News Item

The EU's Role in Fighting Disinformation: Crafting A Disinformation Framework | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

By James Pamment
September 28, 2020

This paper is the second of a three-part series called Future Threats, Future Solutions that looks into the future of the European Union's (EU) disinformation policy.

This series was commissioned by the European External Action Service's (EEAS) Strategic Communications Division and prepared independently by James Pamment of the Partnership for Countering Influence Operations (PCIO) at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Over one hundred experts, practitioners, and scholars participated in five days of workshops, made written submissions, and/or completed surveys that fed into these papers. The resulting publications are the sole responsibility of the author and do not reflect the position of the EEAS or any individual workshop participant.

The first paper, "Taking Back the Initiative," focuses on future threats and the extent to which current EU disinformation policy instruments can meet the challenge. With the coronavirus pandemic erupting during the drafting of these papers, the overview of current instruments has been supplemented with discussion of lessons learned from the ongoing experience of this crisis. This first paper also outlines the overall policy recommendations detailed in the three papers.

The second paper, "Crafting an EU Disinformation Framework," establishes terminology and a framework around which EU institutions can organize their disinformation policy. The paper begins with a discussion of terminology and then outlines the ABCDE (actors, behavior, content, degree, effect) framework for analyzing influence operations. This supports further analysis of areas of institutional responsibility, including ownership of different aspects of the disinformation policy area.

The third paper, "Developing Policy Interventions for the 2020s," outlines three areas of intervention necessary for developing an EU disinformation policy capable of meeting future threats. The first is work that deters actors from producing and distributing disinformation. The second consists of nonregulatory interventions, which focus primarily on policies that can be enacted informally with stakeholders. The third covers regulatory interventions, including legislative responses based upon an auditing regime.

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