

7-9 November 2024
Central Military Club | Sofia
AGENDA

Day 1, November 7

PLENARY HALL

(streaming link: <https://fb.me/e/1W4HneeKd>)

9:00 *Opening*
Atanas Zapryanov, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria
Dana Spinant, Director-General, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission
Todor Galev, Director of Research, Center for the Study of Democracy
Dimitar Vatsov, President, HSS Foundation - Sofia
Keith Peter Kiely, GATE Institute, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

9:30 *When disinformation meets disruption: the evolution of Russia's strategy of paralysis*
Mark Galeotti, Mayak Intelligence

Moderator: Dimitar Vatsov, HSSF

10:30 **Coffee break**

11:00 *Russia's Global Information War: Networks, Strategies, Social Vulnerability*

How to Win the Information War. Russia and its Network in Germany
Susanne Spahn, Political Scientist, Historian and Journalist

"The Global South against the Collective West" - Do We Have a New Discursive Front
Dimitar Vatsov, HSSF

The Propaganda Crescendo and the Spiral of Silence!
Milena Yakimova, HSSF

Moderator: Veronika Dimitrova, HSSF

HALL 2

(streaming link: <https://fb.me/e/26K9RzRMH>)

11:00 *Media Literacy: Passport to the Future*

Battlefield Brain: Cognitive Turf Wars
Andy Stoycheff, NTCenter

Listening to youth – the value of based interventions
Cristina Lupu, Center for Independent Journalism

Disinformation narratives in the Romanian and Moldova context and Media Literacy
Laura Burtan, Funky Citizens

Moderator: Irina Nedeva, AEJ

12:30 Lunch

13:30 *Building Europe's Media Democracy Shield: Countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference*

Media capture in CEE: models of emerging news ecologies and safeguarding epistemic rights

Marius Dragomir, Director, Media and Journalism Research Center

Central Europe between the imperial Scylla of "Ruskiy mir" and the Charybdis of "post-national European identity"

Przemyslaw Zurawski vel Grajewski, Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Section Coordinator, Chancellery of the President, Poland

Building resilience to Russian information manipulation and electoral interference in Moldova

Andrei Curăraru, Co-founder & Policy and security expert, Watchdog.md

Transforming Europe's Media Landscape: Building Resilience and Safeguarding Independence

Maria Stoyanova, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

Anti-EU disinformation in Romania in the context of good governance: narratives, impact and solutions

Bianca Toma, Project Manager, Romanian Center for European Policies

Building Europe's Media Democracy Shield: Countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference

Amaury Lesplingart, CTO, Checkfirst Network

Moderator: Goran Georgiev, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

13:30 *Navigating the Infodemic: AI Solutions for Media Accuracy*

Understanding Disinformation: The Pivotal Role of Media Analysis in Ensuring Information Integrity

Mariya Yurukova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Information Disorder: Getting Ahead of Hindsight

Nesin Veli, Identrics

vera.ai Tools for Detecting Synthetic Content

Olga Papadopoulou, Centre for Research & Technology, Hellas (CERTH)

vera.ai Tools for Textual Content and Meme Analysis

Olesya Razuvayevskaya, The University of Sheffield

Moderator: Nikola Tulechki, Ontotext

15:00 Coffee break

15:30 *Narratives as Warfare*

China's efforts to construct its narrative infrastructure in Southeast Europe

Vladimir Shopov, European Council on Foreign Relations

15:30 *Media and Information Literacy: Passport to the Future*

MIL in Bulgarian education through every subject

Angel Georgiev, Sineo



Resilience Against Disinformation in Wartime: Lessons from Ukraine
Halyna Tanai, LMF, NGO Lviv Media Forum

Why is Serbia embracing Russia - and is it actually doing it at all?
Milorad Ivanovic, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Moderator: Ralitsa Stoycheva, Media Programme South East Europe,
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Wikipedia as an example of Participatory Governance: A Study of Information Resilience and Public Information Resources

