

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	COPE - Italy
PIC number:	946605638
Project name and acronym:	Foster Awareness on the Relevance of Checking the Truth – FACT

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP1
Event name:	WP1 - Debate on the improving of EU policies for countering fake-news
Type:	Webinar debates
In situ/online:	Online
Location:	Italy, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Finland
Date(s):	Between November 2023 - April 2024
Website(s) (if any):	https://fact-project.eu/debate-on-improving-eu-policies/
Participants	
Female:	151
Male:	118

Other:	0
From country 1 - Italy:	<p>Organisation: COPE, Italy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 08/02/2024 17:00 - 19:30 Online debate with 32 participants (19 Females & 11 Males) • 09/04/2024 16:00 - 18:00 Online debate with 18 participants (4 Females & 5 Males) <p>TOTAL participants from Italy = 39</p>
From country 2 - Hungary:	<p>Organisation: CTRIA, Hungary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 06/04/2024 13:00-14:00 Online debate with 8 participants (4 Females & 4 Males) • 11/04/2024 14:00-15:00 Online debate with 13 participants (3 Females & 10 Males) <p>TOTAL participants from Hungary = 21</p>
From country 3 - Romania:	<p>Organisation: ACTA, Romania</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04/04/2024 13:00-14:00 Online debate with 47 participants (27 Females & 20 Males) • 05/04/2024 8:00 - 9:00 Online debate with 42 participants (6 Females & 6 Males) <p>TOTAL participants from Romania = 59</p>
From country 4 - Poland	<p>Organisation: AUTOCREACJA, Poland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17/04/2024 16:30 - 18:00 Online debate with 19 participants (9 Females & 10 Males) • 24/04/2024 16:30 - 18:00 Online debate with 21 participants (10 Females & 11 Males) <p>TOTAL participants from Poland = 40</p>
From country 5 - Lithuania	<p>Organisation: SOC-Efektas, Lithuania</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21/03/2024 8:00-8:50 Online debate with 16 participants (2 Females & 14 Males) • 29/03/2024 13:00-14:00 Online debate with 13 participants (10 Females & 3 Males) <p>TOTAL participants from Lithuania = 29</p>
From country 6 - Greece	<p>Organisation: IASIS, Greece</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21/03/2024 15:00 - 16:30 Online debate with 9 participants (5 Females & 4 Males) • 29/03/2024 12:30 - 14:00 Online debate with 8 participants (6 Females & 1 Male) <p>TOT participants from Greece = 16</p>

From country 7 - Portugal	Organisation: IMVF, Portugal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 01/04/2024 10h30-12h30 Online debate with 13 participants (7 Females & 6 Males) • 12/04/2024 10h30-12h30 Online debate with 15 participants (10 Females & 5 Males) TOT participants from Portugal = 28		
From country 8 - Spain	Organisation: JOVESOLIDES, Spain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15/02/2024 16:30 - 18:00 Online debate with 5 participants (4 Females & 1 Male) • 10/04/20224 16:30 - 18:00 Online debate with 5 participants (5 Females) TOT participants from Spain = 10		
From country 9 - Finland	Organisation: EYP, Finland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/04/2024 17:00-18:00 Online debate with 15 participants (11 Females & 4 Males) • 12/4/2024 16:00-17:00 Online debate with 17 participants (9 Females & 3 Males) TOT participants from Finland = 27		
Total number of participants:	269	From total number of countries:	9
Description <i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>At the beginning of this WP, partners did the desk research of policies / initiatives / projects / experts / organisations related countering the fake news at EU and national levels.</p> <p>Partners organised two webinar debates per country inviting different experts, such as journalists, social researchers, activists, university professors, AI experts. These were previously contacted to complete short anonymous survey and we received almost 50 replies about “How to fight against fake-news?”.</p> <p>The main aim of the online debates was to raise awareness about the fake news phenomenon and to provide direct experiences and insights from experts. These contributions, together with surveys led to final version of the Policy Recommendations document.</p> <p>The events gained excellent feedback and reached more than twice as many participants as previously foreseen.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF THE DEBATES AT NATIONAL LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITALY #1 - On Thursday, 8 February, the 1st webinar debate 'How to recognise fake news in the 2024 European elections and the role of fact- 			

