An exposition on THe forEign informatioN mAnipulation and Interference

PRESS RELEASE

16th of September 2024

ATHENA Consortium Meeting successful held in Barcelona to discuss key milestones

A consortium of universities, fact-checkers and industry met in Barcelona for two days to discuss foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) especially in Europe, within the framework of ATHENA project.

The meeting was hosted by Eurecat technology centre, a research and innovation institute based in Catalonia, whose Director of IT&OT Security Unit, Juan Caubet, described "disinformation as a plague of our times" and called upon all stakeholders to do more to combat it. "We will contribute with our knowledge and experience to the process of analysis and modelling of threats and attacks in the field of cybersecurity and disinformation to a more secure digital future", explained Juan Caubet.

The participants are partners in a three-year, EU-funded project called ATHENA (An exposition on THe forEign informatioN mAnipulation and interference) which is conducting 30 case studies of FIMI. The case studies are examining the tactics, techniques and procedures used by attackers to sow distrust in western societies, to disrupt elections, and the possible countermeasures.

The initiative collects and processes foreign information manipulation and interference data and develops a knowledge graph, a disinformation analysis toolbox and dashboard showing the prevalence of FIMI and the countermeasures in action.

Moreover, ATHENA seeks to strengthen Europe's resilience to disinformation campaigns that aim to destabilize and undermine democratic values by developing tools and methods to help citizens detect, analyse, and counter FIMI.

Specifically, the project produces an easy-to-use questionnaire that anyone can use to decide whether they are confronted by FIMI and is also conducting a "horizon-scanning" task aimed at focusing on how new technologies could amplify disinformation in the next years, as with deepfakes and chatbots.

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ATHENA

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The consortium is also considering the technical, social, and regulatory aspects of FIMI and is collaborating with five other EU-funded projects concerned with other related aspects of disinformation. The six-project FIMI cluster has agreed to exchange findings, knowledge and recommendations and to invite each other to project webinars and other events.

The ATHENA consortium, with a €3 million budget funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe program, comprises leading experts from universities, research institutions, fact-checkers and technology industry from across Europe.

The project partners are: Trilateral Research, the project coordinator, Eurecat, the Maldita.es Foundation, the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH), the University of Cyprus, the Bavarian Police Academy, the Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE), Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Storyzy, Trinity College Dublin, the European Organisation for Security, EU-Disinfo and University College Dublin.

For more information, please visit our webpage: www.project-athena.eu.

Consortium:

Trilateral Research (TRI), Ireland
The Foundation for Research and Technology (FORTH), Greece
University of Cyprus (UCY), Cyprus
Bavarian Police Academy (HfoeD), Germany
Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE), Sweden
Laurea University (LAU), Finland
Eurecat (EUT), Spain
Storyzy (ST), France
Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Ireland
European Organisation for Security (EOS), Belgium
Maldita (MAL), Spain
EU – DisinfoLab (EU-D), Belgium
University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland
ISSP (ISSP), Ukraine
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