Fight against manipulation of information on online platforms

Regaining trust in the media

November 2021
Legal framework

- **Law on the fight against the manipulation of information** (n°2018-1202, 12/22/2018, articles 11 and 12)

- **Targeted stakeholders**: online platforms\(^1\) with a monthly online traffic of more than **5m unique visitors**

- **Obligations of means**: easily accessible and visible **content reporting system** and additional measures

- **Obligations of transparency and cooperation**:
  - publish information about the measures and the allocated resources
  - send annual declaration to the CSA
  - appoint a single point of contact

- **Role of the CSA**:
  - Issue **recommendation** to online platforms (recommendation of 05/15/2019)
  - ‘Name and shame’ mechanism: public **annual report** on the implementation and effectiveness of the measures (2nd report – for year 2020 – released by the CSA on 09/21/2021)
  - **No sanction**

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\(^1\) As defined by French law: online communication service based on: 1° Ranking or referencing, by means of algorithms, of contents, goods or services offered or put online by third parties; 2° Or the bringing together of several parties for the sale of a good, the provision of a service or the exchange or sharing of content, goods or services.
Methodology

End of 2019:
• Setting up a project team within the CSA
• Creation of an experts committee on online disinformation

First semester 2021:
• Creation of a Directorate for online platforms within the CSA

Since the beginning, the CSA has kept a continuous dialog with the stakeholders and been transparent toward the public.
The report on year 2020

14 online platforms:
- VSPs: Dailymotion, YouTube
- Social networks: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter
- Search engines: Google Search, Bing and Microsoft Advertising, Yahoo Search
- Forums: Jeuxvideo.com, Doctissimo

- January 2021: questionnaire to online platforms providers
- 31 March 2021: deadline for submitting the declaration to the CSA
- 21 September 2021: publication by the CSA of the providers' declarations and of the annual report
6 classes of measures recommended

- Reporting mechanism
- Transparency of algorithms
- Promotion of press and audiovisual contents
- Fight against massive dissemination of disinformation content
- Monetization of fake news and information to users about sponsored contents in relation with a debate of general interest
- Media and information literacy and collaboration with researchers
6 classes of measures recommended

All the 16 recommendations aim at improving transparency for the citizens’ good.

Some have a direct link with the trust of citizens. For instance:

• Improve the visibility and usability of reporting mechanisms offered by search engines

• Provide users with features that allow them to understand, if possible in a personalized and contextual way, the effects of algorithmic recommendation and moderation systems

• Increase user awareness of coordinated influence operations and the risks involved, especially during election periods
The need for increased transparency on several levels on the part of platforms

3 levels of transparency

- **To users:** the information must be clear, concise and understandable, and easily accessible (delivered in a contextual, personalized and/or proactive manner where appropriate)

- **To citizens and the civil society:** provision of all publishable information allowing the analysis of the responsibility and impact of platforms in the ecosystem of information

- **To the regulator:** transmission of all the elements (including confidential ones) allowing the CSA the best possible understanding of the measures

Recommendations

- On the service, proactively provide users, if possible in a personalized and contextual manner, with clear and accessible explanations of the measures implemented in response to the risks associated with the manipulation of information

- Be more transparent with the public by providing **more detail and context**, including in statements, and provide the CSA with all information, even if confidential, that will allow for a better understanding of the measures taken and their impact
Communication of the NRAs as a mean to regain trust

NRAs need to communicate to the public in order improve trust of the public in the media and to be accountable.

2 ways to communicate:

• Communication based on the results obtained

• Communication aimed at having an educational outreach (what does the CSA do?)
Thank you!

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