

Code of Practice on
Disinformation – Report of
Newtral for the period
January – July 2025

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Executive summary

Newtral is a media startup founded in January 2018. Our work is divided into three main business areas:

- Fact-checking and data verification. On our website, you can find debunked hoaxes, fact-checks on political statements, as well as explainers, visualizations, and articles from our contributors.
- Audiovisual production for television programs and streaming platforms. Our productions include *El Objetivo* de Ana Pastor, *Dónde Estabas Entonces*, and *Generación Top*, aired on laSexta; *Nevenka* for Netflix; *Sueño Real* for HBO; and *Los Borbones: una familia real* and *Asesinas* on LaSexta.
- Innovation and research based on Artificial Intelligence protocols. We have made significant advancements in various AI-driven fact-checking solutions through automation on a language-agnostic platform powered by Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

At Newtral, we are journalists, engineers, researchers, programmers, producers, directors, editors, graphic designers, and documentalists.

Newtral's fact-checking team is formed by independent journalists who have no relationship with any political party, private interest, or advocacy organization. This team fact-checks the statements of politicians from different parties and public administrations daily, as well as debunks viral misinformation, as well as other related products, such as prebunking, research on disinformation, and narratives. Our fact-checks aim for replicability (so that anyone can follow the process we have followed), and to this end, we include links and a list of sources we have used, including their links. We also invite readers to contact our team if they detect an error, have any comments about data related to our work, or have any doubts about anything whatsoever.

Newtral has partnerships with Meta and TikTok for debunking content proactively on those platforms. We also have a fact-checking tipline through WhatsApp, where anyone can ask us to verify any content they suspect is false. Besides journalists and fact-checkers, Newtral's team includes engineers and data scientists working on the automation of the fact-checking workflow. We have expertise in deep learning techniques and NLP data analysis. Additionally, we are members of both the EFCSN and the IFCN, reinforcing Newtral's commitment to upholding fact-checking standards, fostering transparency, and promoting the integrity of information.

Newtral's activities also cover other types of journalism and reporting, always highlighting the importance of data analysis and the interrelations between computer science and journalism.

As of 2019, Newtral also has an educational area under the name Newtral Educación, devoted to media literacy, data journalism, and promoting critical thinking in educational centers, universities, and others.

Newtral joined the Code of Practice on Disinformation in 2022, reinforcing our commitment to transparency and the fight against misinformation. As part of this initiative, we actively participated in the transition of the Code into a Code of Conduct under the Digital Services Act (DSA). This process marked a crucial step in strengthening the European Union's efforts to create a safer and more reliable information ecosystem.

