



Annual General Debate of the 45th Session of the Committee on Information, 25 April 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Adam Kuymizakis
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Chair

Thank you for giving me the floor and I wish to take this opportunity to also thank Under-Secretary-General Melissa Fleming for her insightful briefing on the commendable work undertaken by the Department of Global Communications in delivering the work of the United Nations to a global audience.

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to add a few remarks within its national capacity.

We are currently living in an era of unbridled technological advances which continue to shift our understanding of information dissemination and consumption. Modern communications have provided us with multiple platforms which allow immense potential for global citizens to navigate, share and build on information, in an ever-expanding network.

Yet, with the immense opportunities brought about by such technologies, we are also facing increasing and novel threats in the way that disinformation and misinformation can spread. Advances in artificial intelligence, particularly through Large Language Models and similar technologies, now



have the potential to create entire news ecosystems to validate malicious disinformation.

Unless addressed through safe, affordable, secure, and sustainable digital technologies, the threats of disinformation and misinformation will continue to grow as their spread becomes increasingly complex, with wider reaches.

Chair

Malta fully supports the United Nations' role in the global discourse towards countering existing and emerging challenges to factual information. We commend the crucial work that the DGC is doing on this front, and also in its varied work in providing factual coverage on UN activities and global issues, engagement with the public, civil society and the media as well as its efforts in empowering students through interactions with UN staff. The Department is pivotal in reinforcing the understanding of the United Nations as a trusted source of unbiased and factual information.

Malta also commends and welcomes the work the Department is undertaking on the global code of conduct promoting integrity in public information, which was called for by the Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda* as a key proposal under the commitment of building trust.

We urge the Department to continue its work in countering disinformation and misinformation on three particular fronts where we have seen tangible consequences of these issues.



First is the climate crisis, an all-encompassing existential threat which continues to be spurred by rhetoric which challenges empirically based scientific facts and which is an additional impediment to our generation's and future generations' most demanding coordination efforts.

Second is the use of information manipulation in war and conflict, which has contributed to a contemporary version of a "fog of war." The war in Ukraine has demonstrated how disinformation can be used to mislead, distort, and destabilise a critical situation further into hostilities and how it poses a significant threat to multilateralism.

Finally, on initiatives towards countering misinformation related to healthcare, particularly vaccination, which we saw proliferate during the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of having equitable distribution of, and access to, vaccines coupled with access to accurate information is imperative to continue distributing vaccines to communities which are still threatened by the pandemic.

Chair

Malta is a strong proponent for the importance of multilingualism, and we are pleased to note increased efforts towards inclusion and diversity of varied local and ethnic languages, other than the six official languages of the UN. In line with this, it is also crucial to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, to legitimate and factual information.



In Malta's current capacity as an elected member of the Security Council, we are also seeking to prioritise the importance of literacy as a peacebuilding tool. We believe that digital literacy, in particular, is ideal to develop people's capacity to recognise and counter mis- and disinformation, violent extremism and conspiracy theories which often result in hate speech and can further regress into violence and atrocities.

Investing in literacy within a society thus promotes peacebuilding by empowering literate persons to have a multiplier effect on their wider society, not only by improving their economic, political and democratic participation, but also by improving their capacities to seek, analyse and distinguish between facts and falsifications, allowing them to better navigate the contemporary information landscape.

Malta deeply values the work of the Committee on Information and we stand ready to support you in your efforts.

I thank you.