Iglika Ivanova, GATE & Media Literacy Coalition

Politics and Truth – Uses and Abuses of LLMs
Garvan Walshe, Article7 – Intelligence for Democrats

Myths & monsters: disinformation as a storytelling technique
Joanna Elmy, Toest (online)

Moderator: Irina Nedeva, AEJ

17:00 Coffee break

17:30 *Targeting trust: the weaponization of fact-checking tropes*
Andy Carvin, DFRLab (online)

Moderator: Ruslan Trad, DFRLab

18:30 Closing

Day 2, November 8

PLENARY HALL

(streaming link: <https://fb.me/e/1W4HneeKd>)

9:00 *Strategic Communications and (Counter-)Disinformation: Simply a Question of Language?*

Dr. Neville Bolt, Symposium Institute for Strategic Communications

Russia and China FIMI activities in the Western Balkan region

Miroslav Sazdovski, The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats

Moderator: Dimitar Vatsov and Veronika Dimitrova, HSSF

HALL 2

(streaming link: <https://fb.me/e/26K9RzRMH>)

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 DFRLab: Exposing Russian information warfare

Beyond messaging: Telegram's role since February 2022 invasion of Ukraine

Sayyara Mammadova, DFRLab

Exposing Russian information warfare: tactics, tricks and elections

Valentin Chatelet, DFRLab

Final words before the storm

Ruslan Trad, DFRLab

Moderator: **Milena Yakimova, HSSF**

11:00 Democratic Resilience and Information Operations

Cyber Shockwave Exercises: Countering Hybrid Operations and Disinformation Campaigns

George Sharkov, IICT-BAS

Disinformation and the Institutional Response: Deficiency analysis

Iliyana Marinkova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Institutional weakness as a key determinant in the "imported" fake news spreading strategies: Case study of North Macedonia

Mitko Arnaudov, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade

Malign foreign influence in Armenia and possibilities to tackle it

Armen Grigoryan, Centre for Policy Studies

Moderator: **Velizar Shalamanov, IICT-BAS**

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Decoding Gender Disinformation and Addressing Online Violence

Gendered disinformation against Ukrainian women refugees in Bulgaria

Kristina Tsabala, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

Gender and Identity Disinformation: The case study of Armenia

Kate Llewellyn, Senior Project Manager, Artemis Alliance

TFGBV against women in politics and public life in Georgia

Teona Dalakishvili, Senior Program Officer, Transform Program, IREX

Uncovering gendered disinformation in Polish cyberspace

Eliza Kotowska, Project Coordinator & Analyst, Instytut Kościuszki, (online)

13:30 Artificial Intelligence and Understanding the Shifting (Dis)Information Landscape

Gen AI for social media analysis: game changer or a buzzword?

Andriy Kusyy, LetsData

AI in Action: Revealing the hidden structure of disinformation narratives

Andrey Tagarev, Ontotext

Transformer models and generative AI applications: A case study on stakeholder and narrative analysis of traditional and



Anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric as a tool for encroachment on civic space
Boyan Zahariev, Programme Director, Open Society Institute

Anna Arevadze, ForSet

Moderator: Gloria Trifonova, Center for the Study of Democracy

social media coverage in the context of armed conflict in the Middle East

Elena Mihalska and Slavi Slavov, Commetric

Day Zero Dynamics: Narrative Formation and Algorithmic Influence in the first 24 Hours of the Southport Stabbings

Vassil Velichkov, Sensika

Moderators: Todor Kiriakov, A Data Pro & *Yolina Petrova*, Identric

15:00 Coffee break

15:30 Building Resilience in Public Administration and Society

Building Resilience in Public Administration and Society

Georgi Georgiev, Ministry of Defense

Social and Collective Drivers of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference

