

National Counter Disinformation Strategy

Working Group

24 February 2023

Attendees: Martina Chapman (Independent Chair)
Seamus Hempenstall (D/TCAGSM)
Paul Kilkenny (D/TCAGSM)
Fiona Shevlin (D/TCAGSM)
Eugene Farrelly (D/Taoiseach)
Patrick Forsyth (D/Justice)
Mary Clare O’Sullivan (An Coimisiún Toghcháin – Electoral Commission)
David Bruck (D/FA)
Elizabeth Harvey (D/ETE)
Anthony Kilcoyne (D/Education)
Nuala Walsh (D/CEDIY)
Eileen Culloty (EDMO Ireland)
Una Fitzpatrick (Technology Ireland)
Doireann Ansbro (ICCL)
Susan McKay (Press Ombudswoman)
Niamh Hodnett (Coimisiún na Meán – Media Commission)
Cathal McCauley (Library Association of Ireland)
Paul Gordon (National Youth Council of Ireland)

Welcome and introductions (Chair & Secretariat)

Seamus Hempenstall opened the meeting. The group agreed the agenda. Seamus proposed Martina Chapman to be independent chair. Niamh Hodnett seconded. The Group approved the nomination.

Members of the Group, including the Chair, introduced themselves.

Timeline/Policy Context – (Chair and Secretariat)

This is the first meeting of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy Working Group. The group is tasked with developing a National Counter Disinformation Strategy in line with the Future of Media Commission recommendation. The Secretariat outlined the proposed drafting process, the policy context and intended timeline for completion of the Strategy. The Chair and Secretariat outlined that it was envisaged that the draft Strategy would have recommendations or actions for delivery over agreed timelines with relevant bodies or organisations responsible for their delivery.

It was agreed that it was open to WG members to nominate other experts to participate in a range of formats, either in the Group or a sub-group or in some other way. The Chair proposed that presentations from expert speakers should be a standing item for future meetings and the Group endorsed this proposal.

Presentation on disinformation – (European Digital Media Observatory EDMO)

Eileen Culloty gave a presentation on disinformation and countermeasures. The Group discussed different aspects of the presentation, including defining disinformation, the level at which countermeasures might be applied and whether such measures would be short-term or long-term. The difference between disinformation and misinformation was noted and there was consensus that the draft strategy should not focus exclusively on disinformation but look to cover misinformation as well.

The role of theJournal.ie as Ireland's only officially registered fact-checker was noted, along with other services such as Storyful and Newswhip.

The possible role of media literacy in fighting disinformation was discussed as well as the role of 'pre-bunking'. Ireland as a different information environment to the rest of Europe was mentioned in terms of discussing the value of targeted or general responses to disinformation.

The role of the DSA in countering disinformation, in particular the co-regulatory framework of Codes of Conduct, was discussed along with the strengthened EU Code of Practice and the work of EDMO on researcher access to data.

Proposed Terms of Reference (For discussion and agreement)

Suggested amendments were tabled. Chair invited members to submit any other suggested amendments as soon as possible with a view to approving a finalised set of ToRs at the next meeting.

Potential subgroups (For discussion and agreement)

The titles and scope of the sub-groups were discussed in detail. Some amendments were proposed. In response to the Chair, members offered to participate in different sub-groups. Chair invited members to submit any other suggested amendments as soon as possible with a view to approving a finalised set of sub-groups at the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Working Group was proposed for Thursday 23 March.

NCDS Secretariat

28/02/2023