



19/10/2022, Strasbourg

Written Question to the European Commission

Subject: Large scale pro-Russian disinformation operations online on Twitter and Facebook

Reports from the EU DisinfoLab¹ reveal large scale operations to spread pro-Russian disinformation online in the EU. Fake versions of at least 17 news outlets, such as the Guardian and Bild were created to spread pro-Russian disinformation hosted at similar domain names to the news outlets and promoted with paid advertising through FacebookAds. These were then amplified by the recommender systems and bot networks on both Twitter and Facebook.

This is just one example of the scale of the infrastructure in place to undermine truth, trust and democracy, to polarise society and spread disinformation. The fact that Facebook was paid 105,000USD for this one campaign² shows Facebook's deeply skewed balance of incentives.

Does the Commission believe that this balance of incentives promotes compliance with the non-binding code and can the Commission meaningfully adjust this balance of incentives?

What are the options open to the Commission to act upon this clear breach of the companies' commitments under the Code of Practice on Disinformation and how will the Digital Services Act change this?

What options are open to the Commission to intervene in these interaction-based recommender systems that are clearly susceptible to manipulation, polarise our societies and are a direct threat to our democracies?

Undersigned Members of the European Parliament:

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Michal Simecka (Renew)

¹<https://www.disinfo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Doppelganger.pdf>

²https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/CIB-Report_-China-Russia_Sept-2022-1-1.pdf, p 14.

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