Media Audiovisual SLU (Spain)

PERIOD
01/01/2023 - 30/06/2024

AMOUNT
€221,487.47

SHORT SUMMARY
DISINFTRUST seeks to better understand the mechanisms that make citizens believe in misleading content and test the impact of disinformation narratives in different target countries. The project will also prepare an AI content scoring tool that can automatically detect the untrustworthy signals of different disinformation-related content.

STARS4MEDIA-FACTCHECKING: STRATEGY FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN MEDIA RESILIENCE

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Europe's MediaLab - Euractiv Foundation

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Belgium

PARTNER APPLICANT
I-Europa (Slovakia); European Media (Poland); Free Media Bulgaria (Belgium); Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia)

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 31/03/2024

AMOUNT
€399,606.00

SHORT SUMMARY
This research project focuses on the sustainable integration of fact-checking into media in Eastern Europe. It will collect data, develop concepts, design models and test them, involving researchers, media professionals and fact-checking experts from seven countries, including UA and exiled media from BY, RU.

LEVERAGING ARGUMENT TECHNOLOGY FOR IMPARTIAL FACT-CHECKING (LATIF)

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Luiss Free International University of Social Studies Guido Carli

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Italy

PARTNER APPLICANT
University of Dundee (United Kingdom); University of Liverpool (United Kingdom)

PERIOD
01/02/2023 - 31/07/2024

AMOUNT
€399,265.49

SHORT SUMMARY
LATIF brings the Analysis of Competing Hypotheses (ACH) to the fact-checking domain to improve decision-making processes in sifting truth from fakery. LATIF will uncover cognitive biases emerging in the factchecking process and develop digital tools based on ACH to empower a reason-checking of news.

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY

TEAMLIT TEACHER EDUCATION IN DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY: PROVIDING GUIDANCE, RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
MEDEA: Media and Learning Association iVZW

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Belgium

PARTNER APPLICANT
Association for Communication and Media Culture (Croatia); Heidelberg University (Germany); Interuniversity Micro-Electronics Centre vzw (Belgium); Dublin City University Institute for Future Media, Democracy and Society (Ireland); The Finnish Society on Media Education (Finland)

PERIOD
01/01/2023 - 30/06/2024

AMOUNT
€399,996.14

SHORT SUMMARY
TeaMLit aims to establish a value added and sustainable network providing guidance, resources and support for European teacher educators and trainers in MIL and, in so doing, to directly advance students' abilities to tackle disinformation. TeaMLit partners in Belgium, Croatia, Ireland, Germany and Finland will gather and share knowledge, pilot promising approaches, develop training materials and conduct a large-scale multiplier campaign.

MEDIA LITERACY LEADS: DIGITAL WISDOM IN AN AGE OF ONLINE DISINFORMATION

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
The Student View

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
United Kingdom

PARTNER APPLICANT
Bellingcat (Netherlands); DEMOS (United Kingdom); PSHE Association (United Kingdom)

PERIOD
01/09/2022 - 29/02/2024

AMOUNT
€398,968.83

SHORT SUMMARY
The Media Literacy Leads project will partner teachers with local journalists to launch a pop-up newsroom in their schools. We will build resources so that, in partnership, The Student View, Bellingcat, PSHE Association and DEMOS can support child reporters to develop their media literacy skills. They will then use these skills to lead local news investigations into the issues that matter most to them.

269268 - EMPOWERING CRITICAL THINKING EDUCATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Association Langas i ateiti

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Lithuania

PARTNER APPLICANT
Public Internet Access Points (Lithuania)

PERIOD
01/11/2022 - 30/04/2024

AMOUNT
€104,338.28

SHORT SUMMARY
Empowering critical thinking education in local communities: The project aims to strengthen the media literacy skills of educational community members. School librarians will be provided with developed materials and educational resources, also being trained to pass on the knowledge and skills of critical thinking to teachers, students and their parents

EMPOWERING SCHOOLS IN SELF-REGULATION OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY PROCESSES

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
University of Florence

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Italy

PARTNER APPLICANT
Tampere University (Finland); Anastasis Social Cooperative (Italy)

PERIOD
01/01/2023 - 30/06/2024

AMOUNT
€399,459.91

SHORT SUMMARY
The project supports media literacy by developing an adaptive educational game to improve students' ability to regulate cognitive processes in online learning tasks, along with a professional development model to empower teachers to educate critical online readers.

ESCAPE FAKE 2.0

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Polycular e.U

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Austria

PARTNER APPLICANT
LA FABBRICA S.P.A. (Italy); PRO PROGRESSIONE CULTURAL (Hungary); Expert Forum Association (Romania)

PERIOD
01/09/2022 - 29/02/2024

AMOUNT
€250,836.41

SHORT SUMMARY
Young people are vulnerable to fake news, but media literacy cannot be taught with history books. Escape Fake develops innovative digital tools for educating young people on disinformation, by designing an immersive escape room game, creating digital narratives in an artist residency programme, and developing materials for teacher training.

YO-MEDIA: YOUNGSTERS' MEDIA LITERACY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Portuguese Press Editors and Publishers Association

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Portugal

PARTNER APPLICANT
University of Aveiro (Portugal); Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (Italy); Balmes University Foundation (Spain)

PERIOD
01/12/2022 - 31/05/2024

AMOUNT
€399,998.40

SHORT SUMMARY
Media literacy is crucial in preparing youngsters to react responsibly in current pandemics and military crises. Considering existing knowledge gaps, the YO-MEDIA project is focused on developing media literacy in times of crisis for youngsters by developing game-based learning strategies and empowering professionals to promote these skills.

USING MICRO-LEARNING TO TRAIN EDUCATORS - A CASCADE APPROACH TO MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
Godinhela Association – Research and Social Development

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Portugal

PARTNER APPLICANT
Smart Bananas (Italy); University of Salamanca (Spain); University of Skovde (Sweden); SPHERICAL PIXEL S.L. (Spain)

PERIOD
01/10/2022 - 31/03/2024

AMOUNT
€396,334.34

SHORT SUMMARY
MIC-MAC enhances the media and information literacy skills of educators who work with vulnerable learners. It combines 'micro-learning' with interactive gaming to help educators apply these skills to the challenges of real-life teaching situations and the 'lived experience' of their learners. This will in turn improve the digital literacy of learners themselves.

FAKE KNOW MORE

→

NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT
School with Class Foundation

COUNTRY OF THE LEAD APPLICANT
Poland

PARTNER APPLICANT
Demagog Association (Poland); Smilemundo Association (Spain); Adfaber Association (Romania); Fakescape (Czechia)

PERIOD
01/01/2023 - 30/06/2024

AMOUNT
€396,993.30

SHORT SUMMARY
The FAKE KNOW MORE project raises awareness of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds about how one's emotions and general wellbeing increase vulnerability to disinformation. It provides educators working in both formal and non-formal contexts with training, materials and support. Materials will be developed and tested in Poland and then located in Spain, Romania and Czechia.

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