

# COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

## RESILIENT CIVILIANS



### Summary of the workshops organised in the World Cafe format

Wrocław, 8 April 2022 r.

The workshop “Countering Disinformation – Resilient Civilians” was held on the 8th of April 2022 in Wrocław, Poland. It was organised by the Polish Platform for Homeland Security (PPHS) and the European Commission Representative in Wrocław in cooperation with the EU-HYBNET project, the City Hall in Wrocław and the Wrocław Centre for Social Development.

The event gathered around 50 participants who represented public institutions (governmental and local), law enforcement agencies, scientific environment and non-governmental organisations, including independent fact-checking organisations.



+50  
PARTICIPANTS

As part of the event, 3 discussion panels were held in World Cafe format. Each of the three panel groups was led by an expert dealing with disinformation on a daily basis. These experts were:



● **Daniel Rzaša**

editor-in-chief of the portal 300Gospodarka.pl  
and Polish Platform for Homeland Security expert

● **Małgorzata Kilian**

president of the fact-checking Demagog Association

● **Waldemar Bojakowski, PhD**

linguist and communicologist at SWPS University  
of Social Sciences and Humanities in Wrocław

## TOPICS DISCUSSED

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**Participants of the first panel focused on the educational aspect and media literacy education.** They looked for answers to the challenge of presenting the issue of disinformation in an interesting way, as well as general improvement of the effectiveness of media literacy education at schools and for adults. In addition to the systemic implementation of specialised media literacy education, the participants pointed out that for a more effective fight against disinformation, the key is the harmonisation and coordination of activities among public institutions, local governments, public services, universities, civil society organisations and business representatives.

**Discussion of the second group focused on the key role of public administration** entities at various levels in combating fake news and preventing the spread of harmful content, as well as the issue of trust in public administration and its transparency. Coordination of the activities of public institutions and private enterprises as well as non-governmental and scientific organisations in the field of supporting activities in the fight against disinformation was also among the most important topics. Finally, the last of the topics discussed concerned the popularisation of fact-checking and proper training of media literacy competences, especially among young and older Internet users. Here, too, the participants raised the important role of the form of communication popularising the verification of information.

**The third debate again raised issues related to the need of building trust** between NGOs and public administration, and the lack of coordinated actions on disinformation within public administration. Another important topic in the discussion was media literacy education and the preparation of a special offer and the adaptation of media literacy education and cybersecurity content to schools and within already existing subjects.

# MAIN CONCLUSIONS

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**Participants of all the debates discussed various themes** related to fact-checking and disinformation, but all three groups clearly indicated two main conclusions.

**The first is the need for effective media literacy education in schools**, but also for all other age groups (in various forms: special lessons, teacher education, outreach campaigns, etc.).

**The second conclusion is the general lack of coordination** of activities and - which results out of it - lack of trust between, on the one hand, various entities of public administration (e.g. between local governments and the government, but also between individual ministries), and on the other hand, between all actors (stakeholders) involved in the countering disinformation activities, including public administration, NGOs, universities, fact-checking organisations, business and law enforcement agencies.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Suggested recommendations resulting from workshop discussions of the three groups:**

01

Establishing a unit (possibly in the public administration) responsible for coordinating activities in countering disinformation

02

Establishing a broad, general national strategy for the fight against disinformation, its support and support for fact-checking activities

03

Planning effective and up-to-date activities in the field of media literacy education on a wide scale, addressed to the entire society, but with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups, i.e. school students and seniors. Suggested actions might include: creating the functions of regional media coordinators and educators to educate teachers; creating an attractive handbook of good practices; adapting the content of media literacy education and cybersecurity to schools and within already existing subjects

# SUMMARY



The April event "Counteracting Disinformation - Resilient Civilians", for the first time in Poland, gathered in one place practitioners and theoreticians dealing with the subject of disinformation from many different environments, including representatives of law enforcement agencies, public administration, universities, non-governmental organisations and independent fact-checking organisations. The participants, above all, raised the issue of the lack of a clear and broad strategy in Poland in countering disinformation, as well as the lack of coordination of activities in this area. The second most frequently raised issue was media literacy education in the field of disinformation, ways of its implementation and improving the effectiveness of educational activities.

