

Disinformation and AI: Harnessing the Power of Narratives to Build European Resilience

Thursday 14th November 2024, 8.00 - 10.00 AM

Salon 1 - European Parliament, Brussels

– Expert Roundtable –

- List of Participants -

Speakers

- Dubravka Šuica*** European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography
- Brando Benifei*** Member of the European Parliament. Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
- Klara Dobrev*** Ms. Klára Dobrev is a member of the European Parliament for the group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. Ms Dobrev is an economist and lawyer with extensive experience in public administration, business, academia, and voluntary work. A specialist in EU integration, cohesion policy, and financial law, she was first elected to the European Parliament in 2019 as the Lead Candidate of the Democratic Coalition party. From 2019 to 2022, she served as Vice President of the European Parliament, representing the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. Between 2022 and 2024, she led the Democratic Coalition’s shadow government as Shadow Prime Minister. Re-elected in 2024 as the party’s Lead Candidate, Ms. Dobrev speaks five languages and is a mother of five.
- Alexandra Geese*** Member of the European Parliament. Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- Paolo Cesarini*** Mr. Paolo Cesarini is Chair of the Executive Board of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) and Programme Director for the European Media and Information Fund (EMIF) at the European University Institute in Florence (Italy). He also collaborates as Senior Advisor at Teneo in Brussels (Belgium), a global CEO advisory firm providing counsel in management, strategy and corporate communications. Expert in media policies, Digital Single Market and EU competition law, Mr Cesarini previously held management roles at the European Commission, namely in DG Competition, covering both the antitrust and State aid policy areas, and in DG CNECT, where he led various initiatives addressing the technological transition of the European media industry, the interdependency of societal issues and digital media, online disinformation and the innovation gap between research, technology and culture. Before joining the European Commission, Mr Cesarini worked as member of the Legal Service at the Inter-national Labour Organisation in Geneva. He has also been teaching EU competition law at Siena and Montpellier Universities and is a frequent public speaker and author of various publications on EU competition and media laws. Paolo holds a Master in International Law from Siena University and a LLM from the College of Europe, Bruges.
- Andrzej Nowak*** Prof. Andrzej Nowak is a Professor of psychology at the University of Warsaw, Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities and Florida Atlantic University. His primary focus is on the dynamical approach to social psychology, computer simulations of psychological and social processes, psychology and new technology, human-machine interaction, but he also teaches in the area of cognitive psychology and neural networks. Prof. Nowak is leading the scientific research for the NODES project.
- Juliette Montesse*** Mrs. Juliette Montesse has been a journalist with global news agency AFP (Agence France-Presse) since 2010. She worked as a reporter in the parisian suburbs and courthouses before moving to our Europe digital investigation department in 2020.

Jacob Tamm

Mr. Jacob Tamm is currently Deputy Head of the Information Integrity and Countering FIMI Unit at the European External Action Service (EEAS). In this role, he leads efforts to protect the EU from disinformation campaigns and foreign interference in its democratic processes.

***Erika Staël von
Holstein***

A leading expert in depolarisation and the role of narratives, Mrs. Erika Staël von Holstein is the Co-Founder and Chief Executive of Re-Imagine Europa (RIE). With 20 years of experience at the intersection of science, society, and policy, her work centres on societal transformation and the powerful role of narratives in shaping perspectives. Erika advises numerous national and European organisations and is a member of the Spanish government's International Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council. She also contributes to several expert committees across Europe, including the EU Science Diplomacy Working Groups. Erika has published extensively on Science in Society, Responsible Research and Innovation, Evidence-based Policy Making, and Citizen Engagement, and frequently speaks and moderates at conferences, events, and podcasts across Europe.

Krisztina Stump

Mrs. Krisztina Stump has led the Media Convergence and Social Media Unit at the European Commission since 2020, overseeing policy work on combating online disinformation. She chairs the task force for the Code of Practice, guiding its efforts on elections, including the recent 2024 European Parliamentary elections. Her unit also manages media literacy and research initiatives that support the fight against disinformation. Ms. Stump has held various roles in telecommunications, audiovisual media regulation, media pluralism, copyright, and social media policy within the Commission. She holds master's degrees in law with a focus on media law from Columbia Law School and Humboldt University, as well as a master's in communication and media studies from ELTE University.

