

# INFORM and DG REGIO: Fighting **DISINFORMATION** together

**I. Context**

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# I. Context

“More than eight in ten respondents (**85%**) think that the existence of fake news is a problem in their country, at least to some extent. A similar proportion (83%) say that it is a problem for democracy in general.”

“Respondents are most likely to think that journalists should act to stop the spread of fake news (45%), followed by **national authorities (39%), EU institutions (21%)** and other.”

NEWS

## EU Commission warns of 'fake news,' meddling in 2019 European elections

The EU parliamentary elections are vulnerable to "fake news" and cyberattacks, the commission said. The EU has called on social media companies and member states to better fight online voter manipulation efforts.



US military knocked the Russian troll factory offline during the mid-term elections.



CODASTORY.COM

### America Knocks Russian Trolls Offline in Cyber Strike - Coda Story

## **II. What DG REGIO is doing against disinfo?**

- A. Supporting the Spokesperson's Service
- B. Website: most common myths in Cohesion Policy
- C. Upcoming: myth-busting social media campaign

## A. Supporting the Spokesperson's Service:

- The EC Network against Disinformation:
  - DGs and EEAS empowered to respond to disinformation in field of expertise.
- Issuing rebuttals:
  - respond in a clear, up-to-date and factual manner;
  - fast (within 1 h);
  - in many languages, especially the language of the lie.



European  
Commission

Brussels to BLAME? Italy's Salvini lashes out at the EU after Genoa bridge collapse

Gênes : Matteo Salvini accuse l'Europe après l'effondrement du viaduc

Italian Deputy Prime Minister Salvini lashes out on EU



Günther H. Oettinger   
@GOettingerEU

Follow

It is very human to look for somebody to blame, when terrible accident happens as [#Genova](#). Still, good to look at facts: In past 7y, [@EU\\_Regional](#) paid €2.5 billion for roads&trains in Italy + €12 billion from [#EUinvest](#) + EU gave green light to national funding for €8.5 bn

4:23 AM - 16 Aug 2018

Salvini  
Bridge

Cro  
eu

Italiens Innenminister Salvini gibt EU Mitschuld an  
Brückeneinsturz in Genua

## B. Website: most common myths in Cohesion Policy



[ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/what/myth-busting/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/myth-busting/)

# Myths and Facts about EU Cohesion policy

### Cohesion policy does not contribute to defending the EU's fundamental values ^

EU values are at the core of projects financed by EU Cohesion policy. Principles such as gender equality or non-discrimination are even more prominent in the new legislative package proposed for the post-2020 period. For example, the respect of these principles is compulsory when it comes to project selection.

EU-funded projects themselves are a means of spreading EU values on the ground all over Europe – whether these values are specifically mentioned in the projects or not.

Moreover, by building a more prosperous Europe Cohesion policy contributes to strengthening freedom and democracy in our societies.

### Cohesion policy is all about fraud v



## C. Myth-busting social media campaign



Fraud and theft from EU funds are widespread.

**FAKE**



Barely 1.8% of funding was affected by irregularities between 2013 and 2017. Only a tiny fraction of those irregularities was fraudulent, the rest being mistakes.

**IN FACT**



EU funding is dependent on a country's support for the immigration policies of Brussels.

**FAKE**



EU funding is independent of a country's support for migration policies. Countries that are more affected by migration receive more funding to support them in managing it.

**IN FACT**

- Plus, tips on answering to online disinformation
- Launch date social-media campaign: 13 May

