



Future of the European Union Combating Euroscepticism through the participation of citizens

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Some critical remarks on the notion of “euroscepticism”

Ancient Scepticism

“The Greek word “*skepsis*” means **investigation**. By calling themselves skeptics, the ancient skeptics thus describe themselves as investigators.

They also call themselves ‘those who suspend’, thereby signaling that their investigations lead them to suspension of judgment. [...]

At its core, ancient skepticism is a way of life devoted to **inquiry**.”



To put reality into question



Some critical remarks on the notion of “euroscepticism”

“Euroscepticism” (“Europessimism” or “Europhobia”) ?

- ✓ A “catch-all” term. A sort of generalisation of the anti-european positions.
- ✓ “scepticism” vs “opposition” (how to de-politicize the public opinion).
- ✓ heterogeneous and multidimensional phenomenon (it is better to define e. as a plurality of a diversified forms - different nuances of critiques, oppositions, rejections of the EU) or
- ✓ “the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (Paul Taggart)



A brief history

- The term originates in 1985, and was used to indicate the Great Britain opposition to the European project.
- Margaret Thatcher speech at the College of Europe in 1988. The claim for the UK “rebate”.



“I want my money back!”

- ✓ 1957: European Economic Community. Opposition by the communist parties and by nationalists.
- ✓ 1954: The first European crisis (the failure of the European Defense Community).
- ✓ 1965: The crisis of the “empty chair” and general de Gaulle French opposition to the “eurocrats”.
- ✓ Seventies: eurosclerosis.
- ✓ 2004: the failure of the Constitutional Treaty



The critique of the European governance

Putting into question the irreversibility principle of the European integration process.

The European integration process was characterized by

- ✓ a functionalist and progressive integration approach (“spill over” effect).
- ✓ a supranational dimension combined with a strong intergovernmentalism.
- ✓ a transfer of sovereignty towards European institutions
- ✓ a social-market economy model alternative to the social-democratic project as well as to liberalism and pure free market economy.



The critique of the European governance

A linear path towards a growing europeanisation?

ECSC
1951
Coal and
Steel
Community

EEC
1957
The idea to
create a
COMMON
MARKET

SEA
1986
Relaunching
the
integration
project
And the
completion
of the
SINGLE
MARKET

Treaty of
Maastricht
1992
Three pillars
architecture.
EC – CFSP -
JHA.
The bases
for the
MONETARY
UNION

Treaty of
Amsterdam
1997
Stability and
Growth Pact

Treaty of
Nice
2001
Charter of
Fundamental
Rights

Treaty of
Lisbon
2009
New
institutional
architecture
and
launching of
a new
economic
governance

From an economic → to a POLITICAL community?



Euroscepticism: a categorisation

Democratic
euroscepticism
(critique of the
democratic deficit)

Utilitarian
euroscepticism
(benefits/costs for
the country, not
“Europe” as a
whole)

“No global”
euroscepticism
(critique to the
neoliberal Europe
and to the
austerity
measures)

Sovranism
(the identitarian
or/and national
claim towards the
popular
sovereignty)



Post-democracy and crisis of governance

- ✓ “The end of the “permissive consensus” (Majone), and the beginning of postdemocracy (Crouch).
- ✓ European elections and decreasing of participation from 1979 to 2014.
- ✓ The problem of the legitimization of the EU and the end of the “postwar grand narrative”: EU = peace → EU = growth



Post-democracy and economic crisis

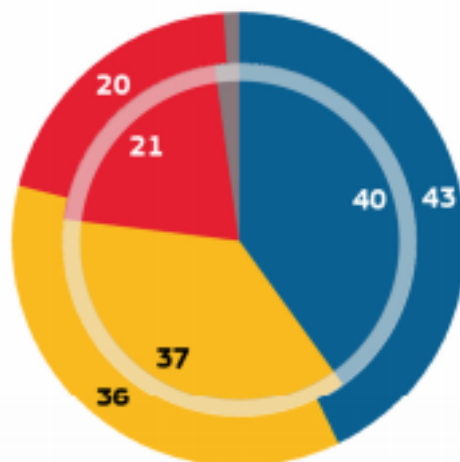
"The severity of the crisis is due to a fundamental contradiction: what would be needed to do urgently is extremely unpopular and therefore virtually impossible in a democratic context. What you should do, and on which everyone agrees in principle (that is, a **large-scale debt mutualisation and long term**, which would lead to massive redistributive measures both between member states and between social classes), it cannot be proposed to member states' voters who have so far been less affected by the crisis than those of the periphery".

