

Study for the assessment of the implementation of the Code of Practice on Disinformation

The Study assesses the policies and tools adopted by the online platforms to implement the commitments made in the Code of Practice against Disinformation in its first year (2018-2019). It concludes that the Code established a common framework to fight disinformation and should not be abandoned, and it proposes ways to strengthen implementation and monitoring (study reference: SMART 20190041).

The Study on the assessment of the Code of Practice against Disinformation SMART 2019/0041 aims at supporting the European Commission's evaluation of the Code effectiveness.

The assessment of the independent contractor, Valdani, Vicari and Associates (VVA), focused on 13 Signatories to the Code of Practice against Disinformation. It analysed the standard terms of service and the specific policies and tools adopted by the online platforms to implement the commitments made in the Code in the first year of its implementation (October 2018 to October 2019).

The overall conclusions of the study:

- The Code of Practice should not be abandoned. It has established a common framework to tackle disinformation, its aims and activities are highly relevant and it has produced positive results. It constitutes a first and crucial step in the fight against disinformation and shows European leadership on an issue that is international in nature.
- Some drawbacks relate to its self-regulatory nature, the lack of uniformity of implementation and the lack of clarity around its scope and some of the key concepts.
- The implementation of the Code should continue and its effectiveness could be strengthened by agreeing on terminology and definitions.

Finally, the Study suggests a mechanism for action in case of non-compliance. To that effect, the European Commission should consider proposals for co-regulation within which appropriate enforcement mechanisms, sanctions and redress mechanisms should be established.

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