



**ERGA Subgroup 1 on Media Plurality
Taskforce 1 on online disinformation
16 April 2019**

Minutes

Attendees: BAI Ireland (co-chair), AGCOM Italy (co-chair), CSA Belgium, RRTV Czech Republic, DLM Germany, ESR Greece, CNMC Spain, CSA France, AEM Croatia, CRTA Cyprus, NEPLPADOME Latvia, ALIA Luxembourg, NMHH Hungary, CVDM The Netherlands, KRRIT Poland, AKOS Slovenia, RVR Slovakia, European Commission.

Introductory remarks

In his introductory remarks, the co-chair Mr Kissane mentioned that the aim of this meeting would be to discuss with the platforms (Google, Facebook and Twitter) political ad transparency tools in order to help ERGA understand the policies implemented in this regard.

The Agenda was adopted.

Presentation of AGCOM and ERGA activities against online disinformation

The meeting started with a presentation from AGCOM, which focused on: (i) AGCOM tasks and powers during the election periods, (ii) the AGCOM's monitoring system and its results, (iii) AGCOM's actions aimed at ensuring pluralism and fairness in the online environment, and (iv) ERGA's activities in the field of disinformation.

It was pointed out that AGCOM monitoring activities mainly focus on radio programming and television. They are carried out through analysing the content of programmes and addressing specific queries.

In addition, AGCOM set up in November 2017 a Technical Table for Ensuring Pluralism and Correct Information on Digital Platforms (technical table) with the aim to promote a self-regulatory approach.

This table, composed of the digital platforms (Facebook and Google), broadcasters, editors, publishers and companies providing audio-visual services, works around five working groups. It deals with the following issues: methodologies for classifying and detecting online disinformation, definitions of monitoring systems for economic advertising flows aimed at financing fake content, fact checking, media and digital literacy and the implementation of the information campaigns about disinformation aimed at consumers.

In this regard, the technical table approved Guidelines for equal access to online platforms during the election periods.

AGCOM is also working on a new set of guidelines for the technical table in view of the 2019 European elections. Such guidelines will concern, among the others, equality of access, transparency of political advertising, removal of content, fact checking and the integrity of services.

Concerning the ERGA's involvement in the assessment of the effectiveness of the Code of Practice on disinformation, it was recalled that ERGA's assistance would be delivered in 2 phases. The first one would concern the three sets of commitments under the Code of Practice on Disinformation (Code), that are particularly relevant in the context of the European Elections i.e.: scrutiny of ad placements, transparency of political advertising and integrity of services (closure of fake accounts and addressing malicious use of bots).

The second phase would then focus on the overall assessment of the Code, on the basis of all five sets of commitments. For the purpose of this exercise, a survey on the competences of the NRAs and of the measures adopted at national level as regards online disinformation could be circulated.

With regard to the intermediary monitoring of the Code, AGCOM stated that the ERGA assistance should focus on the monitoring of the transparency of political advertising.

AGCOM mentioned that during this process ERGA should focus on the following issues: (i) number of ads that were properly labelled as political advertising and their percentage of all political ads, (ii) actions taken to ensure that all political ads are properly labelled, (iii) number of political and issue-based ads taken down for failure to comply with platform guidelines on the transparency of political advertising, (iv) number of records added to public disclosure repositories, (v) information on amounts received from political parties, candidates, campaigns and foundations for political or issue-based advertising, (vi) policies to verify the identity of political ads providers and (vii) progress on the disclosure of the issue-based advertising.

Presentations from the platforms

During the second part of the meeting, ERGA and the representatives of the Commission met three signatory platforms (Facebook, Google and Twitter).

The platforms provided information on the implementation of their policies on the transparency of political advertising.

In particular, the platforms informed on their registration processes for political advertisers and presented their political ad libraries, their functionalities and capabilities, including an overview of the data available in the libraries and on how to perform searches.

The discussion during this part of the meeting focused primarily on the platforms' progress in establishing repositories of political ads and tools/information that would be available to ERGA for its monitoring activities.

A further update on progress was provided in the April reports, which were published mid-May.

Next steps

The intermediate monitoring phase will take place in May 2019 with a view to submitting final report to the ERGA plenary in June 2019.