

Disinformaion and hoaxes lies in their potential severe consequences for society: Social Division, Inhibiting Informed Decision-making, Public Health Worsening.

Disinformation and hoaxes spread through various channels, including social media, alternative media, emails, forums, and online discussion groups, as well as traditional media. People often spread disinformation unknowingly because they trust the source or are influenced by their own biases and emotions. According to surveys conducted in 2023, a significant percentage of the population in Slovakia (almost 50%) believed in various hoaxes and disinformation. Exact numbers may vary depending on the specific disinformation and the context, but they can be significant.

For instance, surveys showed that a substantial percentage of people believed in false information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccines, or political events.

The importance of data-driven combat against disinformation lies in its ability to identify, analyse, and address issues associated with disinformation based on facts and evidence. This includes monitoring the spread of disinformation, providing the public with reliable information, promoting education on critical thinking and digital literacy, and supporting transparency and accountability in media and online platforms. Data-driven combat against disinformation is a crucial tool in protecting democracy, public health, and societal stability.

In Slovakia, we have a multitude of experts dedicated to this topic, constantly refining the fight against disinformation. There are organizations and individuals who monitor hoaxes and disinformation, as well as those who directly debunk them using facts. Successful countries with strong positions in combating disinformation and hoaxes include the Czech Republic and Latvia. That's also why we've reached out to partners such as the Czech Open Society Foundation and Civic Alliance Latvia. From our research, we know that in these countries, we can find examples of best practices and useful tips and information (not only) for Slovakia.

About the DATA BASED DISINFO DEFENSE CONFERENCE

On April 17-18, 2024, a two-day event titled "**Data Based Disinfo Defense**" is taking place in Bratislava. Our partners for this event are the **Czech Open Society Foundation** and the Latvian **Civic Alliance Latvia**.

The event is divided into two days, with the first day dedicated to visiting two organizations engaged in the fight against disinformation and hoaxes — **Gerulata Technologies** and **GLOBSEC**. Participants will be welcomed at Gerulata Technologies, where **Michal Trnka** (Slovakia) will talk about the Gerulata Technologies with regard on the phenomena and key macro-trends that are currently happening in the information space, often in the context of election campaigns. At noon, will be a break for lunch. Following that, we will move to the **GLOBSEC** organization (TBC). After the presentation, a panel discussion will take place (TBC). After this official part we will have an interesting sightseeing tour in Bratislava and the day will end with dinner.

The second day of the event will follow a traditional conference format with presentations and panel discussion. At the beginning of the conference, **Karin Sedláková** (Slovakia), **Tomáš Kriššák** (Slovakia), **Victor Breiner** (Slovakia), and **Dávid Púchovský** (Slovakia) will introduce themselves and briefly talk about their work and activities. Following that, **an expert from Latvia**, will present his lecture. After the lunch break, we will move on to a panel discussion featuring Victor Breiner, Karin Sedláková, Tomáš Kriššák, Dávid Púchovský.

PROGRAM:

April 17, 2024 - Wednesday:

9:30 Welcoming at Gerulata Technologies, Staré Grunty 18, 841 04 Karlova Ves, Bratislava
10:00 – 12:00 Gerulata Technologies (Introduction + phenomena and key macro-trends that are currently happening in the information space, often in the context of election campaigns)
12:00 – 13:30 Lunch at the Gerulata Technologies
13:30 – 14:00 Transfer to GLOBSEC (TBC)
14:00 – 16:00 GLOBSEC (TBC)
16:30 – 18:00 Optional – Sightseeing tour of Bratislava
18:00 Dinner (TBC)

April 18, 2024 - Thursday:

9:30 Welcoming at Cvernovka, Račianska 78, 831 02 Bratislava
10:00 – 11:00 Introduction of speakers (Karin Sedláková, Tomáš Kriššák, Dávid Púchovský, Victor Breiner)
11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break
11:20 – 12:20 lecture and case study from Latvia
12:20 – 13:30 Lunch at Cvernovka
13:40 – 15:00 Panel discussion on Best Practices from Slovakia in the Fight Against Disinformation
15:00 Closing of the event