(Claus Offe)



Post-democracy and economic crisis

D78 In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?
(%)



EB90 Aut.2018 ■ Outer pie

EB89 Sp.2018 ■ Inner pie

- Total 'Positive'
- Neutral
- Total 'Negative'
- Don't know

EU		EU	
EB90	EB90-EB89	EB89	EB89-EB88
43	+ 3	40	=
36	- 1	37	=
20	- 1	21	=
1	- 1	2	=

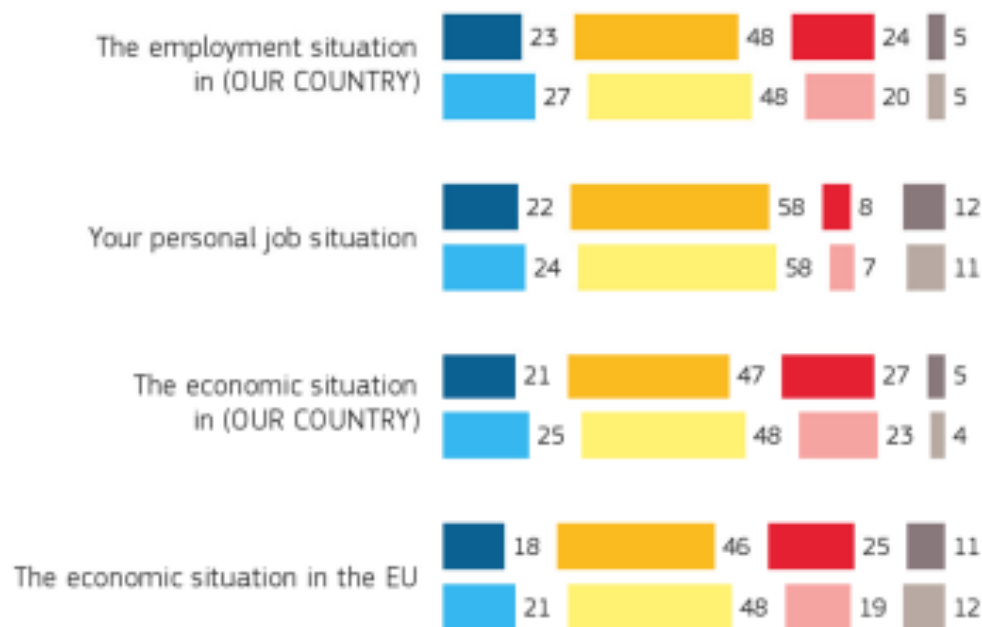
Evolution Autumn 2018 (EB90) / Autumn 2017 (EB88)



Post-democracy and economic crisis

QA2a What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to...?

(% - EU)



