

# COUNTERING DISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

Millions of citizens across Europe use the internet to look out for every type of information. Unfortunately, there are actors that exploit these instruments to spread disinformation and to manipulate public opinion, causing distrust in science and legitimate governments and often resulting in criminal actions.



**FERMI** develops a framework to detect and monitor the way that **disinformation and fake news** spread, both in terms of locations and within different segments of the society, and to put in place relevant security countermeasures.

## MAIN GOALS

- 1 Analyse the direct risks posed by **disinformation and fake news** to the offline world and minimise the impact.
- 2 Design training and education material for European Police Authorities, other professionals and stakeholders, and EU citizens.

## SPECIFIC GOALS

- 1 Support the EU LEAs and (social) media organizations in the combat against **disinformation and fake news** and the ramifications thereof
- 2 Realize technological breakthroughs towards a society more resilient to **disinformation and fake news**.
- 3 Realise accurate risk modelling and assessment, optimized decision support for LEAs to mitigate such risks.
- 4 Improve understanding of the cultural and societal aspects of **disinformation and fake news** based on thorough behavioural analyses.

## USE CASES

### FAR-RIGHT DISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

**Disinformation and fake news** regarding the size and nature of migration toward the EU have created growing xenophobic sentiments leading to violent radicalization from right-wing extremists.

Non-state actors are spreading disinformation to undermine trust in the local governments and reinforce extremist narratives and recruitment strategies, increase the motivation of self-radicalized terrorists in order to perpetrate real attacks, and use psychological manipulation to undermine an individual's belief in specific social values.

### HEALTH CRISIS, RIOTS AND FORMS OF VIOLENCE

The COVID-19 infodemic has led –and it is still leading– to a spike in **disinformation and fake news** through hoaxes, pseudoscience and conspiracy theories, breeding distrust in public institutions and putting lives at risk.

Police Authorities and other stakeholders need to be equipped with additional intelligence in order to allocate, in a timely manner, well calibrated resources to these events that have the higher probability to involve or trigger violence and criminal activities.

### FAR-LEFT DISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

Left-wing extremism, particularly anti-capitalist and anarchist violence leads to welfare losses arising from the loss of life and physical destruction, opportunity costs in terms of investments, externalities in terms of other crimes.

The experience of the police from the analogue world, paired with the digital **FERMI** solutions and an economic observation and analysis layer (economic factors), follow a holistic approach that creates added value from law enforcement to prevention.

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