European Commission: March 2019 monthly reports from Facebook, Google and Twitter

IRIS 2019-6:1/4

Christina Etteldorf

On 23 April 2019, the European Commission published the monthly reports from Facebook, Google and Twitter concerning actions taken during March 2019 to implement their commitments related to the Code of Practice on Disinformation. The reports demonstrate that all three platforms appear to have stepped up their efforts to combat false and misleading information in the run-up to the European Parliament elections. In particular, measures have been taken to ensure the findability and labelling of political advertising.

The Code of Practice on Disinformation, drawn up last year by the working group of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Disinformation, has been signed by all three platforms. As signatories, they are required to submit reports detailing the measures they have taken to combat disinformation. These reports, which form the basis for the Commission's recently published summary and evaluation, describe a host of measures designed to combat false and misleading information, especially in the political sphere.

All three networks already have publicly accessible libraries in which political ads are collected, although Google's ad library remains in the test phase. Data from these libraries can be used to search for political and issue-based ads, and thus to carry out independent assessments. The libraries are therefore a decisive tool for promoting transparency. However, the Commission regrets that Google and Twitter, unlike Facebook, have not adjusted their policies on issue-based advertising to ensure the findability and transparency of such ads.

All three reports state that ads are scrutinised in order to exclude misrepresentation or spammy behaviour, including ads with political content or politically relevant themes. While Facebook and Twitter failed to provide any concrete figures, Google reported that in March 2019, 10 234 actions had been taken against EU-based Google Ads advertisers for violating the company's policies on misrepresentation. Not all of these violations had necessarily been associated with disinformation campaigns. However, the Commission stressed that a deeper analysis would help elucidate the extent to which the enforcement of the platforms' policies helped to de-monetise imposter websites and websites that persistently purveyed disinformation.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

With regard to the transparency of political ads, the platforms also report a series of measures. Google and Twitter, for example, have begun implementing their new election ads policy, which includes a compulsory verification process for advertisers wishing to run election ads for the European Parliament elections. Facebook also reports better labelling of political ads and how they are financed and, in relation to service integrity, the deletion of spam and fake accounts.

The reports also describe a raft of other measures that the platforms are taking to combat disinformation. Google, for example, is investing in media literacy, including training for journalists on countering disinformation, and training and security tools for election professionals. Like Facebook, Google is also backing so-called fact-checking by financially supporting FactCheck EU and providing new tools for checking and labelling content, which should enable search engines to easily recognise fact-checked articles and thus increase their visibility in search results.

Commission's analysis and platform reports

https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/third-monthly-intermediate-results-eu-code-practice-against-disinformation

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026