## III. How can you help? The **INFORM – REGIO** workflow in fighting online disinfo

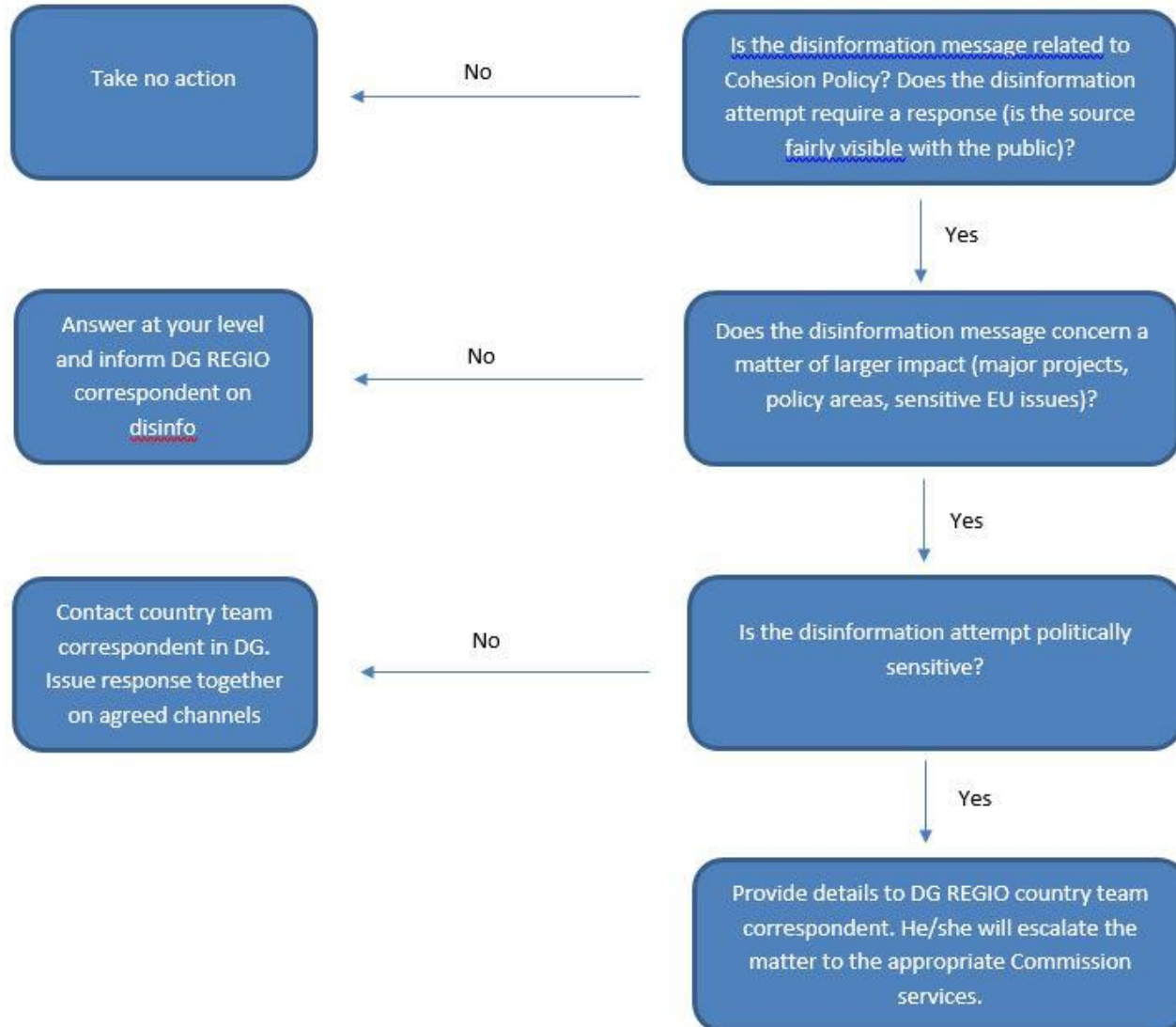
A **collaboration scheme** between the INFORM network and DG REGIO in reacting to online disinformation (myths, fake news) on cohesion policy.

- ensure a **rapid reaction** (maximum 1 hour);
- be **proportional** (the reactions must match the intensity and gravity of the disinformation);
- delegate to the **appropriate level of response**.

The aim is to react fast to online news articles and reports, social media posts and comments from public figures.



European  
Commission





European Commission



European Commission

February 28 at 6:02 PM · 🌐



The Hungarian government campaign distorts the truth and seeks to paint a dark picture of a secret plot to drive more migration to Europe. The truth is that there is no conspiracy.

Here is our answer to the campaign "You too have the right to know what Brussels is planning".

More information → <https://europa.eu/IHc99wY>

CLAIM

FALSE

"They want to reduce funding for countries that oppose immigration"

REALITY

EU funding is in no way linked to support for or opposition to migration



Natasha Bertaud  @NatashaBertaud · Feb 25



Latest Hungarian ad claims 1) next #EU budget provides "more money for immigration".

2) #Hungary would have to pay if it rejected migrants.

3) The payment of EU financial support is dependent on whether the a country supports "the immigration policies of Brussels"



Natasha Bertaud 

@NatashaBertaud

Following



3) #EU financial support (they mean cohesion funds) not "dependent on support for migration". Simply: countries that are more affected by migration receive more funding to support them in managing it.

3:12 AM - 25 Feb 2019

## IV. The Road to Palermo

- Call for myths encountered often by you:  
deadline 4 April
- Comments on the workflow: deadline 4 April
- Launch date social-media campaign: 13 May

In times of universal deceit, telling the truth will be a revolutionary act.

*George Orwell*

Don't believe everything you read on the Internet.

*Thomas Jefferson*