EB90 Aut.2018

EB89 Sp.2018



Better

Same

Worse

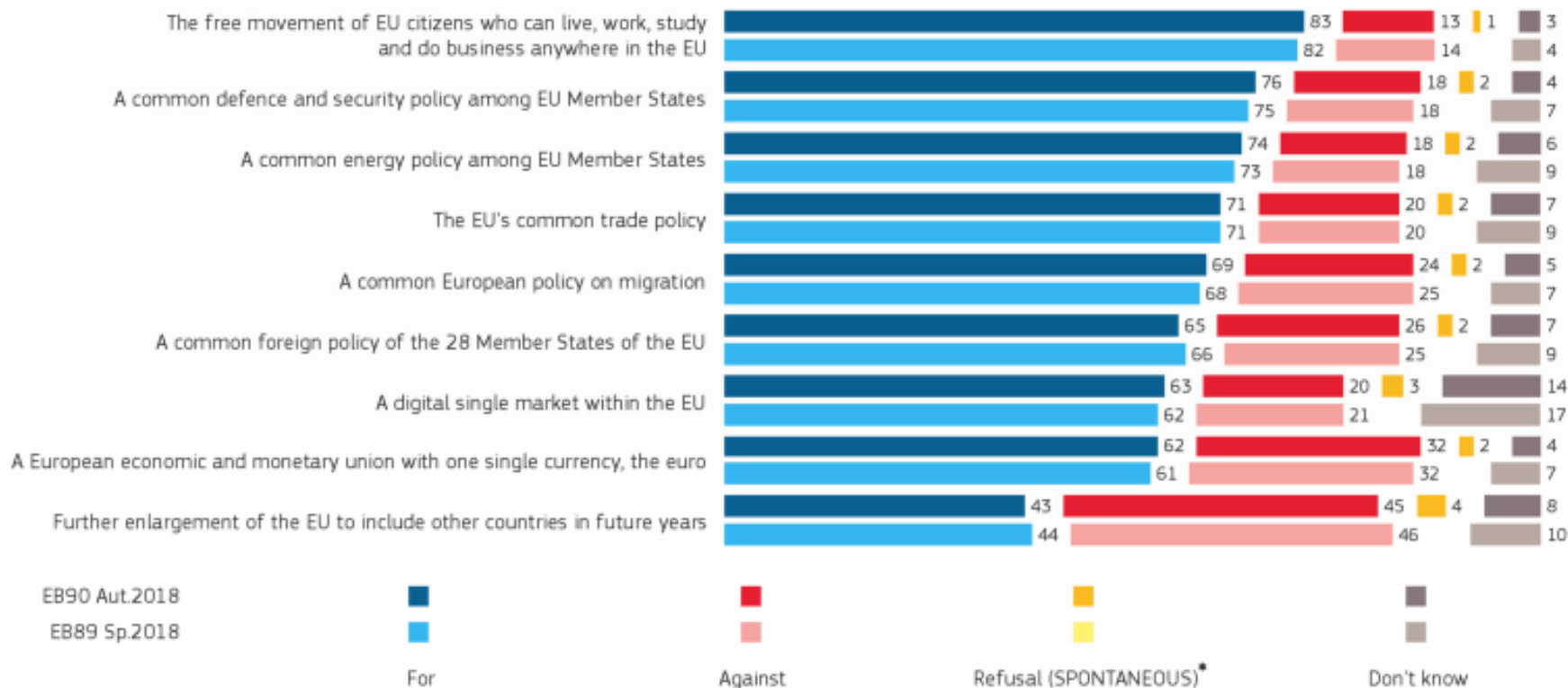
Don't know



Post-democracy and economic crisis

QA15 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.

(% - EU)

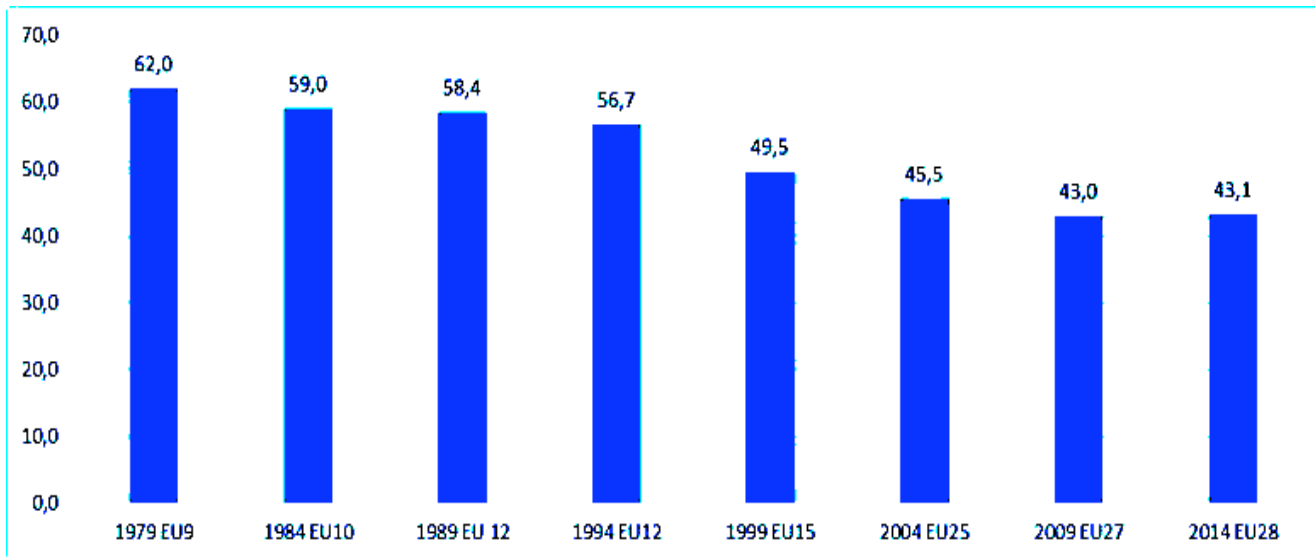


* Minor item



Post-democracy and economic crisis

Participation to the elections 1979-2014 (Source: Eurostat)





