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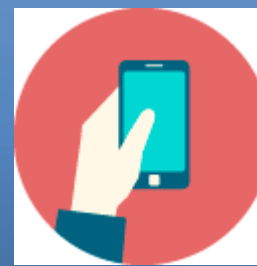
EODS Project

Election Observation and Democracy Support (EODS) is the capacity building project for EU Election Observation. It is funded by the European Commission

www.eods.eu

The current EODS project's main areas of support:

- Strengthening the EU Election Observation Mission methodology
- **Building the capacity of EU election missions to assess the impact of social media on elections**
- Training election observation specialists in EU methodology and key election principles
- Developing tools to support the operational aspects of EU election observation



STATE of PLAY

The analysis and the assessment of online election-related communication is a global challenge the EU EOMs together **with other international organizations** is trying to respond and to adapt their methodologies accordingly

- ✓ 2020. The new EODS project has a fully dedicated component to develop a methodology to monitor online platforms- ALL EU EOMs since 2021 have included in the CT a new position the SMA
- ✓ 2020. *“EU Guidelines for Observing Online Environment and Election related Content”*
- ✓ 2021. *DoP Online campaign working group – “Basic principles to observe and assess online election campaigns” – PUBLIC DOCUMENT See EODS website ww.eods.eu*
- ✓ 2023. *‘Social Media Monitoring Practical Guide’ A Methodological Framework to Guide SMA during the analysis and assessment of the digital ecosystem ensuring consistency – objectivity and transparency while collecting data from online platforms*

CHALLENGES

- ❖ Lack of methodological approach
- ❖ Better definition of which tools to use
- ❖ Operational difficulties and Teams division of tasks
 - ❖ Time constraints of the mission
- ❖ Use terminology in the appropriate way
- ❖ Identify the main areas of assessment
- ❖ Need for a Social Media Monitoring *Technical/Practical Guide*

Social Media Monitoring (SMM)

- During EU Election Observation Mission (EOM), an **exhaustive monitoring of social media platforms is not feasible** in practice due to the speed, reach and volume of the content produced and to the mission time-frame
- EUEOM use **complementary approaches and techniques (qualitative AND quantitative + cooperation with Core Team Members + meetings with interlocutors)** to gather information and make assessment on online election-related content and campaign
- To safeguard **the accuracy and credibility of EU EOM reporting** the mission is transparent on both the scope of social media monitoring and the methodology used
EU EOM SMM ANNEX FINAL REPORT
- **Importance of CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS** to engage with them and strengthening interaction with national networks/organizations that specialize in monitoring social media or fact-checking for collaboration and regular exchanges

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES

EU EOMs assessment rests on international and regional human right and instruments, commitments and good practices.

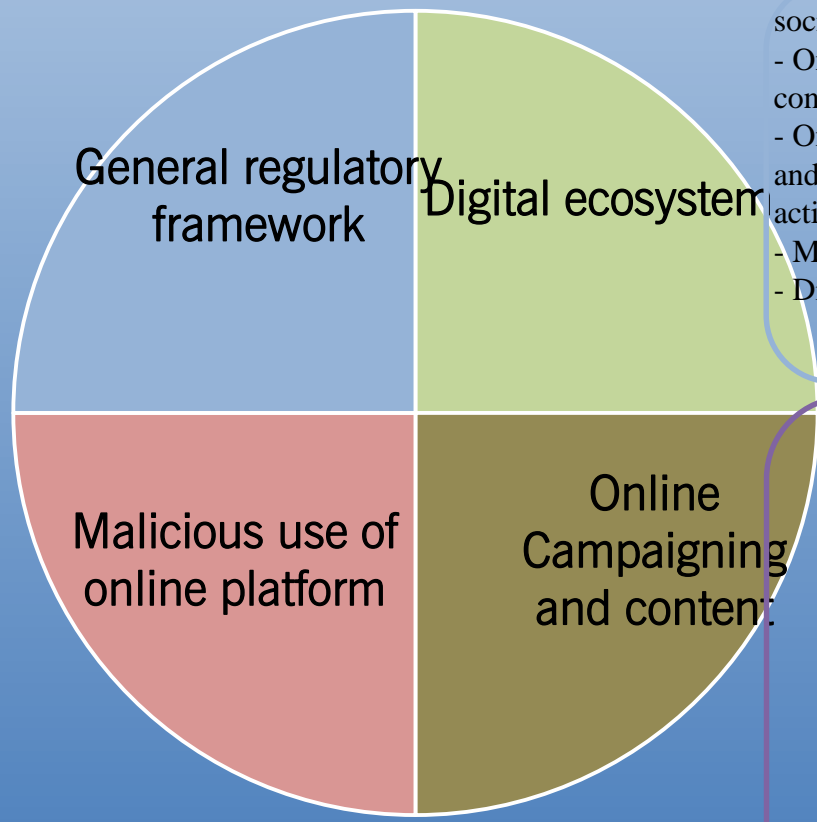
There are KEY rights to assess the online campaign :