V. Empowering Users	
Commitment 17	
In light of the European Commission's initiatives in the area of media literacy, including the new Digital Education Action Plan, Relevant Signatories commit to continue and strengthen their efforts in the area of media literacy and critical thinking, also with the aim to include vulnerable groups. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 17.1	
QRE 17.1.1 [insert wording if adapted]	<p>At Newtral, we have media literacy as one of our main objectives. In 2019, we launched Newtral Educación, a full division devoted to pursuing this goal. Through it, we participate in many activities with different types of civil society organizations, universities, and companies to generate a critical spirit and promote good practices in the field of verification.</p> <p>In 2025, Newtral Educación has expanded its reach through comprehensive programs targeting vulnerable communities and diverse audiences. Our initiatives include specialized workshops with law enforcement, educational institutions (CFIE Valladolid, Universidad Javeriana), and civil society organizations (FELGTBI+ or Psychobeers Granada), among others. We've strengthened international collaboration through IBERIFIER+, the Iberian EDMO hub, and partnerships with European institutions, while delivering targeted training on emerging threats like deepfakes and AI-generated content. Our community-based approach ensures media literacy reaches beyond urban centers to rural populations through local partnerships across Spain's regions.</p>
SLI 17.1.1 - actions enforcing policies above [change wording if adapted]	<p>Actions enforcing media literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Outreach and Training Programs: Extensive workshops and training sessions conducted by Newtral across universities and schools throughout Spain, including collaborations with Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universidad de Cádiz, Universitat Jaume I de Castelló, Universidad de Valladolid, Universidad Javeriana (Colombia), and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, covering topics such as fact-checking, disinformation identification, and data journalism for high school students, university journalism programs, and professional development for educators. • Targeted Support for Vulnerable Communities: Specific initiatives by Newtral addressing groups at risk of disinformation, including workshops with UNAD on addiction and drug-related misinformation, and sessions with FELGTBI+ focused on combating LGBTI+ hate speech. • Professional Capacity Building: Training programs delivered by Newtral for the Ministerio del Interior (National Police), Solar Power Energy, and media professionals to enhance their ability to identify and counter disinformation on specific topics, including specialized sessions on AI and verification technologies with institutions like Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, and Instituto RTVE. • International Collaboration and Research: Active participation by Newtral in European initiatives through IBERIFIER+, EDMO, EFCSN, and the European Parliament, international conferences with IFCN Global Fact, and research partnerships with universities like University of Sussex, Hanken School of Economics (Finland), and Universidad Diego Portales (Chile) to share best practices and develop new approaches to media literacy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth and Digital Natives Focus: Dedicated programs by Newtral for young people, including university student collaborations with Universidad Complutense de Madrid, UC3M, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, secondary school workshops, and specific training on emerging threats like deepfakes, recognizing that digital natives require specialized approaches to media literacy. • Community-Based Education: Local and regional workshops by Newtral in collaboration with organizations like Psychobeers Granada, CESEG, and Columbares in smaller cities and communities (Valladolid, Granada, Castellón, Murcia, León, Santiago), ensuring that media literacy education reaches beyond major urban centers to include rural and underserved populations who may be more vulnerable to disinformation.
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X. Monitoring of Code	
Commitment 38	
<p>The Signatories commit to dedicate adequate financial and human resources and put in place appropriate internal processes to ensure the implementation of their commitments under the Code. [change wording if adapted]</p>	
Measure 38.1	<p>Newtral has appointed two dedicated representatives to actively engage in the Permanent Task Force and its associated Subgroups, as part of our commitment to the Code of Conduct on Disinformation (formerly the Code of Practice). These representatives are responsible for overseeing the coordination and alignment of Newtral's internal initiatives with the commitments outlined in the Code. Their role includes facilitating cross-departmental efforts, monitoring progress, and ensuring that our policies, tools, and outputs reflect both the spirit and the requirements of the Code.</p> <p>In addition to pursuing full and transparent compliance, Newtral is committed to playing a proactive role within the broader community of stakeholders. Our representatives contribute regularly by sharing best practices, technical know-how, and practical insights drawn from our experience in fact-checking, AI-driven analysis, and media monitoring.</p> <p>Newtral also maintains a continuous social media monitoring system in Spain, tracking disinformation narratives across major platforms as well as messaging apps such as Telegram and a tipline on WhatsApp. Our team publishes key findings and regularly shares insights and conclusions with the wider international fact-checking community, contributing to greater awareness, coordination, and preparedness in addressing evolving disinformation trends.</p> <p>Through this engagement, we aim not only to meet obligations but to help shape the collective response to disinformation across Europe—strengthening coordination, encouraging innovation, and reinforcing the credibility and effectiveness of the Code itself.</p>
QRE 38.1.1 [insert wording if adapted] xx	<p>Newtral has allocated sufficient resources and has established appropriate internal processes to ensure the effective implementation of our commitments under the Code. We have formed a team of two people and instituted internal processes to achieve comprehensive coverage across all aspects of our commitment.</p>

X. Monitoring of Code
<p align="center">Commitment 39</p> <p>Signatories commit to provide to the European Commission, within 1 month after the end of the implementation period (6 months after this Code's signature) the baseline reports as set out in the Preamble. [change wording if adapted]</p>
<p>This marks Newtral's fifth report submission under our commitment to the Code. Our previous reports are published and can be found in the Transparency Center, ensuring continuous monitoring and accountability. With this new report, we cover all relevant activities and developments since our last submission, reaffirming our dedication to transparency and the fight against disinformation.</p>

X. Monitoring of Code	
Commitment 40	
Signatories commit to provide regular reporting on Service Level Indicators (SLIs) and Qualitative Reporting Elements (QREs). The reports and data provided should allow for a thorough assessment of the extent of the implementation of the Code’s Commitments and Measures by each Signatory, service and at Member State level. [change wording if adapted]	
Measure 40.1	Newtral is delivering its fifth report.
Measure 40.2	Newtral is fully committed to cooperating with the European Commission, ensuring prompt responses to their requests for information and data. This cooperation is aimed at facilitating an efficient and thorough monitoring process for the conversion of the Code.
Measure 40.3	In the next six months, our focus will be on actively tracking the changes and new obligations arising from the implementation of the Code of Conduct (CoC) within the framework of the Digital Services Act (DSA). This includes not only the ongoing reporting but also addressing any additional requirements or developments as they emerge, ensuring our full alignment with the evolving standards and contributing to the ongoing work.
Measure 40.4	As part of the EFCSN, we contribute to monitoring the reports submitted by other stakeholders to check the degree of compliance.
Measure 40.5	<p>In line with our dedication to transparency and effective coordination, we have initiated substantive conversations with the national coordinator in Spain, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia (CNMC), to better understand the implementation framework and establish clear channels for direct communication. These discussions have proven essential for aligning our reporting processes with national oversight mechanisms and ensuring that our data contributions effectively support policy assessment at the Member State level.</p> <p>Our dialogue with CNMC has focused on clarifying reporting expectations and establishing regular communication protocols that will enhance the quality and utility of our submissions. This collaborative approach ensures that we provide meaningful insights into the effectiveness of our disinformation countermeasures and educational initiatives within the Spanish context.</p>