EU and Fake News

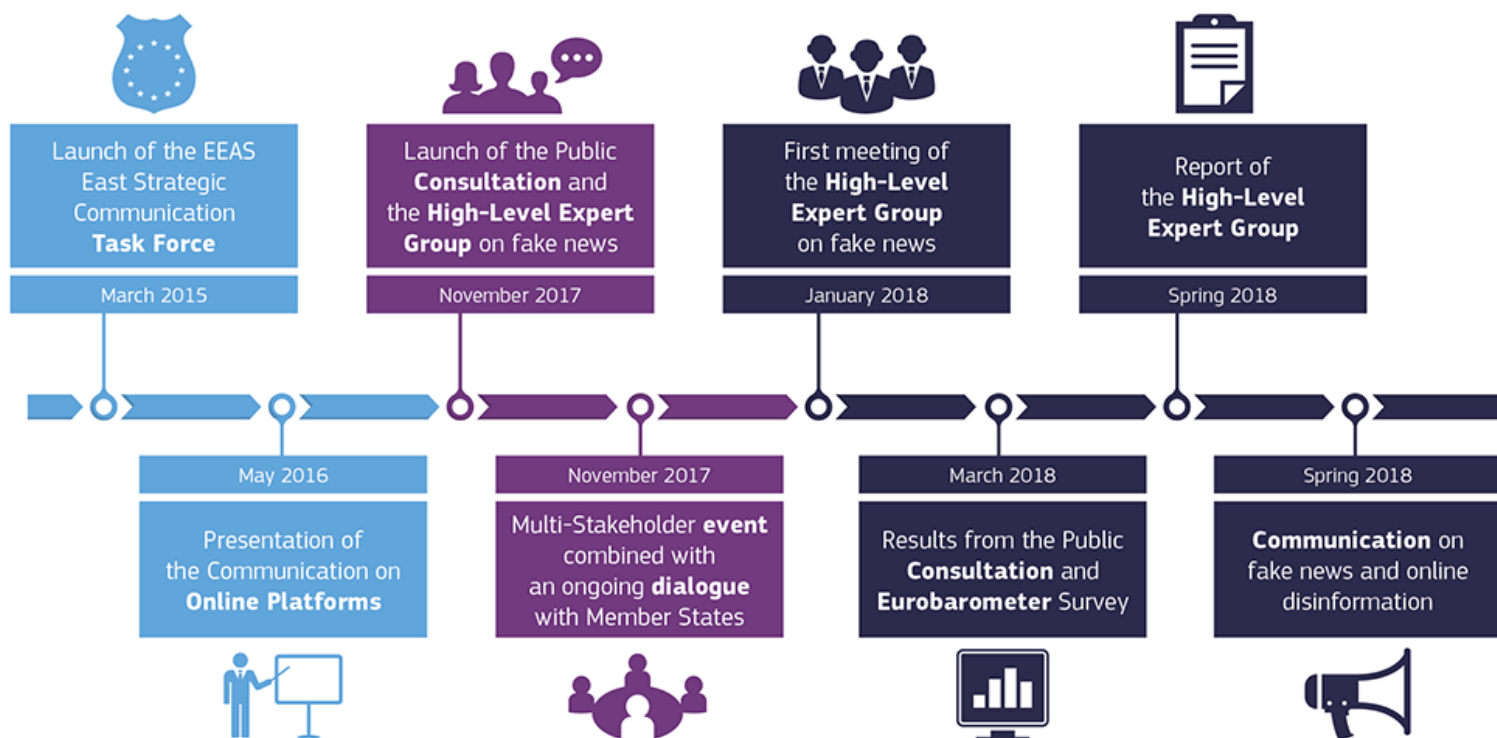
- 85% perceive fake news as a problem
- 83% as a problem for democracy
- 73% concerned about fake news during pre-election period
- 37% come across fake news every day
- 71% feel confident on identifying fake news
- Most trusted source—→ traditional media
- Responsible for stopping fake news
 - 45% journalists
 - 39% national authorities
 - 30% press and broadcasting management

Source: March 2018 Eurobarometer



EU and Fake News

Tackling Fake News in the EU



The Commission's Representations in the EU Member States and external delegations in third countries will participate in the debate and gather information on national rules and initiatives addressing the spread of fake news in their countries.



