**Resolution for ACR AGM 2022**

**Title of Resolution**

European Commission Guidance on Strengthening the Code of Practice on Disinformation

**Name of individual submitting the Resolution**

Grace Attard, ACR General Secretary

**Justifications, reasons and current situations to be addressed**

The COVID-19 crisis has starkly illustrated the threats and challenges disinformation poses to our societies. The "infodemic" – the rapid spread of false, inaccurate or misleading information about the pandemic – has posed substantial risks to personal health, public health systems, effective crisis management, the economy and social cohesion.

The debates on the COVID-19 vaccination have illustrated the sometimes-extreme consequences of disinformation in the area of health. Despite the considerable efforts made to date, there is an urgent need to step up efforts to fight disinformation[[1]](#footnote-1).

The quality of the guidance on strengthening the European Code of Practice on Disinformation is evidence of the European Commission's determination to constantly improve its action against disinformation.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The European Commission must continuously ensure that the fight against disinformation is not used as a pretext for limiting public freedoms, in particular freedom of expression.

Action to combat disinformation must be given high priority, by focusing more on tackling the

emergence of disinformation rather than on moderating its content. This would encourage a more

preventive and proactive approach, which requires more resources, particularly for skills.

In addition to voluntary commitments by online advertisers, the Commission should consider a range of more binding economic, legal or financial instruments.

The need for ongoing and determined discussions with digital platforms, specifically with a view to clarifying and advancing methodologies for processing information is essential. Facebook is particularly relevant here, not least because 78% of the EU population – more than 300 million Europeans – are users of it.

More resources need to be concentrated on small platforms that are less well‑known to the general public and sometimes much less transparent as regards the flow of information. More and continuing efforts are needed to coordinate the fight against disinformation. The topic has been disjointed for too long; only common action can tackle the issue.

The importance of a European media literacy plan, is necessary, however the subject of media content is the responsibility of the Member States. It is an essential precondition for our democracies that everyone, particularly our youngest citizens, are able to distinguish between true and false information.

The subject of fighting disinformation needs to be opened up broadly to all stakeholders and those who could have a role in this fight. This is particularly the case for researchers and all civil society organisations.

Measures to combat disinformation should not be too focused on English-speaking content, particularly for countries bordering Russia.

These actions should also ensure accessibility for and understanding of people with disabilities, especially sensory, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable to false information.

1. Joint communication, *Tackling COVID-19 disinformation – Getting the facts right* ([JOIN(2020) 8 final](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020JC0008)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)