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Means to counter fake news

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1. Introduction

Fake news is a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of deliberate disinformation spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media. It is usually written and published usually by someone who intends to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity, or person, and have a financial or political gain.

Fake news has emerged as a global topic of concern and there is a risk that efforts to counter it could lead to censorship, the suppression of critical thinking and other approaches contrary to human rights law. In this Joint Declaration, we identify general principles that should apply to any efforts to deal with these issues,

2. How can we deal with the particular issue

The UN identify applicable human rights standards, encourage promotion of diversity and plurality in the media and emphasize the particular roles played by digital intermediaries, as well as journalists and media outlets, and notes that they should consider including critical coverage of disinformation and propaganda as part of their news services in line with their watchdog role in society, particularly during elections and regarding debates on matters of public interest.

In this context, it is a time for news media to tack closely to professional ethics, to eschew the publishing of unchecked information, and to take a distance from information which may interest some of the public but which is not in the public interest. We should also bare in mind that all news institutions, and journalists are to avoid spreading uncritically disinformation and misinformation. The elimination of positions providing internal fact checking has led to the function now being assumed by

bloggers and other external actors who call out mistakes made by journalists.

Journalism also needs to detect and uncover cases and forms of disinformation. Journalists ought to engage in societal dialogue about how people decide on credibility and why some share unverified information. As with the news media, for journalism schools and their students, along with media trainers and their learners, this is a major opportunity for strong civic engagement with audiences.

3. **Important facts**

We should know by now that the forces behind disinformation do not necessarily expect to persuade journalists or broader audiences about the truth of false claims, as much as cast doubt on the status of verifiable information produced by professional news producers. This means that many news consumers feel increasingly entitled to choose or create their own ‘facts’ seeking to shield themselves from legitimate critique.

Today, social media content ranges from the personal to the political. There are many instances produced by governments, and/or an industry of public relations companies under contract to political or commercial actors.

4. **Sources**

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