Attendees

- Christian Beck* In representation of Daniel Freund MEP. Mr. Christian Beck has over a decade of experience working with MEPs on lobby transparency and EU integration, notably in the AFCO and LIBE Committees. Since July 2019, he has led the office of MEP Daniel Freund, focusing on the Constitutional Affairs Committee with a specialization in lobby transparency, EU institutional integrity, the future of the EU, and rule of law. During the 2014-2019 legislative term, he headed the office of MEP Sven Giegold, overseeing matters for the Constitutional Affairs Committee (AFCO). Previously, he worked in the office of Green Bundestag Member Lisa Paus. A member of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen since 1998, Mr. Beck has been co-opted to the Federal Working Group on European Policy (BAG Europa) and delegated to the European Green Party (EGP). He is also a member of the union ver.di, the conservation organization BUND, and the Flemish Green Party, Groen.
- Naja Bentzen* Ms. Naja Bentzen is a Policy Analyst at the European Parliamentary Research Service, specializing in parliamentary diplomacy, international relations, and foreign information manipulation and interference. She has extensive experience in media analysis and journalism and has studied or worked in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and the United States. Previously, Ms. Bentzen served at the European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington, D.C., and was a fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government.
- Caterina Berardi* Mrs. Caterina Berardi is the Strategy and Policy Officer in the Chief Executive Cabinet at Re-Imagine Europa (RIE). She coordinates key initiatives to strengthen democracy in a digital society, notably RIE's Future4Citizens program and the EU Horizon research project ORBIS, which focus on fostering trust and transparency in deliberative democracy. Mrs Berardi actively collaborates with EU policymakers and experts to advocate for policies that enhance democratic trust and governance. She holds a Master's degree in International Relations and has significant experience across the NGO and private sectors, bringing a strong background in political affairs, policy analysis, and strategic communications to RIE's mission of reimagining Europe's democratic future.
- Joe Elborn* Mr. Joe Elborn works at the intersection of youth, technology and democracy as the Executive Director for the Evens Foundation.
- Ingrid Godkin* Ms. Ingrid Godkin is responsible for Policy and Administrative Coordination in the Cabinet of European Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica. Her role includes speechwriting, coordinating briefs, and managing the 'Democracy: Deliberative and Participative Democracy' portfolio.
- François Heinderyckx* Prof. François Heinderyckx is a full professor at ULB, specialised in media sociology, journalism and political communication, and serves as Advisor to the Rector for the CIVIS European alliance of universities. He previously held the position of Dean of the Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication (2015-2019) and has served as Director of the Department of Information and Communication Sciences. Prof. Heinderyckx is a former president of both the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) and the International Communication Association (ICA). His research focuses on journalism, media audiences, and political communication.

François Lallemand

Mr. François Lallemand has extensive experience in European media and television, having worked in the field for three decades. He was involved in the launch of the European news channel Euronews in 1993, where he progressed from the French newsroom to features coordinator and news presenter. He joined AFP in 2000 as a video journalist, covering major global events including the 2002 and 2007 French elections, the 2006 Lebanon war, and the 2008 Georgia war. In 2012, he hosted AFPTV's first live broadcast from the Cannes Film Festival. Mr. Lallemand served as AFPTV Deputy Editor from 2009 to 2013, later leading AFPTV's Europe and Africa output from London. He is now based in Paris, working with AFP's European Media Projects team.

Amerigo Lombardi

Mr. Amerigo Lombardi is the head of ESG and impact Investing at PlusValue. He is a policy advisor and evaluator in the field of education, innovation, social inclusion and labour market policies, at the Italian and international level. Mr. Lombardi brings extensive experience from roles in international institutions, including the European Commission and the International Labour Organisation, as well as private think tanks. As a policy advisor and evaluator, he specialises in education, innovation, social inclusion, and labour market policies at both national and international levels. In recent years, Mr. Lombardi has led several projects to advance innovation in education, including Thematic Country Reviews on apprenticeships for CEDEFOP and a cost-benefit analysis of apprenticeships in Italy for the Bertelsmann Foundation and JPMorgan Chase Foundation. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations from Siena University and a Master's degree in European Union Studies from Université Libre de Bruxelles.

David Mair

Mr. David Mair has been with the European Commission since 1995 and joined its Joint Research Centre ([JRC](#)) in 2011. He is currently Head of Unit overseeing the JRC's work on democracy, science for policy, and knowledge-sharing initiatives under the 'Science for Democracy and [Evidence-Informed Policymaking](#)' program. From 2011 to 2016, he led the JRC work programme on science advice, foresight, and policy, and served as Acting Director in 2015. Prior to this, he worked in DG Health and Consumers, heading units on consumer policy, regulatory enforcement, and market analysis. Mr. Mair also has experience with DG Taxation, the UK Treasury, UBS, and the British Army. He holds a degree in History from Cambridge University.

Evgenii Mateichik

Mr. Evgenii Mateichik is a Project Manager with over 10 years of experience in government relations, public policy, and stakeholder engagement. He contributes to the NODES project at PlusValue, an Italian strategic consulting firm. Mr. Mateichik has a diverse background in diplomacy, culture, and education at both national and international levels, including experience with the UN system. He has also volunteered for non-profit organizations and participated in university research projects. Known for his communication skills, tact, and attention to detail, he holds a Bachelor's degree in European Studies and a Master's degree in Diplomacy from Saint Petersburg State University, with additional studies as an exchange student at the University of Bologna.

