



CODE OF RESPONSIBLE FACT-CHECKING

PREAMBLE

The current level of development of digital communications allows rapid scaling of distorted and false data, misinformation and various kinds of fakes, including those generated using AI. This makes it difficult for people to gain useful knowledge and form an objective picture of events in various fields — politics, election campaigns, economics, social relations, education, migration, ecology, terrorism, military conflicts.

On the one hand, the speed of information exchange has increased its availability, and on the other hand, it has made it almost impossible to independently determine which is true and which is false.

Deepfakes and generative content are almost indistinguishable from reality. The right to access information is violated by disinformation actions of a number of actors

in the global space, the dissemination of deliberately false information and unreliable publications in the media and digital spaces.

National governments, the private sector, BigTech, public organizations and a number of other actors are making significant efforts to establish and promote their own rules for verifying the authenticity of information. Nevertheless, such global processes, which proceed without unification and international consensus, in some cases cause new risks associated with bias and preconceptions, as well as following a certain political environment. This problem is critically compounded by the danger of digital services and platforms using proprietary opaque algorithms.

An effective response to the above-mentioned threats is to unite the efforts of countries, organizations, representatives of civil society and experts who oppose destructive influence on the international and national information space, as well as to strengthen technological sovereignty and ensure the use of the Internet based on algorithms that are not subject to external manipulation.

This Code of Responsible Fact-checking (hereinafter referred to as the Code) **was published on November 20, 2024, in Moscow, Russian Federation by the Council of Experts and founders of the Global Fact-checking Network** (hereinafter referred to as GFCN) in order to unite the international fact-checking community and define common standards for fact-checking.

This Code can be signed by any member of the public, media, blogger, or organization that shares the principles that

the Global Fact-checking Network (GFCN) plans to promote.

GFCN is an international association whose activities are aimed at objective and unbiased verification of information. Its mission is to improve the quality and objectivity of information at both national and global levels. Ensuring access to reliable and transparent information based on real data, rather than on the political interests of individual parties, is a key task of this association of fact-checkers and journalism as such, whose activities should be based on the principles of responsibility and professionalism.

This Code is based on the approaches set out in UN General Assembly Resolution 76/277 of 24 December 2021, which is based on best practices gained by Member States, UN entities and other organizations in countering disinformation.

The creation and promotion of this Code at the international level meets today's challenges and will help protect reliable and truthful knowledge and information, build peaceful and open communities, bridge «the digital divide» and raise public awareness. This Code contains the fundamental principles of responsible fact-checking and is offered for signing to specialists, experts and fact-checking organizations from different countries of the world.

PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE FACT-CHECKING

1 Objectivity and impartiality

Fact checkers strive to be objective and not express personal opinions or biases in their published materials.

In their professional activities, they provide information without distortion and try to be neutral in their assessments.

2

Strict observance of the inalienable human rights and freedoms

Fact checkers stand in solidarity with the principle of the supremacy of the inalienable rights and freedoms of man and citizen, and declare the crucial role of the availability of reliable information for any person, regardless of political, religious or other motives, as well as other circumstances. Access to reliable information is inextricably linked to natural human rights, including the right to life, liberty and safety, and the main task of the fact-checker is to help implement these rights. Therefore, fact-checkers undertake to comply with ethical standards and be guided by socio-humanitarian goals that bring well-being and prosperity to countries and peoples.

3

Ensuring pluralism of political views and harmonization of national interests

Fact-checkers recognize the importance of freedom of speech and diversity of opinion. They don't seek to stifle alternative viewpoints, but rather provide information that helps people make informed decisions. At the same time, fact-checkers reserve the right to have, disseminate and highlight their personal position outside the framework of their professional fact-checking activities.

4 Availability of verified data

Fact-checkers verify information sources to make sure that they are reliable and authentic. They analyze the quality of sources and evaluate their reputation. Fact-checkers help protect reliable and truthful knowledge, build peaceful and open communities, bridge the digital divide, raise public awareness, and counter attempts to falsify history.

