

Committee: Human Rights Council

Delegate: France



Topic: Impact of disinformation on social cohesion

The spread of false and misleading sources of information poses a significant risk to the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Even though this is not illegal it can still contribute to polarisation and jeopardise the implementation of policies and can undermine the trust in institutions which may destabilise societies worldwide. In today's digital and interconnected world, the spread of misinformation and disinformation poses a significant threat to the foundational elements of our societies. Disinformation undermines human rights, and many elements of good quality democracy and counter-disinformation can have an exceptional impact on human rights.<sup>2</sup> The Republic of France recognises the extreme effects disinformation may have on the interconnectedness and unity within societies, therefore it urges the Human Rights Council to develop responses on multiple levels that includes formal laws and regulations, civil society action and corporate measures et cetera.

The Human Rights Council has repeatedly affirmed that correct information, media and freedom of access to truth are important to dignity and democratic participation. Disinformation campaigns, this includes both foreign and domestic tend to exploit digital platforms to weaken democratic processes, cause further divisions within communities and manipulate public opinion.

The Republic of France recognises that fighting disinformation is essential in protecting and preserving social cohesion, upholding human rights and protecting democratic alliances. France has taken initiative by implementing national measures that include the 2018 Anti-Manipulation of Information law, to prevent foreign interference during elections and enhance transparency in online political advertising.<sup>3</sup> At European level France strongly supports the EU'S Code of Practice on Disinformation, which promotes

---

<sup>1</sup> OECD Mis-and disinformation

<sup>2</sup> Directorate-General For external policies Policy Department "The impact of disinformation on democratic processes and human rights in the world." European Parliament (April, 2021.)

<sup>3</sup> Government of France. *Loi elative a la lutte contre la manipulation de l'information* (2018)

algorithmic transparency, coordinated responses to digital manipulation and platform accountability.<sup>4</sup>

Disinformation also poses a huge global risk; the UNDP warns that false narratives weaken social resilience by damaging interpersonal and intergroup trust-central pillars of stable governance.<sup>5</sup> When communities disagree on common and basic facts, cooperative decision making falls through, public health measures fail and extremist groups tend to gain influence, these conditions threaten the human rights that we as the Human Rights Council are meant to protect.

The Republic of France believes that a human rights-based approach to disinformation must, as top priority contain transparency, responsible digital governance and media literacy. We urge the Council to strengthen multilateral mechanisms to support fact checking networks, monitor digital manipulation, promote civic education and ensure that tech companies adhere to international human rights principles.

Strengthening social cohesion requires restoring trust in institutions, trust in communities and trust in shared perceptions of reality. France remains committed to working collaboratively within the Human Rights Council to protect the integrity of correct information and its ecosystems and uphold each individual's rights and freedoms essential to peaceful, resilient and democratic societies.

---

<sup>4</sup> European Commission. *EU Code of Practice on disinformation*.

<sup>5</sup> OECD Governance Directorate. *Addressing Disinformation: Strengthening Democracy*