Bilyana Mircheva

Mrs Bilyana Mircheva is a Policy Advisor at the European Parliament, assisting MEP Andrey Kovatchev primarily in the work of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and Foreign Affairs (AFET) Committees, with a focus on Armenia and the Southern Neighbourhood. Her key achievements include drafting and securing the adoption of the European Parliament's 2022 report on Armenia, contributing to the IMCO opinion on the European Health Data Space Regulation, and ongoing work on the DROI opinion concerning the prohibition of products made with forced labor on the Union market.

Maxime Painot

In representation of Pascale Joannin (Robert Schuman Foundation). Maxime works at

the Brussels Office of the Robert Schuman Foundation and was Trainee at EUROPEUM - Institute for European Policy (March-July 2024).

Claire Pershan

Mrs. Claire Pershan is the Mozilla Foundation's EU Advocacy Lead. She was previously Policy Coordinator at the EU DisinfoLab, an NGO specialised in monitoring mis/disinformation and influence operations, and prior to that she was Project Manager at Renaissance Numerique, a Paris-based think tank where she worked on content moderation and cyberviolence. She has contributed to the European Commission Joint Research Center's work on Hybrid Threats in the Information Domain, also as a content expert for Internews on the influence of new technologies on civic space.

Jo Pierson

Prof. Jo Pierson, Ph.D, is Full Professor of Responsible Digitalisation at Hasselt University (Hasselt, Belgium) and Professor of Media and Communication Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences; Solvay Business School at VUB (Brussels, Belgium). He is head of the School of Social Sciences and staff member of the research group R4D (Research for Digitalisation, Diversity & Democracy) at UHasselt. He is also affiliate of the research centre imec-SMIT at VUB. His main research expertise is in data privacy, digital platforms, public values in data-driven technologies, and AI.

Sophie Pornschlegel

Mrs. Sophie Pornschlegel is Deputy Director at Europe Jacques Delors. Her research areas cover EU green policies as well as EU democracy, governance and rule of law. She is a policy fellow with Das Progressive Zentrum in Berlin and teaches at Sciences Po Paris. Her book "At the end of the regular order: Why we need to rethink power" (Am Ende der gewohnten Ordnung: Warum wir Macht neu denken müssen) was published in 2023 in German.

Beatrice Sanz Sáiz

Ms. Beatriz Sanz Sáiz is the EY Global Consulting Data and AI Leader, overseeing a team of over 9,000 professionals and driving the integration of analytics and artificial intelligence into the firm's global strategy. With a career spanning more than a decade at EY, she has held key roles across EMEA and Asia-Pacific and has extensive experience in financial services, where she established analytics and innovation as core competencies.

Ms. Sanz Sáiz holds a Master's degree in Mathematics and Statistics from Complutense University of Madrid and is a professor at IE Business School, teaching in the International Masters of Big Data & Analytics program. A recognized thought leader, she is a regular speaker at international industry conferences and has been featured in *Forbes* and the *Financial Times*.

Charles Terroille

Mr Charles Terroille is Science Editor and Analyst at Science Feedback, where he verifies the credibility of influential scientific claims in the media. With a background in Political Science (Sciences Po Lille) and Investigative Journalism (ESJ Lille), Charles specialises in climate change disinformation and the digital spread of misinformation. An alumnus of the Oxford Climate Journalism Network, he also has experience as a TV investigative journalist and anti-corruption consultant.

Jan Zajac

Dr. Jan M. Zajac is an entrepreneur, researcher, and social psychologist. He is the Founder and CEO of Sotrender, a research company specializing in social media and analytics software. Dr. Zajac is also an Assistant at the Chair of Social Psychology at the University of Warsaw. A graduate of the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) and the University of Warsaw, he also studied at Università Bocconi in Milan and Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium. A frequent speaker and trainer at industry events on startups, online marketing, and research, Dr. Zajac is fluent in six languages and has travelled to 44 countries, many of them by bicycle.

Laura Zurdo-Maroto

Ms. Laura Zurdo Maroto is a member of the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT I4), the Commission unit responsible for the Code of Practice on Disinformation. Previously, Ms. Zurdo Maroto worked in Trust & Safety advisory. She holds a Master's in Digital Policy & New Technologies from Sciences Po Paris and Bachelor Degrees in Law and International Relations from Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Madrid).

Charlotte Westphal

Mrs Charlotte Westphal is a trainee at the Spokesperson Unit of the European Parliament.