

EU support to fact checkers

The text below is in answer to your enquiry.

To promote fact-checking and raise awareness of fact-checked information to citizens, the European Union is supporting independent fact-checkers in different ways.

The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)

The [European Digital Media Observatory \(EDMO\)](#) serves as a hub for fact-checkers, academics and other relevant stakeholders to collaborate with each other. It encourages them to actively link with media organisations, media literacy experts, and provide support to policy makers. This helps to coordinate actions in the fight against disinformation. It's the EU's largest interdisciplinary network to counter disinformation and its network consists of 14 national and multinational hubs.

The [creation](#) of the Observatory is one of the elements in the Commission's detailed [action plan against disinformation](#), published in December 2018. The plan aims to reinforce capabilities and strengthen cooperation between Member States and the EU in four key areas: improve detection, coordinate responses, work with online platforms and industry, raise awareness and empower citizens to respond to disinformation online. Specifically, in the area of awareness and citizens' empowerment, the plan foresees concrete actions to help fact checkers and researchers in their fight understanding and discovering the sources of disinformation.

The Commission launched the [first call for tenders for the creation of the European Digital Media Observatory](#) in 2019, which included up to €2.5 million. The Commission committed to finance a digital platform which will network together independent national multidisciplinary teams, and this call for tenders is a direct implementation of the commitment made in the action plan against disinformation.

A consortium led by the [European University Institute](#) in Florence won the call for tenders in May 2020. The consortium includes the company Athens Technology Center from Greece, Aarhus University from Denmark, and the fact-checking organisation Pagella Politica from Italy. The consortium has started its activities on 1 June 2020.

EDMO will build its main features in two phases. The first phase focus on the deployment of a core service infrastructure and will define the governance rules of the Observatory. The second will establish EDMO national and regional digital media research hubs across the EU. Their aim is to put in place actions to increase EDMO's capacity of tackling harmful disinformation campaigns at national and EU level, and analyse their impact on society and democracy.

The second phase of EDMO has started after the launch of the [second call for proposals to extend the reach of the European Digital Media Observatory \(EDMO\)](#) in June 2020.

The 8 hubs that had been selected were funded with more than €11 million (see [here](#) the list of beneficiaries and the amounts) through the Digital Service Infrastructure of the [Connect Europe Facility](#), which will help implement and expand the work of EDMO.

The Digital Europe Programme (DEP) helps to fund EDMO. In 2023 a [call for proposals](#) under DEP was launched ([evaluated](#) by January 2024, it includes the) in order to finance the work of independent national /multinational hubs for analysis of digital media ecosystems in order to ensure the coverage of geographical areas covered by the EDMO hubs for which the funding is ending at the end of 2023 and in 2024. Again, in 2024 a new call for proposals was published for hubs for which

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the funding is ending at the end of 2024 and in 2025, and it was opened until 21 November 2024. It [seems](#) not evaluated yet. The [budget](#) available for this call is 8 million €. The results were expected to be published during February 2025.

Right now, EDMO has a network of 14 national and multinational hubs. In a [factsheet on the Observatory](#) recently updated by the European Commission (30 January 2025) it is indicated that from its launch in June 2020, EDMO had received €30 million EU co-funding.

On a [written answer](#) given by Commissioner Breton to Parliamentary question - E-000625/2023(ASW) on April 2023, you can read: *“The Commission had as such no role in selecting the members and partners involved in the winning consortium. (...) EDMO has created a network of independent fact-checking organisations based in the EU to foster collaboration among them in fighting disinformation. The network of fact-checkers works independently from the Commission and has been created following admission criteria based on the highest ethical and professional standards, including be free of influence or control over them by political parties or movements.”*

The European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFSCN)

The [EFSCN](#) is an independent association of European fact-checking organisations that upholds and promotes the highest standards of fact-checking and media literacy to combat misinformation for the public benefit. The association was launched in 2022 by more than 40 European fact-checking organizations.

The European Code of Standards for Independent Fact-Checking Organisations designed by the EFSCN, is a set of criteria to ensure that organisations fact-checking misinformation and disinformation adhere to the highest standards of methodology, ethics and transparency in order to best serve the public interest. Once verified as compliant with the professional standards set out in this Code, organisations become members of the European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN).

The writing of the Code and launch of the EFCSN network was made possible through a project funded by the European Commission. This project was part of the [Call of Integrity of Social Media](#) and was led by [six European organisations](#) focused on fighting misinformation: [Fundación Maldita.es](#) (Spain), [AFP](#) (France), [CORRECTIV](#) (Germany), [DEMAGOG](#) (Poland), [Pagella Politica/Facta](#) (Italy) and [EU DisinfoLab](#) (Belgium).

The objective of the call was to draft a Code of professional integrity for independent European fact-checking organisations, to pilot its implementation and to support fact checking and open source investigation organisations in adhering to it.

The [total budget](#) earmarked for the co-financing of projects under this call for proposals was estimated at EUR 900.000,00 (nine hundred thousand euros). The EU co-financing is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 75% of the total eligible costs of the action.

Since this project ended in December 2023, the network is funded by its membership fees and external donations. Individual projects have also have additional funders. [Read more about project funders on the projects page.](#)

Network of European fact-checkers to fight disinformation

The Financing of pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of "Communications Networks, Content and Technology" in [2023](#) and [2024](#), includes a Preparatory action to continue to provide European fact-checking organisations with a concrete package of resources.

The proposal build on the results of other initiatives that foster the cooperation among fact-checking organisations in Europe such as the new European Fact-checking Standards Network (EFCSN, part of

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the ongoing Pilot Project CNECT/2020/3029907 Integrity of Social Media), the pilot project of the European Narratives Observatory (CNECT/2022/5162608)) and the work of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO-Smart 2019/1087).

The budget line for this pilot in [2024](#) is PA 07 22 01: EUR 9 000 000; the [2023 budget line](#) PP 07 23 01: EUR 2 500 000.

Supporting civil society, media and academia

Under Horizon Europe, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV), Erasmus+ and other programmes, the European Union is supporting civil society organisations, journalists, media organisations and researchers across Europe. Mainly on actions related to support media freedom and pluralism, increase media resilience and help enhance media literacy.

See the projects under Horizon Europe related to disinformation [here](#). It lists 37 related projects, although not all are fully fact-checker related (ex. [research](#) on how citizens consume and share misinformation, or [research](#) on empower citizens to investigate if statements are true).

One example on fact-checking related project is:

[vera.ai: VERification Assisted by Artificial Intelligence](#), which cooperate with media professionals and researchers to build trustworthy AI solutions that will include a fact-checker-in-the-loop approach and AI models that constantly check updated sources and multimodal data, verified in the InVID-WeVerify plugin and the Truly Media/EDMO platform. The project will facilitate the fight against complex disinformation technologies in all formats.

Another interesting outcome of Horizon 2020 funding is the WeVerify plugin:

<https://weverify.eu/verification-plugin/>. See the project details (2018-2021) and funding on the [CORDIS webpage](#).

In 2021, the WeVerify plugin won the US Paris Tech 1st prize awarded by the Global Engagement Center of the US State Department and the Digital Forensic Lab of the Atlantic Council, in a worldwide competition between some 40 verification tools. The toolkit is designed and maintained since its launch by AFP Medialab, with the support of all our project scientific partners who are providing innovative services through web services. According to the Poynter Institute, home of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), the InVID-WeVerify verification plugin "[is one of the most powerful tools for spotting misinformation online](#)".