checking' was held, which was attended by renowned experts in the field of fake news and fact-checking and was attended by many spectators, both youths and adults. The aim of the debate was to provide participants with the necessary tools to recognise the fake news of the candidates in the European elections. The main theme revolved around the role of fact-checking and developed around two micro-themes: AI and its use in the creation of fake news and fake news revolving around the migration phenomenon. The event lasted two and a half hours and was held on the ZOOM platform. The moderator opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing the topic and the speakers. Following this, the moderator introduced the experts and the ORIEL association. COPE NGO director Manuele Manente presented COPE and Andrea Zalabaiova the FACT project. Afterwards, the moderator introduced the first topic and opened the debate on the subject. The first expert, Giovanni Zagni, intervened and gave an interesting discussion on the role of fact-checking, from its origins to the present day, giving many examples of fake news and how fact-checking in journalism combats them. The second expert, Marco Menichelli, explained how to work in the field of cyber security against fake news. The next expert, Gianni Riotta, took up the role of fact-checking in journalism, emphasizing its importance during the European elections. After a short 10-minute break, the moderator introduced the second topic and opened the debate on the subject. The fourth expert, Professor Guido Nicolosi, opened the debate on fake news in the field of migration created by candidates in the European elections. This is followed by Evelyn De Luca, the fifth expert, who focuses on how fake news can be combated, giving the example of how the association she belongs to works in the field of fact-checking. Finally, the debate closed with the last intervention of expert Giovanni Zagni on the subject. The moderator thanked all participants and closed the meeting by making an appointment for the next debate.

- **ITALY #2** - The webinar entitled 'How to recognise fake news in the 2024 European elections and the role of fact-checking' took place on 9 April 2024, from 16:00 to 18:00 CET, on the Zoom platform, attracting participants of various age groups interested in the topic of disinformation and fact-checking. The moderator kicked off the event by welcoming the participants and presenting the main topic together with the distinguished speakers. These included the founder of a law firm and president of the 'Assodata' association, Marco Martorana, an expert in the protection of privacy and new technologies, as well as Professor Giovanni Maddalena, lecturer in Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Molise, known for his studies in pragmatism and communication. The central topic of the webinar was the analysis of fake news and its impact on the 2024 European parliamentary elections, with a focus on the role of Artificial Intelligence in countering this phenomenon. The event was opened by a brief introduction by Professor Guido Nicolosi, an expert in the sociology of cultural and communicative processes, who outlined the agenda and objectives of the meeting. Afterwards, Andrea Zalabaiova, Project Manager of the FACT project of the NGO COPE, provided a further perspective on the topic, introducing the fact-checking strategies adopted within her organisation. Speeches by experts, such as lawyer and privacy law professor Marco Martorana and professor Giovanni Maddalena, offered an in-depth overview of the causes and consequences of fake news, as well as possible solutions to effectively counter it. The debate was led by Professor Guido Nicolosi, who moderated the exchanges of opinions and insights between the participants. Finally, a part of the webinar was dedicated to questions from the audience, allowing direct interaction with the experts, followed by conclusions and final greetings.

The event turned out to be an important opportunity for reflection and debate on one of the most relevant challenges in the run-up to the 2024 European elections: the fight against fake news and the crucial role of fact-checking in the defense of democracy and truthful information.