EEAS Task Force

- The Task Force was set up to address Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns.
- It develops communication products and campaigns focused on better explaining EU policies in the Eastern Partnership countries
- It reports on and analyses disinformation trends, explains and exposes disinformation narratives, and raises awareness of disinformation coming from Russian State, Russian sources and spread in the Eastern neighbourhood media space.



Consultation

- 13 November 2017 — 23 February 2018

Aim of the consultation:

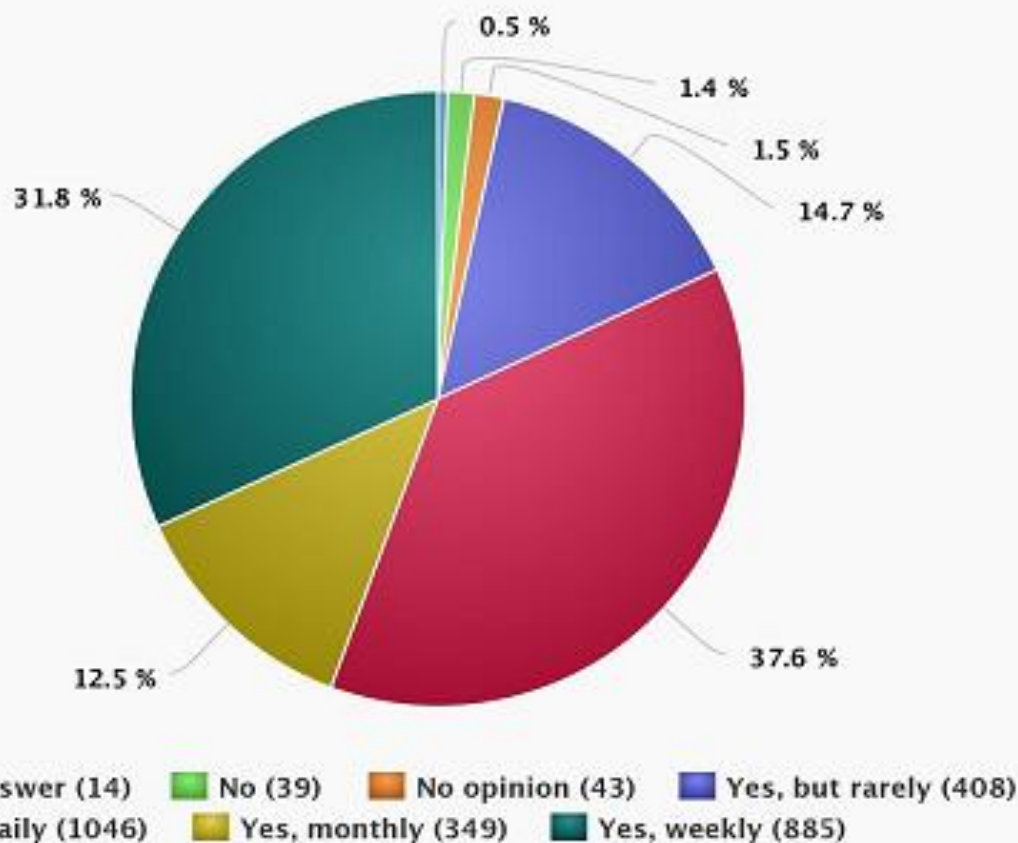
- to help assess the effectiveness of current actions by market players and other stakeholders
- the need for scaling them up
- to introduce new actions to address different types of fake news.

Two questionnaires: one for the citizens and one for legal persons and journalists reflecting their professional experience of fake news and online disinformation.



