

**Committee/Council: Special Conference**

**Issue: Bracing and improving educational systems to combat the effects of misinformation**

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**Introduction**

Mass media are responsible for providing education and regimen and as a result, they also play a crucial role in the formation of a person’s personality, which is being influenced by the messages a person receives from its environment and which it adopts in its daily life, behavior, and choices. Consequently, information is one of the most important duties that the media have to fulfill because according to their content life attitudes of people are being formed.

Misinformation is the result of deterioration of information, which the media present, and its separation from truth. Sometimes information can be exaggerated or degraded and some other times it can be concealed from the public. Since economic, political and social interests started interfering and obstructing the function of mass media, misinformation is at its highest levels.

Especially young people who are more involved in social media and receive massive and different information are in danger of being misinformed and that’s why education plays a major role as educators have a shared mission of observing and teaching truth and at the same time enabling students to be observant and think critically.

In modern information-driven societies, people encounter million of information sources without being able to distinguish facts from fiction, by receiving information from unreliable sources such as celebrities, TV shows, and non-expert websites people process much information very quickly and the problem is, that information keeps on influencing public opinions even after it has been retracted.



## Definition of Key-Terms

### Misinformation

Misinformation is the state of having false or incorrect information which has been spread either intentionally or unintentionally

### Disinformation

False information that is spread in order to influence the public opinion and to mislead, usually propaganda issued by government or media

### Over- information

The state where public opinion is being given lots of information which are not proofed to be true or false

### Media

When referring to the term media, one means the communication channels which provide individuals with news, education, entertainment, and data. Included are all broadcasting and narrowcasting media such as magazines, newspapers, television, fax, telephone and the internet

### Social Media

Social Media can be described as a cellular phone or internet based applications and tools used by individuals in order to share information with others. Included are blogs, bookmarking sites, popular websites or applications such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and any aspect which allows interactive activities between its users. It is a subcategory of the larger classification of media

### Education

The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university(Oxford Dictionary)

(<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/education>)

## Background Information

### Description of the problem

The media have nowadays forgotten their primary purpose as they may serve political and economic interests. They misinform the public opinion, they hide or create scandals and they overlook the arbitrariness of politicians and as a result, they mislead and manipulate the people. Many times, they brain-wash people as they give messages which reach the limits of propaganda. It is a fact that they spread rumors about celebrities humiliating them with the purpose of impression and profit. They create and present false information deceiving people and separating them from the truth.

They promote prolific leaders, opportunistic politicians, demagogues, particularly in periods of social, economic and political crisis, cultivating a climate of insecurity and uncertainty that prepares the territory of messianism. They manipulate the public, common opinion, foment the dialogue and mutilate free will. Thus, the modern civilian, semi-deceased, de-convalescent and spiritually castrated, is unable to control power and to participate actively in the community.

Violence scenes are being played out and situations are presented more tragic than they really are in order to impress the public. This certainly implies the familiarization of the individual with violence, the mitigation of his moral and emotional analgesia. Especially from the young, the criminals are heroic, they are considered revolutionary and imitation tendencies appear, resulting in a manifestation of similar behaviors.

At other times, social and racial discrimination seem to be inflicted, which subdues the social contradictions and disputes. Their constitutional position towards vulnerable social groups violates human rights and at the same time the balance of the social fabric is at risk, while the humanitarian spirit, solidarity, respect, unity and tolerance for the difference are being abolished.

### Causes of misinformation

The media are connected with strong decision-making centers and with communal and political powers aiming at ideological propaganda and the manipulation of the masses. Such purposes are served by the media when they violate legitimate framework of operation or require facilities of an economic or other nature. The

bodies of power respond in exchange for the ideological coloring of the news and the unilateral projection of truth.

Media's financial dependence on capital and sponsors make them vulnerable to economic control by factors with economic power, which transform media into means of wealth. When the goal is to increase viewing so as to increase profits through advertising then truth and objective information are taken over by the overwhelming, false and impressive information that lead to misinformation.

The moral alienation of certain journalists has the effect of consolidating the idea of defamations as the only way to achieve spectacular recognition and audience. Besides, the admission of journalists to the field of press implies their subordination to this status. Respectable journalists are removed from the media when their work becomes outdated and financially incompatible for the station in which they work while new faces, presenters and not journalists, are attracted, who are accepted by the public, they are chosen however aesthetically and not professionally.

Responsible is public opinion as well. The high levels of illiteracy, the low educational level of certain populations and the lack of critical thinking create the conditions that allow the phenomenon of misinterpretation and of the systematic and methodical deception of the common opinion.

### Impact of Misinformation

Misinformation prevents the viewer from knowing the truth. People come in contact with false, distorted news. They are disoriented by the substance of the information and draw their attention where the media dictate them.

The educational level of people is undermined. The public opinion is being brain-washed and manipulated by ideological propaganda. People become susceptible to control, manipulation and disorientation. The dependence of the public opinion, its formation according to specific ideological need, removes from people the qualitative criteria for controlling the socio-political arousal. Thus, people are unable to perceive judgments and to justify the evolutions, they choose and decide without any will, they become intellectually and conscientiously loose.

People are trapped in passivity. The mass adopts uncontested ideas, ways of living, habits, and values, it accepts faces and situations, experiences passively unpleasant developments without showing resistances and without being able to defend.

Collective life is degraded, culture is undermined and social progress at all levels is hindered. All the above characterize a society without respecting the traditional values of freedom of speech and the democratic and unbridled information.