Alexander Politov, Center for the Study of Democracy

AI against disinformation

Dmytro Bilash, Co-founder and CBDO, Osavul

Achieving Information Integrity Through Cognitive Security

Ludmilla Huntsman, Cognitive Security Alliance

Algorithms of Deception: How Platforms are Struggling to Combat AI-Generated Disinformation

Andrii Paziuk, National Aviation University, Ukraine

Moderator: Todor Galev, Center for the Study of Democracy

15:30 Propaganda Narratives and Distorted Public Communication

Collective Subconsciousness and Economic Disinformation

Krassen Stanchev, Institute for Market Economics

Russian narratives and the social vulnerability of Bulgarians

Boryana Dimitrova, Alfa Research

Manipulations of Public Communication Beyond "Fake News". (Meta)deliberation as Antidote

Plamen Makariev, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Main Narratives of Propaganda and Disinformation against EU

Veronika Dimitrova, Luborir Donchev, Valentin Valkanov, Maya Dimitrova, Deyan Paskalev, HSSF

The Digital Concentration Camp: How Anti-Democratic Propaganda Uses Conspiracy Theory

Valentin Valkanov, HSSF

Moderator: Milena Yakimova, HSSF

17:00 Break



17:05 **Disinformation, Health Concerns and Consequences**

Challenges for Communication: Health Issues in the Face of Refugee Crisis and the Exacerbation of Disinformation

Ludmila Hamplová, Strategic Communications at the Czech Department of Public Health Protection

Decoding the Damage: Uncovering the Hidden Complexities of Disinformation in Emergency Responses

Jaroslav Valuch, Transitions

Moderator: **Ruslan Trad**, DFRLab

17:45 *Closing*

Day 3, November 9

PLENARY HALL

(streaming link: <https://fb.me/e/1W4HneeKd>)

9:00 **Navigating Power, Information and Propaganda from a Historical Perspective**

Navigating the Informational Landscape: Gramsci's Hegemony and the Multitude in Post-Communist Bulgaria

Keith Peter Kiely, GATE Institute

Qualitative and quantitative framework for tackling disinformation

Boyan Dafov, GATE Institute

Historical revisionism as TikTok propaganda, Grand Pro-Putin Narratives in the Black Sea Region

Madalina Voinea, Expert Forum

HALL 2

(streaming link: <https://fb.me/e/26K9RzRMH>)

9:00 **Earning the Trust of Disinformation-vulnerable Audiences. 360 Approach.**

How our Early Warning System Helps Newsrooms Stay Ahead of Disinformation Trends

Maksym Eristavi, Disinfo Task Force

Boosting our Partners' Editorial Strategies and Harnessing Expertise across Borders

Ludmila Hamplová, Science+

What we've Learned about the most Disinfo-vulnerable Audiences and how to Reach Them

Mykola Okhotnik, Science+



SOFIA INFORMATION
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<https://sofia-info-integrity.eu/>

The future, the spread of information and democratic values - Are we using the right approach?! - Perspectives of the Western Balkans
Katerina Veljanovska, MIT University – Skopje, Faculty of Security Sciences

Moderator: Todor Galev, Center for the Study of Democracy

How a Successful Project with Science+ Transformed one Newsroom's Approach to Audience Engagement
Cătălin Gomboș, Science+

Moderator: Maksym Eristavi, Disinfo Task Force

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 *Telegram Investigative Techniques*
Sayyara Mammadova, DFRLab

Moderator: Dimitar Vatsov, HSSF

12:00 *Lessons learnt: SIIF Closing Summary and Future Outlook*



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

This event takes place with the financial support of the following initiatives, projects and programs: the initiative "Europe against anti-democratic propaganda" (Project "Rights and Values", financed by European Union and Open Society Institute – Sofia); BROD (Digital Europe program under contract No: 101083730), vera.ai (Horizon Europe, Research & Innovation program, under contract No: 101070093), "Social Vulnerability and Propaganda" (Financed by America for Bulgaria Foundation) and Media Programme South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung..

Организатори:

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