5 Reproducibility of results and openness of the fact-checking methodology to an unlimited number of people

Fact-checkers provide information about their methods and sources to ensure transparency in their work. They provide access to the results of their research and explain in an accessible way how they came to their conclusions.

6 Providing constructive feedback

Fact-checker provides an unlimited number of people with the opportunity to ask for help or clarify verification details through up-to-date and accessible communication channels.

7 Collegiality of decision-making

If there is a conflict of interest or disagreement in the estimates, fact-checkers jointly decide on the reliability of data, involving the GFCN management to form responsible committees.

8 Integrity and timeliness of corrections

Fact-checkers strive to minimize the risk of an error in fact-checking by any means available, while in the event of such an error, they ensure that possible consequences are eliminated, including within the framework of an initiative refutation and involving GFCN collegial structures in a control check.

9 Continuous professional development

Fact-checkers constantly train and improve their skills to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and methods in the field of fact-checking. They learn new technologies and methods of data analysis.

10 Engaging key actors in countering fake news

Fact checkers stand in solidarity with the principle of the supremacy of the inalienable rights and freedoms of man and citizen, and declare the crucial role of the availability of reliable information for any person, regardless of political, religious or other motives, as well as other circumstances. Access to reliable information is inextricably linked to natural human rights, including the right to life, liberty and safety, and the main task of the fact-checker is to help implement these rights. Therefore, fact-checkers undertake to comply with ethical standards and be guided by socio-humanitarian goals that bring well-being and prosperity to countries and peoples.

Fact-checkers collaborate with other public entities and organizations to share information and improve the quality

of their research. They can create collaborative networks and participate in joint projects. Fact-checkers support media outlets that provide reliable information and promote critical thinking. They work with journalists and editors to ensure the quality of news and prevent the spread of false information. fact-checkers support efforts to equip editorial offices and journalistic bureaus/offices with professional methods and tools for manual and automatic verification of information for correctness and reliability. Fact-checkers provide information, advisory and expert support in countering false information to other international organizations, national legislative and executive authorities, as well as global and national information platforms and social networks upon their request. Fact-checkers undertake to develop cooperation with civil society organizations and academia in building, testing and implementing of the most up-to-date and advanced methods and mechanisms for verifying and determining the actual accuracy of public information. Fact-checkers help raise public awareness of new risks and threats posed by false and misleading materials and misinformation; distribute educational and awareness-raising materials aimed at eliminating misinformation and improving the global information space.

FINAL PROVISIONS

The Code comes into force from the moment of its publication. The Code is valid indefinitely, unless otherwise decided by the GFCN.

Any counterparty engaged in fact-checking activities can join

the Code, regardless of its legal form and national jurisdiction. The Code is signed in person or remotely by contacting the GFCN on own initiative.

Signing and strict compliance with this Code is one of the key requirements for subsequent adoption in the case of applying for membership of GFCN by individuals and organizations engaged in fact-checking, but it does not oblige the parties to take any legally significant actions.

Any changes made by GFCN to this Code are possible only after informed notification of all signatories and organization of public discussions of the amendments made.

The Code does not imply financial and legal obligations of the signatories, either among themselves or in relation to third parties.

GFCN provides random verification of compliance of signatories to the Code with its provisions and can publish the results of these checks on its own information resources and the resources of GFCN members.

If any of the signatories to the Code is not satisfied with the results of the implementation of the Code or the content of its provisions, such a Code participant has the right to contact GFCN to discuss the possibility of making changes to the Code or excluding them from the list of signatories.

The Code is signed in two original copies in English and Russian. The original copies are kept in the GFCN, which provides access to the list of signatories and the current text of the Code in Chinese, English, Spanish, Arabic, French, Russian, Portuguese and German to an unlimited number of persons.

FULL NAME:

Organization:

Date:
