

Chances and
Risks of

Social Media for Democracy

About the Event

Political elections and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted the chances and risks social media pose to democratic systems in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Social media allow for more inclusive, transparent and participative public debates, to name a few benefits. However, the immediate exchange through online platforms has exposed challenges for democracies and political systems: Online disinformation, manipulation of information and hate speech sow distrust in democratic institutions, cause polarization and create instability. Particularly against the background of elections, such as recent elections in both our regions, the intentional spread of false information can disrupt key democratic processes. The question of how to better coordinate, regulate and harmonize how disinformation is handled requires cooperation between like-minded democratic countries at an international level.

Programme, 19.10.2021

5–7 pm (Berlin)
12–2 pm (Santiago de Chile / Buenos Aires)
10 am–12 pm (Mexico City)

5 pm (Berlin) Welcome and Introduction

Moderator **Ms. Carolina Chimoy** Deutsche Welle

5:05 pm Political Insights

Political Insights – The role of policymakers in tackling disinformation

Democracies in Europe and LAC increasingly face disinformation campaigns and the spread of false information to manipulate the public opinion, which creates public polarization and threatens democratic institutions. At the same time, open social media are a powerful tool to strengthen freedom of expression, public control and the formation of opinions. Communication via social media is an essential component of political discourse.

How do democratic governments tackle disinformation? How can they regulate social media whilst strengthening democratic processes and protecting fundamental civil rights online?

Speakers

Mr. Miguel Berger State Secretary of the German Federal Foreign Office

Mr. Pablo Anselmo Tettamanti Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic

Mr. Javier Zarzalejos Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation

Q&A

5:30 pm Expert Panels

Moderator **Ms. Carolina Chimoy** Deutsche Welle

5:35 pm Setting the Scene

Setting the Scene: Disinformation and Democracy

For Europe as well as Latin America and the Caribbean online communication and its misuse is a “trending topic”. News are disseminated rapidly through social media and influence public opinion making. What are current debates and trends in Latin America and Europe around digital content moderation, social media and disinformation? Experts from civil society and academia provide an analytical background and present the latest findings.

Speakers

Mr. Paul Fehlinger Co-Founder and Deputy Executive Director, Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network, France

Mr. Eduardo Ferreyra Senior Project Officer, Asociación por los Derechos Civiles (ADC), Argentina

Ms. Amélie Heldt Researcher, Power of Opinion & Digital Media, Leibniz Institute for Media Research, Germany

Q&A

6:15 pm Good Practices from the Regions

Good Practices from the Regions

Europe and LAC face the challenge of finding suitable solutions to tackle disinformation. In this dialogue examples of fact checking online content and ideas to strengthen democratic forces will be shared: What can Europe and LAC learn from each other in the fight against disinformation?

Speakers

Ms. Lisa Ginsborg Acting Secretary-General EDMO Hub, European Digital Media Observatory, EU

Ms. Thamy Pogrebinschi Senior Researcher, LATINNO and Collective against the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of Civil Society in Endangered Democracies, Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Germany Observatory, EU

Ms. Laura Zommer Executive Director and editor-in-chief, Chequeado, LatamChequea in partnership with UNESCO, funded by the EU

Q&A

7 pm Wrap-up