



9th ASEF Editors' Roundtable (ASEFERT9)

15-16 October 2018, Brussels

Exploring the Battlefronts of 'Fake News':

A Tripartite Approach to the Fight Against Misinformation

CONCEPT NOTE

Misinformation is an age old concept that has been around for as long as news itself. Having assumed various forms over the course of history, from propaganda campaigns to spin doctoring, it has once again been cast into the international spotlight, brandishing a new title: "Fake News".

Not too long ago, the phrase "Fake News" was merely used to describe a social media phenomenon. It has since rapidly evolved into a journalistic cliché, political slur and, on occasion, deemed a matter of national security.

The proliferation of the smart phone and social media platforms has disrupted traditional methods of news consumption. This has led to the prevalence of online disinformation campaigns and information warfare which has been established as a part of modern statecraft, holding an equal importance to conventional kinetic warfare. It harnesses the ability to tear away at social fabrics, sowing discord and undermining fundamental democratic systems, while maintaining a disproportionately low cost against high impacts and returns.

Many governments across the world have already begun detailing their plans to combat this global challenge with the use of legislation. However, international observers hold the view that legislation alone is an oversimplified and incomplete solution to a more complex problem at hand.

The ASEF Editors' Roundtable (ASEFERT) is a 2-day biennial forum aimed at promoting dialogue, strengthening ties and cross-continental cooperation between 20-30 news editors from ASEM partner countries across Asia and Europe. This year's edition of ASEFERT9 takes on a multi-stakeholder approach and examines the following:

- Problems faced by journalism in the current news media landscape;
- Sociopolitical disruption that has been brought about by the proliferation of "Fake News";
- Country-specific legislations that have already or are expecting to be imposed and what this means for stakeholders;
- Countermeasures adopted by news media outlets and civil society to fight back against such falsehoods.

In recognising the complexities of the issue and the necessity of a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach, ASEFERT9 will include representatives from news media, policy expertise, tech companies, and civil societies to create a robust discussion and provide for a diversity of opinion.

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The intended outcome of the 2-day ASEFERT9 is to curate a detailed report on how the scourge of Fake News is being fought from a tri-sectorial approach in individual countries across Asia and Europe. Through the resulting discussions of the roundtable, a series of country reports as well as an agreement on key principles to further action will be compiled and published for online distribution and submitted to the ASEM Governments.

Participating Editors

Editors from the ASEM partner countries will be selected to attend ASEFERT9. Attending editors will submit a full-page written report containing case studies and events from their specific countries on how online disinformation has disrupted their country's sociopolitical sphere. The report should also include any corporate policies and legislation that have come into or are already in effect, with an assessment of the effectiveness or shortfalls of such solutions. This report must be submitted in July 2018 and may be requested to be updated leading up to the ASEFERT9. The reports are scheduled to be published in the finalized conference booklet with full accreditation. Editors are expected to participate actively in the discussions during the roundtable and will be notified beforehand should they be selected to give oral presentations during the roundtable.

The roundtable runs immediately before the 12th ASEM Summit (ASEM12; 18-19 October 2018), allowing for attending editors to stay behind and cover the Summit itself. ASEF will help to facilitate attending editors to gain media access to cover the Summit.

Contact

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