Consultation

3. Have you ever come across fake news?





Consultation: Results

- Fake news are highly likely to cause harm to society, in particular in areas such as political affairs, immigration, minorities and security.
- Fact-checking through independent news organisations and civil society organisations—→ best method
- Preference for a multi-stakeholder, multi-dimensional, self-regulatory approach
- New technologies such as artificial intelligence and block chain



High Level Group (HLG)

- The HLG's tasks shall be to advise the Commission on all issues arising in the context of fake information spread across traditional and social media and how to cope with its social and political consequences.

In general:

- Analyse in-depth the current situation and legal framework, as well as the potential political and social risks associated with the spread of disinformation online
- Define the scope of the problem and canvass legislative or non-legislative interventions to limit the dissemination of fake content
- Define roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders
- Assess possible improvements to such existing voluntary measures
- Sketch out the direction for developing quality journalism
- Identify guiding principles for possible self-regulation



Communication(s)

- "Tackling online disinformation: a European approach" (April 26 2018) → outlines the key overarching principles and objectives such as transparency, credibility, diversity and inclusiveness.
- Multi-stakeholder conference (13-14 Nov 2018) and a colloquium on fake news to define the boundaries of the problem, assess the effectiveness of the solutions already put in place by social media platforms and to agree on key principles for further action.



Code of Practice

- The first time worldwide that industry agrees, on a voluntary basis, to self-regulatory standards to fight disinformation
- Representatives of online platforms, leading social networks, advertisers and advertising industry agreed on this Code.
- Aim→ achieving the objectives set out by the Commission's Communication by setting a wide range of commitments, from transparency in political advertising to the closure of fake accounts and demonetization of purveyors of disinformation.



Action Plan

- 5 Dec 2018→ Action Plan against disinformation
- 4 key areas to build EU's capabilities and cooperation:
 - Improving detection
 - Having a coordinated response to threats
 - Collaboration with online platforms and industry
 - Raising awareness and empowering citizens



#EUvsDisinfo

ACTION PLAN AGAINST DISINFORMATION

UNDERSTANDING THE THREAT AND STEPPING UP EUROPEAN RESPONSE

Disinformation is an evolving challenge, with high potential to negatively influence democratic processes and societal debates. Its increasingly adverse effects on society across the European Union call for a coordinated, joint and sustainable approach to comprehensively counter it.


83% OF EUROPEANS THINK FAKE NEWS IS A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY *


73% OF INTERNET USERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT DISINFORMATION ONLINE IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD *

THE ACTION PLAN AGAINST DISINFORMATION

A set of actions aiming to build up capabilities and strengthen cooperation between Member States and EU institutions to proactively address disinformation


IMPROVE DETECTION, ANALYSIS AND EXPOSURE OF DISINFORMATION


 Invest in digital tools, data analysis skills and specialised staff within the EU institutions and in Member States

 Assess reach and impact of disinformation


MOBILISE PRIVATE SECTOR TO TACKLE DISINFORMATION


 Implementation of EU-wide Code of practice on disinformation

 Major online platforms such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and Mozilla have signed up

 Regular reporting as of January 2019 and possible regulatory action in case of unsatisfactory results


STRONGER COOPERATION AND JOINT RESPONSES TO DISINFORMATION


 Set-up of the Rapid Alert System to provide alerts on disinformation campaigns in real-time

 Member States to designate national contact points for disinformation and to exchange related information

RAISE AWARENESS AND IMPROVE SOCIETAL RESILIENCE

 Targeted campaigns in Europe and beyond

 Active participation of civil society in identifying and exposing disinformation

 Supporting independent media and fact-checkers



*Source: Flash Eurobarometer 464 (Fake news and disinformation online) and Special Eurobarometer 477 (Democracy and elections)



Readings to learn more

Policy paper n. 121, 2014 -
by *Notre Europe* (Jacques
Delors' think tank)
**EUROSCEPTICISM OR
EUROPHOBIA:
VOICE VS. EXIT?**

Yves Bertoncini | *Director
of Notre Europe* - Nicole
Koenig



[http://www.institutdelors.eu
/media/euroscepticismoreu
rophobia-bertoncini-
koenig-ne-jdi-
nov14.pdf?pdf=ok](http://www.institutdelors.eu/media/euroscepticismoreurophobia-bertoncini-koenig-ne-jdi-nov14.pdf?pdf=ok)





Thank you!



That's all folks!