

Brussels, 22 January 2019

WFA's note on its responsibilities and activities in relation to the Code of Practice on Disinformation

The World Federation of Advertisers (WFA, EU Transparency Register: 6440918199-49) is the voice of marketers worldwide, representing 90% of global marketing communications spend – over €800 billion per year – through a unique, global network of the world's biggest markets and biggest marketers. WFA champions responsible and effective marketing communications worldwide. As a signatory of the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation, the WFA recognizes the importance to address the challenges posed by the dissemination of disinformation.

WFA's role as a trade association signatory is and will continue to be in line with the guidelines set forth in the Code. WFA will continue to raise awareness of the Code amongst its membership and encourage WFA members to join it or respect its principles, as appropriate. This includes circulating information amongst members, discussing the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation in various forums and meetings and integrating this topic into WFA's 2019 agenda.

Most importantly, the issue of disinformation has been incorporated into WFA's Global Media Charter, which identifies key issues within the digital advertising ecosystem that WFA members see today. WFA's Global Media Charter was co-written by a number of WFA members, including both corporate global advertisers and national advertiser associations, not just in Europe but globally.

The document has the full support of WFA members, and the issues identified, as well as the commitments made by advertisers, have been integrated into WFA's planning and strategic priorities for 2019. The Global Media Charter identifies the principles by which advertisers seek to operate with partners in order to resolve a wide range of industry issues and sets out specific requirements for this to happen.

The Media Charter also outlines a number of obligations for its participants. On disinformation, the document makes the following statement:

"We [advertisers] understand that advertising can fuel and sustain sites which misuse and infringe upon Intellectual Property (IP) laws. Equally advertising revenue may be used to sustain sites responsible for 'fake news' content or 'disinformation'.

Advertisers commit to avoiding (and support their partners in the avoidance of) the funding of actors seeking to influence division or seeking to inflict reputational harm on business or society and politics at large through content that appears false and/or misleading."

Following recent discussions with the European Commission, WFA is looking forward to working with the European Commission to explore the various commercial options available which could help advertisers "deploy policies and processes to disrupt advertising and monetisation incentives for relevant behaviours, such as mispresenting material information about oneself or the purpose of one's properties" and, where relevant, share this information with WFA members.

As per WFA's competition law compliance policy, WFA will not endorse or recommend specific commercial partners and it remains at the sole discretion of individual advertisers to assess the relevance, feasibility and suitability of working with any vendor, as well as carry out any related due diligence.