

## Fighting Disinformation in Slovakia

*The project, 'Researching Europe, Digitalisation and Conspiracy Theories' (REDACT), not only set out to understand digital disinformation but to contribute to attempts to curb it. The project has been working with its project partners – organisations tasked with monitoring and combatting disinformation in different European countries – to consider the role that conspiracy theories, as a distinct sub-set of disinformation, play in digital information ecologies.*

One of these project partners is Konspiratori.sk in Slovakia. The organisation, launched in 2016, identifies and lists websites that regularly publish conspiracy theories, hoaxes, pseudoscience, or propaganda content. It was created in response to the growing proliferation of disinformation and conspiracy theories in Slovak and Czech online spaces.

Konspiratori.sk maintains a publicly accessible database of untrustworthy websites, reviewed by an independent panel of multi-disciplinary expert volunteers. The primary goal is to help advertisers, media agencies, and the general public avoid financially supporting or spreading harmful online content by unknowingly interacting with these sites.

Beyond its database, Konspiratori.sk has expanded its efforts into media literacy.

By promoting media transparency, critical thinking, and responsible advertising, Konspiratori.sk plays a key role in improving Slovakia's information environment. It remains a prominent example of a civil society-led effort to combat disinformation in Central Europe. In short, Konspiratori.sk is a success story. Nevertheless, the organisation is always seeking ways to evolve. Working with REDACT and drawing on its research, Konspiratori.sk has changed its public-facing communication and practice.

For example, Konspiratori.sk's FAQ – a widely used resource in this area – had not been updated since 2016, but the threats, actors, communication channels and the methodologies used to understand them have evolved considerably since then. Konspiratori.sk drew on findings from the REDACT project to revise the FAQ to now include more nuanced definitions of key terms. In addition, Konspiratori.sk's communication now reflects REDACT's key insights into how online conspiracy theories work. For example, it emphasises how conspiracism must be understood not simply as a problem of factually incorrect information, but as a way of knowing tied to identity and belonging.

Konspiratori.sk has always understood the supply side (particularly the bad faith monetisation of conspiracy theories), but, drawing on research by the REDACT team, now also considers the demand side (what people might be seeking from conspiracy theories). They are also weaving this approach into their on-the-ground media literacy training.

Pavol Hardoš, a founding member of Konspiratori.sk and REDACT researcher, comments:

*“Our experts have often relied on their domain expertise and tacit knowledge for assessing indivi-*

*dual websites, but given what we know about disinformation and digital conspiracy theories in particular from the REDACT project, we have developed sharper definitions of the phenomena we work with to help the public understand the different forms that disinformation takes.”*

He continues, *“through the work with REDACT, we have started to contend with the fact that conspiracy and disinformation content is no longer spread primarily through websites, but on social media, often by ordinary users, influencers and political figures.”*



## Prečo vznikla táto iniciatíva

**1.** Prečo používať našu databázu?

**2.** Prečo obsahové inzertné siete nechránia zadávateľa reklamy?

**3.** Aký je náš mandát označiť web za neetický?

**4.** Aké weby sa dostanú na tento zoznam?

**5.** Aké sú kritériá na zaradenie do našej databázy

**6.** Ako funguje komisia a zaraďovanie do zoznamu?