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Why fighting disinformation is increasingly important and how AI4Debunk can contribute?

Uniting European forces against disinformation

In January 2024, an interdisciplinary consortium of eight European countries launched a project to fight disinformation, fake news and foreign interference. Funded by the European Union (EU) through the Horizon Europe Programme, the research project, Al4Debunk, brings together political scientists, sociologists, journalists and computer science experts to achieve an ambitious goal: debunk disinformation and fake news. To achieve this goal, the international consortium will elaborate trustworthy online activity to provide citizens with efficient Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered tools.

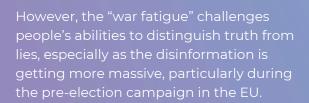
The issue of disinformation, fake news and propaganda has been a dominant theme in the headlines for several years. The COVID-19 crisis became a test case, showing that the effectiveness of how the EU and its democratic societies deal with disinformation and destructive propaganda remains rather low. Since Russia's invasion in Ukraine, in parallel with individual country efforts, the European Commission (EC) and other international organisations have undertaken fact-checking and debunking activities to counter Russia's massive propaganda and disinformation. Summarising the EU experience and response to the threat posed by disinformation, fake news and foreign influence, one can conclude that there has been a significant gap between the response by the EU and the disinformation impact on the minds of the Europeans and the stability of the EU during the COVID-19 crisis. This gap has been narrowed by the EU's response to the war in Ukraine. The emotional reaction of the Europeans to the war in Europe forged an unprecedented unity within the EU.











Al4Debunk

that the Covid-19 virus left on people's devastating effect on people's minds. Infodemic is a term that blends information and epidemic, referring to the rapid spread of information — both accurate and social media. What exactly does infodemic mixture of facts and conspiracy theories, speculations and rumours, amplified and relayed worldwide by modern information technologies, which have affected the EU and global economies, politics and security with the root realities. It is a phenomenon which we have observed with a growing frequency in recent years. Disinformation lead to general anxiety and polarisation of society, and create social unrest and public violence (David Rothkopf, The Washington Post, 11 May 2023).

of information and global battle of powerful opponents. The geo-political challenging as foreign actors like Russia and China are highly experienced in organising toxic disinformation campaigns, using various manipulative techniques and destructive narratives for the "anti-EU" propaganda in their struggle for influence.

Al4Debunk: a multidisciplinary approach

How can we efficiently use AI in factknowledge of AI is limited. Naturally, I am aware that AI is a series of technologies. It is all about machine learning and algorithms. opportunity for people to check the quality of information. However, I have many disinformation user-friendly? How can we run ahead of technological progress and predict future challenges? Perhaps we should invent pre-bunking disinformation rather than limit ourselves to its debunking? I hope that our international Alteam will be able to answer these and many one issue. I am convinced that AI is not going to replace human critical thinking. universities to improve the learning process.

I am writing this article after the first two am very proud that the University of Latvia is coordinating the project implementation responsibility to make AI4Debunk a success story. The people of Latvia know very well what propaganda and disinformation mean generation, who experienced huge propaganda inflow during the Soviet times, fake news.











have not been trained to distrust public narratives. Therefore, we will be happy to knowledge of Russia's propaganda machine with our colleagues to enrich the

Finally, I would like to share my thoughts that stemmed from AI4Debunk's "warmup" meeting in the Latvian Parliament on March 12, 2024.

Firstly, even though it is vital to provide citizens with comprehensive facts and times. More than ever, the EU must confront cynics and sceptics. European leaders must find a proper combination of facts to override false news and emotional engagement to provide reasons for hope and confidence. Secondly, rooting out disinformation is a crucial goal for the EU. narratives, the EU does not seem infodemic spread by Russia, China and other non-democratic players. I believe that Al4Debunk could improve the EU citizens' resistance to disinformation. Thirdly, the current regulation on AI should be complemented by other means like media literacy, critical thinking, fact-checking, etc.

ongoing full-scale invasion of Ukraine, evidence-based information in combination with debunking of disinformation should European project.



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Since September 2011, she served at the European Commission as head of the EC Representation in Rīga. In 2008-2011 she was Director of Social and Information Society Statistics in European Commission, and Director of Economic and Regional Statistics in 2005-2008. From 2001 to 2005, she was Chair of the Latvian Public Utilities Commission in charge of regulation of electricity, gas and telecommunication markets as well as railway and postal services. In 1999-2001, she was Senior Advisor to Executive Director in the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC. From 1991 to 1999, she was Director of Economic Analyses and Fiscal Policy Department in the Latvian Ministry of Finance, and Advisor to Minister of Finance.

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