X. Monitoring of Code
<p align="center">Commitment 42</p>

Relevant Signatories commit to provide, in special situations like elections or crisis, upon request of the European Commission, proportionate and appropriate information and data, including ad-hoc specific reports and specific chapters within the regular monitoring, in accordance with the rapid response system established by the Taskforce. [change wording if adapted]

From January to June 2025, Newtral maintained its commitment to providing proportionate and appropriate information to support the European Commission's rapid response system, despite the absence of major electoral events in Spain during this period. Our efforts focused on proactive monitoring and cross-border intelligence gathering to enhance preparedness for future sensitive periods.

Although Spain did not experience any elections in the first half of 2025, Newtral actively monitored disinformation trends and electoral interference patterns in other European countries to strengthen our early warning capabilities. This surveillance approach will allow us to identify emerging narrative frameworks, manipulation techniques, and technological threats that could potentially impact Spanish democratic processes in future electoral cycles.

Our educational outreach through workshops and training programs across Spanish institutions served as an additional component of our preparedness strategy, building societal resilience against the types of disinformation tactics observed in other European contexts during this monitoring period.

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 43

Relevant Signatories commit to provide, in special situations like elections or crisis, upon request of the European Commission, proportionate and appropriate information and data, including ad-hoc specific reports and specific chapters within the regular monitoring, in accordance with the rapid response system established by the Taskforce. [change wording if adapted]

Newtral is committed to generating reports and providing data in accordance with the harmonized reporting templates and refined methodology for reporting and data disclosure, collectively agreed upon within the Taskforce. As part of our proactive approach, we are actively preparing to enhance the maturity of this commitment in anticipation of the upcoming European elections.

Additionally, Newtral is involved in EuroClimateCheck (FactCRICIS), a project launched in May 2024 and co-funded by the European Union. It aims to strengthen European fact-checking organizations' responses to crises related to climate change by providing advanced tools, expert networks, and improved methodologies. This initiative further supports our readiness to address disinformation during crises, ensuring faster, more coordinated responses.

Newtral has also contributed to gathering information on domestic disinformation actors for the report prepared by EFCSN for the European Commission: "Examples of Domestic Disinformation in EU Member States".

Reporting on the service's response during a period of
crisis

Reporting on the service's response during a crisis

Torre-Pacheco unrest (July 2025)

Threats observed or anticipated at time of reporting: [suggested character limit 2000 characters].

Following an assault on an elderly resident in Torre Pacheco (Murcia) on July 9, 2025, Newtral identified severe disinformation threats that escalated racial violence in this municipality of 40,000 inhabitants, where 30% are foreign residents. Primary threats included: systematic circulation of decontextualized violent videos falsely attributed to Torre Pacheco, including footage from Almería (May 2025), Guadalajara Mexico (2021), Torreveja, and Fuenlabrada Madrid (2021); fabricated official communications falsely attributed to Torre Pacheco city council making xenophobic statements; coordinated hate networks using Telegram channels like "Deport Them Now" issuing calls for migrant "hunts" and threats; international disinformation amplification through Russian Pravda network (232 contents in 4 days), Polish extreme-right account 'Visegrad 24', and pro-Russian 'Radio Genoa' generating 3 million views; circulation of unverified suspect identities and vehicle information presented as confirmed attackers; false imagery including staged scenes (jamón display in Huelva 2024 presented as "counterattack against Muslims"); and manipulation of legitimate incidents (elderly man's fall in El Algar presented as immigrant assault). These narratives were strategically deployed by ultra-nationalist groups, VOX proxies, and international networks to inflame racial tensions, coordinate physical violence, and establish "vigilante patrols" featuring neo-Nazi symbolism, demonstrating sophisticated coordination between domestic extremist groups and foreign disinformation networks.

Mitigations in place at time of reporting: [suggested character limit: 2000 characters].