- **PORTUGAL #1** - The 1st Debate about Disinformation in Portugal was organised on 1 April 2024, from 10.30am to 12.30pm. It was facilitated by experts in the field of information, such as Filipe Pardal from Polígrafo and Dina Margato from Iberifier. There were 13 participants in the Debate, who asked questions and made comments creating a good discussion.
- **PORTUGAL #2** - The 2nd Debate about Disinformation in Portugal was realised on 12 April 2024, from 10.30am to 12.30pm. It was facilitated by experts in the field of information, such as Fernando Costa from Público newspaper and Ana Paula Costa from Casa do Brasil Association. There were 15 participants in the Debate, who asked questions and made comments creating a good discussion. There was a very large and important approach to Disinformation in Migration.
- **SPAIN** - Both debates started by a presentation of the results of the survey that 20 national experts have filled in, and then we discussed together the different recommendations to tackle fake news in order to agree on the ones that will have the greatest impact, and try to precise them to make them as concrete as possible realistically.
 - #1** Experts: Lorena Tortosa, Journalist, member of the Valencian Journalist Union, Lidia Valera y Dafne Calvo, Journalism Teachers, Department "Language theory and communication sciences", Faculty of Philosophy, Translation and Communication, University of Valencia, Victor Pool, member of "Poder Migrante", a network of activists and collectives working for the rights of migrants. It aims at raising awareness and mobilizing against structural racism.
 - #2** - Maite Mercado and Raquel Turillo, from the Journalism Teachers Department "Language theory and communication sciences" Faculty of Philosophy, Translation and Communication University of Valencia along with 3 social workers and educators working with young and vulnerable communities.
- **GREECE #1** - On 21 March 2024 our online event "Myth vs Fact: Challenging Mental Health Stigma" took place, where we started with an introduction to explain what the FACT project is, and to introduce it to people who were not familiar with it. Afterwards, Catrin and Jaume talked about mental health stigma and its effects, and how we can overcome it. After that, Leixuri Martín focused on Fake News, and how it affects the European Union and its parliament, and at the end, we discussed the most efficient ways to do Fact Checking to be aware of when we are reading a true news or a Fake News.
- **GREECE #2** - On Friday 29 March 2024, our AI expert Elena Spyropoulou continued the events of the FACT project, focusing on a topic that is on everyone's mind these days, Artificial Intelligence. Elena was explaining how to talk to the AI, as not everyone is aware of it. And then, getting into the subject, she gave us tools to detect when a text is written by AI, and how to check it. She also showed us how to create images with this tool, making us aware that it is something that is within everyone's reach, making emphasis on the era of disinformation, where we have to be more alert than ever to avoid becoming a victim of Fake News.
- **HUNGARY #1** - First event was online discussion and debate with the news editor of Alba Innovár and Fehérvár App about fake news and its dangers. Speakers talked about experiences, solutions, how to avoid fake news and how to filter them. During the discussion, a lot of information about different solutions was presented, from which the participants could learn a lot. The

expert Dorina Mészáros encounters a lot in her work with news monitoring and filtering out fake news. For this reason, she was asked to present this in an online discussion and debate with the participants.

- **HUNGARY #2** - The second event was on artificial intelligence, where two experts came together for a professional discussion and debate on the topic. The two experts explained in detail the concept of Ai, its appearance, advantages and disadvantages. Various questions were also asked by the participants, making the programme even more interactive and interesting. The experts linked the topic of Ai with the topic of fake news, filtering fake news, using Google's Fact Check Tools as an example. On the site, several proven fake news stories were presented to the participants. They also explained how to use it and how Ai could be of further help to them.
- **ROMANIA #1** - On April 4, 2024, the first online meeting with the theme "Fake news - real people - real consequences" took place. The subjects addressed by Mirela Marcut, expert in digital media, and professor at the University of Oradea, were: What is social media? What kind of content appears on social media? How do I recognize an information or opinion article? What is fake news? How do I identify it? There were many questions and the large audience created a good debate.
- **ROMANIA #2** - The second online debate took place on April 5, 2024 and expert in digital media, Mirela Marcut, focused on the following topics: How do fake news and social media affect us? How can I help a "cleaner" online environment Practical identification and debunking exercises where the audience was grouped into breakout rooms and divided into small debate groups. Concrete examples of fake news were analyzed and debated, and at the end, participants provided feedback.
- **POLAND** - "Breaking the Myths" was the title of an online debate on the issue of fake news, which was organized by the Self-Creation Foundation as part of the FACT (Foster Awareness on the relevance of Checking the Truth) project. The meeting was attended by, students and adults from all over Poland. The substantive part and discussion was moderated by Dr. Piotr Czyszowski - a specialist in communications and media, as well as a radio and television journalist. The debate consisted of two parts.
 - #1** - The first meeting, held on June 17, 2024, discussed issues related to the problem of fake news, as well as disinformation and hybrid warfare. The following issues were also discussed: information vs. communication, information noise, interference, distortion, information vs. truth, responsibility for information and the role of the media.
 - #2** - The second meeting was held on April 24, 2024. The panel analyzed selected examples of fake news. It also sought answers to the question: how to recognize fake news and disinformation, and how to defend against them? Initiatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission to combat fake news and disinformation were also discussed, and finally, issues related to fake news in the context of current legal regulations in Poland were discussed.

