



DE-CONSPIRATOR LAUNCH PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 24/01/2024

The world's political scene is changing quickly, and with it, the kinds of threats and challenges. One such challenge is the intentional spread of false information and manipulation by foreign actors, known as Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI). FIMI represent the ever-evolving strategic and coordinated efforts by foreign actors to twist the truth, sow fear, confusion, and division, ultimately aiming to achieve their own political and economic goals by undermining the credibility of democratic institutions.

Among these foreign actors, two key perpetrators are mentioned most often: **Russia** and **China**. Both countries use FIMI as a modern warfare tool to engage in the intentional manipulation of public conversations to promote their agenda, encouraging **division** and **polarisation** within European societies and beyond.

With 2024 marking a pivotal year for democratic processes – where nearly two billion people worldwide will participate in various elections, including the European Parliament elections in June – **FIMI poses a major threat to liberal democracies that rely on the free and open flow of information.**

Against this backdrop, January 2024 marks the official kick-off of a groundbreaking research project called **DE-CONSPIRATOR**, with the purpose of examining the sophisticated information suppression tactics employed by foreign actors, notably Russia and China, within the European Union (EU) and its partner countries (PCs).

IN MORE DETAIL

DE-CONSPIRATOR is a Research and Innovation Action project funded by the new Horizon Europe Programme with a total duration of thirty-six (36) months and a total budget of approximately three million euros.

Specifically, DE-CONSPIRATOR's **key objectives** include:

- Analysing the tactics of those who initiate FIMI.
- Mapping out how FIMI spreads within the EU and Partner Countries (PC) through local networks.
- Developing a comprehensive, multilingual database of FIMI incidents.
- Investigating the factors that contribute to the success of FIMI campaigns.
- Assessing the effectiveness of existing legal and regulatory frameworks in the EU and nationally against FIMI.



Through the research outcomes, DE-CONSPIRATOR is expected to improve the understanding of how to **safeguard fundamental rights against the misuse of information, shed light on how authoritarian regimes use information suppression, and evaluate the societal impacts of such actions**. Additionally, the project intends to develop policy guidelines, tools, and strategies to identify and counteract information suppression attempts in the EU and beyond.

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

The project brings together a diverse group of leading research institutions and organisations, each contributing unique expertise and resources towards developing a better understanding of information suppression by state authorities. Specifically, the project's consortium comprises **thirteen (13)** partners from **ten (10)** different EU Member States and EU Neighbourhood countries, led by the **Ozyegin University** from Türkiye.

"The Economist calls 2024 as the biggest election year in history, with the highest-ever number of elections around the world and in Europe squeezed into a single year. While this makes 2024 a promising year for the future of democracy, it also creates a conducive ground for Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), which visibly increases around election periods. In order to create a sustainable and multi-layered defence against FIMI - both in the EU and in partner countries - our project - DE-CONSPIRATOR - brings leading data scientists, field experts and information specialists across Europe to set new detection and attribution mechanisms against foreign information suppression efforts and to measure the trans-European reach and effectiveness of such actions."

Akin Unver, Project Coordinator

PRESS CONTACT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

For more information, press materials, or interview requests, please contact:

Nikolaos Sotiriou

Dissemination & Communication Manager, White Research
nsotiriou@white-research.eu



**Funded by
the European Union**

Detecting and Countering Information Suppression from A Transnational Perspective, or DE-CONSPIRATOR, project is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement number 101132671. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.