Newtral implemented comprehensive countermeasures to address the Torre Pacheco disinformation crisis through systematic debunking. Our response included immediate fact-checking of viral decontextualized videos, providing detailed verification showing true origins (Almería, Mexico, Torreveja, etc.) with precise geolocation and temporal evidence. We debunked fabricated official communications by directly coordinating with Torre Pacheco city council spokespersons, who confirmed false documents had no institutional origin. Our investigation exposed the international coordination of hate networks, documenting connections between the Russian Pravda network, the Polish 'Visegrad 24', and domestic extremist groups, providing transparency about foreign interference in local conflicts.

We referred to Guardia Civil and local police to verify official information about arrests and investigation status, preventing the spread of false claims about suspect identities. Our mitigation strategy included real-time monitoring of Telegram channels used by hate groups to coordinate violence, documenting their expansion from 50 to 1,000 followers during the crisis. We provided detailed context about the broader coordination network, exposing VOX-linked propaganda channels (HerQles, Gaceta de la Iberosfera, Revuelta) that initially amplified the incidents.

Our reporting included expert analysis from criminologists and hate crime specialists, contextualizing the violence within broader patterns of rural precarity and structural conflicts rather than spontaneous racism. We maintained continuous updates as new false narratives emerged, creating a comprehensive resource documenting over 10 distinct disinformation pieces designed to inflame racial violence and coordinated by both domestic and international actors seeking to exploit local tensions for broader political objectives.

Reporting on the service's response during a crisis

Iberian Peninsula blackout (April 2025)

Threats observed or anticipated at time of reporting: [suggested character limit 2000 characters].

The April 2025 blackout across the Iberian Peninsula triggered not only a technical crisis but also a wave of disinformation that threatened to exacerbate public confusion and erode trust in institutions. As fact-checkers at Newtral, we identified several key threats in real time: Russian-Linked Disinformation Campaigns: Outlets such as Pravda and Kombat falsely claimed the blackout was a cyberattack orchestrated by NATO or Ukraine. These narratives sought to exploit the crisis for geopolitical manipulation. Viral Falsehoods on Social Media: Unverified rumors spread rapidly, including claims of mass casualties, government cover-ups, and deliberate infrastructure sabotage. Some posts misleadingly blamed renewable energy policies for the collapse. Risk of Escalation: The prolonged outage raised concerns about secondary effects, including civil unrest due to delayed power restoration and potential cyberattacks targeting weakened grid systems. Newtral's role was critical in monitoring, verifying, and countering these narratives before they could further destabilize public perception.

Mitigations in place at time of reporting: [suggested character limit: 2000 characters].

The widespread power outage that affected the Iberian Peninsula in April 2025 created not just an energy crisis but also an information crisis. At Newtral, we immediately recognized the potential for disinformation to exploit public uncertainty and began our fact-checking operations to counter false narratives and provide reliable information to citizens.

From the first hours after the blackout, our monitoring systems detected coordinated disinformation campaigns attempting to frame the incident as something more sinister than a technical failure. Russian-aligned media outlets such as Pravda and Kombat were particularly active, circulating unfounded claims that NATO or Ukrainian actors had orchestrated a cyberattack to cause the blackout. These narratives, while completely baseless, gained worrying traction across social media platforms.

We responded with rapid verification and debunking efforts. Our team published multiple investigative pieces that systematically dismantled these false claims. One key article exposed how Russian-linked portals were pushing the NATO cyberattack narrative without providing any credible evidence. Another comprehensive fact-check addressed the flood of rumors spreading on social media, from exaggerated claims about casualties to conspiracy theories blaming renewable energy infrastructure.

Beyond publishing corrections, we took proactive steps to limit the spread of misinformation. Our team worked directly with social media platforms to flag and report the most harmful falsehoods, particularly those that risked inciting panic or undermining public trust in the restoration efforts. We also maintained close communication with government agencies and energy providers to ensure our fact-checks aligned with the latest official information.

Recognizing that crisis situations create particular vulnerability to misinformation, we prioritized clear, accessible communication. Our team produced easy-to-understand explainers that helped citizens distinguish between verified facts and unfounded rumors. These were designed for maximum shareability across digital platforms, helping good information spread as quickly as the bad.

The blackout revealed several concerning trends in how disinformation operates during infrastructure crises. Malicious actors demonstrated their ability to quickly exploit technical failures to push geopolitical narratives. Ordinary users, often with good intentions, amplified false claims while trying to make sense of the situation. This created a perfect storm where misinformation could spread faster than official corrections.

Our work during this crisis underscored the vital role of independent fact-checking in maintaining public trust during emergencies. While we were able to counter many false narratives, the experience also highlighted the need for stronger preventative measures, including media literacy initiatives and better coordination between fact-checkers, platforms, and authorities, to build societal resilience against future disinformation campaigns.