According to the participants, the debate was an interesting initiative that helped them understand the phenomenon of fake news and the problem of disinformation more broadly. As they agreed, similar debates should occur more often in order to educate and sensitize the public to the problem of disinformation.
- **FINLAND #1** - Event took place on Zoom 11.4. 17.00-18.00. The theme of the discussion was risks of disinformation, responsibility to mitigate its risks as well as measures implemented by the European Union on the matter. The event was joined by active members of European Youth Parliament Finland as well as three experts; digital policy specialist Johannes Mikkonen from

European Parliament where he works as an assistant to MEP Kumpula-Natri, former European Parliament employee Leevi Saari who current works as a researcher in University on Amsterdam, specializing in digital policies and AI as well as a presentative of fact-checking organization Faktabaari Elsa Kivinen. The event was moderated by Ninni Issakainen from EYP Finland. Discussion began with introduction to the topic followed by the experts outlining the most relevant dangers of disinformation. This was followed by the debate on whose responsibility it is to implement policies on disinformation as well as how successful the EU has been on the matter. The young people also joined the conversation, raising points about the harm to individuals posed by AI as well as how difficult it is to regulate something as ambiguous and wide spread as disinformation.

- **FINLAND #2** - Event took place on Zoom 12.4. 16.00-17.00. The themes were effects of disinformation to democratic processes as well as the distrust to authorities as results of increasing amounts of disinformation. Elsa Kivinen from fact-checking organization Faktabaari and researcher Minna Horowitz from Helsinki University joined the discussion as experts. Both also work with collaborative DECA project which brings together experts, researchers and policy makers to find solutions to increasing media literacy and knowledge on the effects of disinformation. It was raised that especially in the Nordic countries, the trust in authorities is still quite high despite the growing amount of disinformation, however, there are no safeguards in place in case the trust of citizens would start to waver (which was noted to be likely). Similarly, due to the high trust, the governments of these countries have not made efforts into implementing policies which would safeguard their democracies in case of for example election interference. Also, the role of projects and initiatives such as Faktabaari and FACT were brought up as ways to improve people's critical thinking skills, therefore making them less likely to fall for conspiracies and disinformation. The young participants also took actively part in the discussions, sharing their experiences in encountering disinformation as well as how in their opinions people slip start believing conspiracy theories.
- **LITHUANIA #1** - The event 'Don't be fooled' took place on Thursday, 21 March and was attended by experts in the field of fake news, fact-checking, critical thinking, and democracy, as well as local youths. The purpose of the debate was to raise awareness about fake news, equip participants with tools to recognize misinformation in the mainstream media, especially in the context of upcoming local presidency and EU elections. The main themes of the event were the role of fact-checking, with a focus on AI and critical thinking. The event lasted for an hour and was conducted on the ZOOM platform. The moderator, Aušra Stravinskienė, welcomed the participants, introduced the topic, and the speakers. Other experts, such as Linas Staršelskis, Lina Giedrimienė, and Angelė Bražaitė, shared their insights and expertise on the topic. The discussion included presentations on cases of fake news and an exploration of how language is used for propaganda and to distort truth. The meeting included a brief introduction of the Social Effect Network NGO, the purpose and activities of the FACT project, and presentations on what constitutes fake news. Participants and experts actively engaged in sharing their experiences and encounters with fake news, discussing potential improvements from a legislative point of view. The outcomes of the event included increased awareness of fake news, the dissemination of tools and insights to recognize misinformation, and the sharing of real-life experiences related to encountering and combatting fake news
- **LITHUANIA #2** - The 'Don't be fooled' event indeed represents a significant milestone in the collective effort to combat the pervasive issue of fake news