### The Bologna process

The Bologna process is a reform process taking place in Europe and aiming at ensuring comparability in the standards and quality in higher-education qualifications. Through this process, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been created. 46 countries are participating and together with international organizations including the Council of Europe they structure and implement the process.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

### Finland

Finland's education policy aims at providing all people equal opportunities to receive an education. The education system may be characterized as permeable as everyone can be promoted to higher education. The main goal is learning and not testing and even though it is considered to be one of the excellent education systems, Finland still tries to improve it based of course on its own approach and committed to these fundamentals.

### South Africa

In a research drawn up concerning education systems in 2015 by OECD club mainly between developed countries, South Africa ranks 75<sup>th</sup> out 76. It could be described as a discriminatory system as the teachers have been educated by a sub-par system. However, South Africa tries to improve its educational system and invests a considerable amount of the total budget in education.

### DPRK

In DPRK we can find a characteristic example of misinformation created and ruled by the government. International media are not allowed to enter the country and the government shares only specific information with the rest of the world.

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)

This organization consists of educators and advocates who strive for education reform. Their goal is to ensure optimal education, development, and well-being of children. In order to achieve this ACEI hosts the Global Summit on Childhood, where professionals gather together, and discuss issues concerning childhood. The association works also with the Institute for Global Education Diplomacy which aims at providing children suitable education.

Education International

30 million professionals who represent 400 organizations in 170 countries strive for promoting quality education and the combat racism and xenophobia that prevents children to receive an education. They do not work alone as they get help from other global unions whose aim is to further global education.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

GPE works in 60 developing countries with the aim of delivering a good and quality education whereby it prioritizes the poorest and most vulnerable ones. The organization collaborates with governments, other international organizations and teachers to develop education strategies, to find a solution to the problems and challenges educators face, to finance the implementation of those programs and to monitor their results.

UNESCO

The initials stand for United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. UNESCO began its work in 1945 and its mission is to contribute to preserving peace, decreasing poverty and to long-term development. In order to achieve these goals, they aim for global education. It consists of 204 member-countries.

**Timeline of Events**

Date	Description of event
2017	On 6th January an intelligence community report concluded that the President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin ordered a

	misinformation campaign in order to influence the U.S presidential elections
2016	Facebook announces steps against fake news and misinformation
2010	European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was created ensuring better educational systems among Europe
1933	Joseph Goebbels becomes the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda of Germany, his job is to misinform the people through the media.
1921	The General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press is now responsible for keeping the Soviet secrets away from the press and as a result, it is responsible for misinformation and propaganda,

## Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

### [A/RES/56/116](#)

This resolution was adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2001 aiming to offer education for everyone and especially for people living in LEDC's.

### [A/HRC/20/L.12](#)

The resolution on the right to education was submitted by the Human Rights Council and adopted by the General Assembly on 29 June 2012.

### [Education World Forum](#)

The Education World Forum is a ministerial seminar held annually in London. This year's EWF was held on January 22-25 and ministers from around the world gathered to debate future practices in education focused on teaching and technology.

### [London International Conference on Education \(LICE\)](#)

The LICE is an international conference which promotes collaboration between academicians and professionals from education in order to achieve the evolution of pedagogy and research.

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

As misinformation is an issue that made its presence intense only the last few years, there have not been any official previous attempts to solve the issue. Of course, many strategies have been adopted and many measures have been put into force in order to achieve educational reform and make education accessible to everyone. However, there has been no attempt to combat the effects of misinformation through education.

## Possible Solutions



Bracing and improving educational systems in order to combat the effects of misinformation is an issue that requests effort from governments, teachers, and relevant organizations as well as from young people themselves. It should be noted that there is an enormous complexity in the efforts to improve the educational systems as every country and society has got different approaches. To begin with, there should be stricter and objective criteria through which teachers will be hired so as people with proper experience, knowledge, and consciousness of how important their work is. Of course, their wage should be proportionate to their work so as for them to feel worthy and do their job rightly, teachers should warn students concerning

fake news they might comprehend from the media and if they are correctly informed about facts they should inform their students accordingly. Furthermore, the educational system, should focus on more relevant issues that will help the youngsters broaden their horizons and know how modern society functions. This is why teachers and experts should inform students about how to use social media and what the dangers are in order to prevent misinformation. The main goal should be learning and not be testing because young people have to learn to deal with contemporary, daily problems. At the same time, governments have to be put in effort and give the appropriate budget for the implementation of all the above. Organizations should take action through information campaigns at schools but on the social media as well. In general, the solution to misinformation is in the school environment, where educators and students interact with each other and students



reinforce their consciousness about how economic and political factors influence the work of mass media, which should not be faced as reliable means of information.

Misinformation can only be dealt with through international cooperation and global agreements. Some countries, like The Netherlands, support that there should not in any way exist any kind of censorship in online news because that would violate a fundamental human right, freedom of speech. On the other hand, many other countries, like Germany, believe that the only way to fight misinformation is through proper legislation. There is also a third opinion claiming that the roots of the problem are hiding deep within the society, which means that the only way to combat misinformation is not through proper legislation but changing our educational systems.

The best three educational systems in the world are considered to be the ones of Canada, Finland and Switzerland. Those three educational systems share a very common bottom line. Students are free to choose in what lessons they are going to participate but even more important is the fact that the students choose by their own the topics they would like to discuss in every lesson. Teachers are allowed to use their own teaching method, within the law boundaries, and they do not have to fully follow an educational program made by the government. The problem is that LEDCs do not have the necessary resources in order to create a proper educational system. Therefore, international organizations and the United Nations should play an important role.

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