General Principle	Main International Commitments/Standards
Freedom of Expression	ICCPR art. 19 CCPR
Right to Political Participation	ICCPR art.25 CCPR General Comment No 25
Privacy and Data Protection	ICCPR art.17 CPPR General Comment No16
Access of Information	ICCPR art.19 CCPR General Comment No 34
Transparency	United Nations Convention against corruption UNCAC , art. 7(3), “[...] enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public offices [...]”
Equality and Freedom from Discrimination	ICCPR art. 2,3 CCPR General Comment No 31

SOCIAL MEDIA Analysis EU EOM Framework – WHAT

- Freedom of expression, access to internet, access to information, privacy and data protection;
- Supervisory bodies;
- Agreement between EMB and social media platforms;
- Legal and regulatory framework for online election campaign.

- Internet penetration and access to social media;
- Online presence of political contestants;
- Online presence of other political and state actors, influencers, activists, religious leaders, others;
- Most relevant pages and accounts;
- Digital literacy and fact-checking



- **Information Manipulation**
- **Derogatory speech, hateful content;**
- intimidation and threats to contestants;
- Online Gendered based violence
- Illicit Microtargeting

- Election-related content shared by EMB, official pages and accounts;
- Voter information initiatives
- Election-related information shared by influencers, media, CSOs, etc.;
- **Campaign online by contestants;**
- **Political ADVERTISING by contestants, third-parties, authorities, other actors**



1. The EU EOM will need to balance constraints and priorities when defining the scope of the monitoring considering the time and the resources allocated. *In terms of areas of assessment and platforms some may be more important than others given the political/media landscape of a country.*

2. The EU EOMs most relevant platforms are:

FACEBOOK – INSTAGRAM – YOUTUBE – TWITTER – TIK TOK

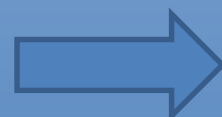
3. THE EU EOM INCLUDES ONLY PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT –
Therefore private messaging apps are out of the scope (WhatsApp –ecc due to data protection and privacy matters)

Social Listening Tools used during EU EOMs – HOW

To collect data:



To collect data:



To date, there is no official API available from **Tik Tok** to gather data for research. Tools available are not highly developed and they will require experimenting with trials.



POLITICAL ADVERTISING ONLINE

This area of observation is closely linked with the assessment of the campaign and party finance!

The most common types of political advertising and sponsored content are:

- ❖ Labelled official ads by Political party and candidates
 - ❖ Ads by Third Party /Non Contentants
- ❖ Advertising by state institution and public officials
 - ❖ Dark Ads

ADVERTISING ONLINE by NON- Contestants

Advertising and sponsored content placed by 3rd parties online is one of the emerging most interesting aspect to address and currently 1 of the most challenging

WHY

- Overall Lack of regulations and unclear online platforms community rules
- There is little transparency about who paid for it and who benefits
- Often fuel information disorder and undermine the integrity of the electoral process
- Can circumvent campaign rules more easily and place themselves in a ‘grey area’

EU EOMs RECOMMENDATIONS

Each EU EOM drafts a set of recommendations as part of its Final Report for how the host country can improve its election process in line with regional and international standards

Inadequate legal framework for campaign finance, lack of meaningful oversight and limited awareness of the rules among contestants resulted in non-transparent campaign financing (**EU EOM KOSOVO 2021**)

Inadequate campaign finance regulations undermine transparency and leave political parties and candidates unaccountable (**EU EOM SIERRA LEONE 2023**)

An inadequate legal framework coupled with the acute socio-economic crisis allowed for the proliferation of vote-buying practices, affecting the level playing field
(**EU EOM LEBANON 2021**)

Campaign finance rules NOT in line with good practice (**EU EOM TIMOR LESTE 2021**)

The lack of an effective oversight of campaign funding and spending, and the absence of a deterring effect of sanctions resulted in highly unequal chances in the electoral competition (**EU EOM HONDURAS 2021**)

THANK YOU

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