through media literacy and critical thinking. The collaboration between seasoned experts and the younger generation underscores a comprehensive approach to nurturing an informed society capable of discerning credible information. Utilizing ZOOM platform, to reach a wider audience showed the adaptive strategies to facilitate meaningful discussions on critical issues. The immediate positive outcomes observed among participants—enhanced understanding and skills to identify misinformation—serve as a solid foundation for continued education and advocacy efforts. This event's success highlights the indispensable role of community engagement and education in equipping individuals to effectively navigate the complexities of the information age, reinforcing the essential nature of such initiatives in fostering a resilient and well-informed public.

TESTIMONIALS:

"I attended the event with great interest because I found the topic really interesting and very topical. The experts were great and very engaging, I will definitely attend the second one too!" (anonymous participant from Italy)

"It was a great debate where I made my presence felt and the panelists are to be congratulated. I was grateful to learn how journalists demystify disinformation by seeking out sources linked to this subject to clarify. Thanks to Cátia and IMVF." (Juliano from Portugal)

"I was clarified about how fact-checking is parameterised and how fact-checkers made carefully researched - a lesson I recognise as crucial to understanding a work that is increasingly essential in the society we live in." (Salvador from Portugal)

"Taking part in the debate on disinformation was an enlightening and empowering experience." (Beatriz from Portugal)

"I liked the fact that we had from each a different perspective, which allowed us to have an enriching debate." (anonymous participant from Spain)

"The topics were very interesting. I have acquired many lessons that I can apply as a professional in raising awareness with young people about fake news." (anonymous participant from Spain)

"Enriching reflective debate with good professionals who raised highly relevant issues as well as possible solutions to the challenges." (anonymous participant from Greece)

"It's important to destigmatize mental health and be careful with the fake news, and there should be more webinars like this one in order to promote the public awareness." (anonymous participant from Greece)

"I was not very familiar with AI, but I started to understand that it can be something dangerous but also something helpful. I would suggest more webinars about this topic, cause it is interesting and not known for older people like me." (anonymous participant from Greece)

"I think they have approached the subject from very interesting perspectives. A lot of the information and topics that were presented I had never heard of. It was a really useful event." (Kristóf from Hungary)

"It was very good to hear how many experts are already on the subject and we also found the fake news filtering programme that was presented very useful." (Nóra from Hungary)

"It was a really useful online meeting in which I learned interesting things about how the social media algorithm works, how opinions or statements can be "exploited" and then transmitted as news and truths" (anonymous participant from Romania)

"I learned about fact-checking platforms and now I know that I can help make the online environment cleaner by applying the motto 'Think before you share.'" (anonymous participant from Romania)

"Participating in Peter's online debate was invigorating. The respectful atmosphere fostered insightful exchanges among participants with diverse expertise. Covering a wide range of topics, it left me feeling intellectually stimulated and hopeful for future discussions hosted by Peter." (anonymous participant from Poland)

"One aspect that stood out to me was the level of expertise and knowledge demonstrated by my fellow participants. It was evident that each individual had invested time and effort into researching their viewpoints, resulting in well-informed arguments backed by evidence." (anonymous participant from Poland)

"I enjoyed the meeting and listening about fake news, Although we think we are not going to fall to be victims for it, it still is possible and relevant. We should talk about this in the mainstream" (anonymous participant from Lithuania)

"Many things about fake news i already new and AI as well, but it was good to hear experts' point of view and update my knowledge, this project seems interesting" (anonymous participant from Lithuania)

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE