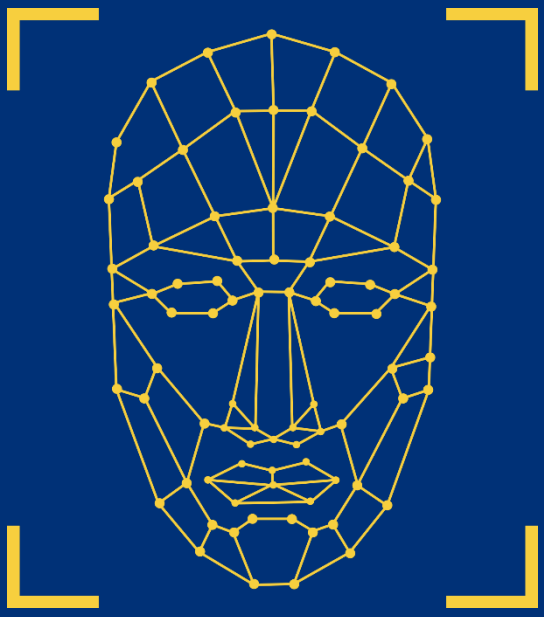
HDMO
Hungarian Media Observatory
Against Disinformation

POLITICAL CAPITAL
POLICY RESEARCH & CONSULTING INSTITUTE



SYNTHETIC INFLUENCE

Deepfakes and artificial intelligence in the Hungarian election campaign

10 April 2026

Authors: **Richárd Demény, Péter Krekó, Csaba Molnár, Adél Tilistyák, Konrad Bleyer-Simon**

Co-funded by
the European Union

HDMO
Hungarian Media Observatory
Against Disinformation

POLITICAL CAPITAL

Table of contents

The research was carried out in the framework of the **HDMO (Hungarian Digital Media Observatory)** project, funded by the **European Union**. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Health and Digital Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Graphic Design: Réka Elekes

Co-funded by
the European Union

Executive Summary

This report mainly focuses on the video content generated with the help of artificial intelligence and disseminated during the Hungarian election campaign. **The topic is important because realistic deepfakes can be particularly persuasive, and even when individuals are aware of such technologies, vivid audiovisual representations continue to shape judgments and perceptions.** These materials often evoke strong emotions — such as fear, anger, empathy, or moral outrage. Moreover, their impact is persistent: even when content is later exposed as false, it can continue to shape attitudes and beliefs.

- **Our research and analyses show that, in the Hungarian election campaign, artificial intelligence is also used extensively to produce political imagery**: AI-generated political images have played a dominant role on the Facebook pages of government-controlled media outlets. In addition, a number of digital content creators produce AI-generated political videos, although their reach is typically moderate.
- **Among political actors, AI-generated videos are used most intensively by Fidesz and affiliated proxy organizations to support and amplify their political messages and narratives.** On the opposition side, the Democratic Coalition Party appears to be the only significant actor in this field.
- **AI-generated videos are also capable of circumventing Meta's system designed to filter political advertisements.** This allows such content to be distributed not only organically but also as paid advertisements despite existing restrictions. Paid advertisements often achieve substantially greater reach than organic distribution alone, enabling these contents to reach large audiences despite platform regulations.
- **AI videos with dehumanizing content, false information, or political statements that never made can currently appear on platforms without obstruction, influencing political campaigns in a malevolent way.**
- **This phenomenon is not unique to Hungary but reflects a broader global trend.** Artificial intelligence has rapidly become a key tool for the dissemination of electoral disinformation worldwide. Examples include AI-generated and deepfake content circulating during the 2024 U.S. presidential campaign, the 2025 German federal elections, the 2025 Irish presidential election, and the parliamentary elections in Slovakia in 2023. AI-based manipulation has quickly evolved into a globalized campaign tool. **No EU country has thus far witnessed such a massive proliferation of deepfakes generated by**

Co-funded by
the European Union

governmental actors - a striking example of state-sponsored disinformation.

- A public opinion survey conducted by Political Capital Institute a few weeks prior to the elections confirmed that their impact was massive in the campaign:
    - A large majority of respondents **(73%) report having encountered such content on social media**, with exposure varying significantly by political affiliation, age, and education.
    - These videos contribute to substantial levels of uncertainty: **more than half of those exposed (52%) report having been unsure whether a video was authentic or AI-generated**, and over one-third (37%) have at some point been misled into believing that manipulated content was real.
    - At the same time, **respondents tend to overestimate their own ability to detect such content**, **while expressing low confidence in others' ability to do so.**
    - Despite their growing prevalence, the use of AI-generated or manipulated videos in political communication met with overwhelming rejection, with **90% of respondents considering such practices unacceptable.**
    - **There is no comprehensive law in Hungary's legal system governing the use of AI for political communication purposes.** The legal approach treats AI as a tool rather than a subject of law, placing responsibility on those who create or disseminate the content which can result in both civil and criminal liability. However, these mechanisms are largely reactive, offering ex post remedies that are limited in their ability to address rapidly spreading content, particularly during election campaigns.
    - **At the European level, the AI Act regulates the use of AI on a risk-based approach to ensure its reliability.** It introduces strict regulatory requirements for high-risk AI systems intended to be used for influencing the outcome of an election and voting behaviour. However, these provisions are being implemented gradually and are not yet fully operational. In the interim, although social media platforms' terms of service and community policies include guidelines on AI-generated content as well, it is unclear how strictly these requirements are enforced. This creates an uneven enforcement environment in which harmful content can still achieve significant reach before being addressed. (see the policy subsection for regulatory considerations).

Co-funded by
the European Union

Recommendations

Our most important recommendations are the following:

For social media, microblogging, streaming, and potentially search platforms:

- While we acknowledge that these services cannot proactively identify all harmful deepfake content on their platform, we recommend that –at least during election campaigns, but preferably all year –**monitor content published on the profiles of the largest political actors (by the number of followers), including candidates, political parties, political activists, influencers, and political campaign organizations. As an outcome of this exercise, platforms should ensure this content is adequately labelled**.
- The same platforms should also ensure that deepfake content (unless labelled and clearly falling into the non-harmful category) **should not be eligible for monetization or advertising services.**
- Services that can be used to distribute deep fakes should cooperate with stakeholders along the value chain (especially with developers of AI technologies) to **improve the process of marking and detection**.

For generative AI platforms, and all potential providers and deployers of AI services (including the providers of the above mentioned services, if they also provide AI-generation services for their users):

- In line with the draft Code of Practice on Transparency of AI-Generated Content (second draft published on May 5, 2026), optional Measure 2.2, **support the development of forensic detectors to identify AI-generated content.**

For EU institutions:

- Pay closer attention to the systemic risk posed by unlabelled AI-generated content, **introduce stricter labelling obligations on technology services producing, deploying, or distributing AI-generated content**, as well as formulate binding requirements for distributors of AI content to take sufficient steps towards identifying AI-generated content on their services.

For content creators, including political actors, on the national level:

- **Always label AI-generated content,** no matter what share of the video is manipulated or what the intent behind the manipulation was.
- Before sharing videos created by others, **always ensure that manipulated components are clearly labelled**.

Co-funded by
the European Union

The Psychological Impact of Deepfakes

The rapid spread of generative artificial intelligence is transforming the disinformation landscape by enabling the large-scale production of highly persuasive synthetic media. AI-generated images, videos, and audio - particularly deepfakes - do not simply increase the quantity of false information but also exploit psychological mechanisms which makes the recipients more credule to false information. These technologies, of course, do not induce any novel mechanisms in how individuals proccess information. Instead, they exploit well-established cognitive biases, emotional reactions, and epistemic vulnerabilities, amplifying the influence of disinformation in digital information environments.[1] In the section below, we aim to summarize these psychological mechanisms.

Individuals tend to assign greater credibility to visual and audiovisual content than to text-based information because they rely on the heuristic that visual evidence reflects reality: we believe our own eyes. AI-generated videos and images exploit this bias by presenting fabricated events in highly – and increasingly - realistic formats. Research shows that multimodal disinformation, such as deepfake videos, can significantly increase perceived credibility and persuasive impact, especially when the source appears authentic or authoritative.[2] Even when individuals are aware that such technologies exist, vivid audiovisual representations still shape judgments and perceptions.

AI-generated disinformation also plays with our emotions. Synthetic media can be designed to evoke strong emotional reactions - including fear, anger, moral outrage, or empathy - that increase susceptibility to disinformation and encourage sharing behavior. Emotional arousal can reduce analytical reasoning and increase reliance on intuitive and quick processing, which can makes individuals more vulnerable to misleading information. Experimental studies demonstrate that emotionally charged deepfakes can significantly amplify belief in false narratives.[3]

AI-generated disinformation has an impact on us even when we know it is fake. Generally, disinformation continues to shape beliefs and attitudes even after it has been corrected. Once false information becomes integrated into individuals' cognitive

[1] Chesney, R., & Citron, D. (2019). Deepfakes and the new disinformation war. *Foreign Affairs*, 98(1), 147–155. ; Paris, B., & Donovan, J. (2019). *Deepfakes and cheap fakes: The manipulation of audio and visual evidence*. Data & Society.
[2] Lee, J., & Shin, S. Y. (2022). Something they never said: Multimodal disinformation and source vividness in understanding the power of AI-enabled deepfake news. *Media Psychology*, 25(4), 531–546.
[3] Agarwal, S., Farid, H., Güera, D., & Delp, E. J. (2020). Detecting deep-fake videos from appearance and behavior. IEEE International Workshop on Information Forensics and Security. ; Dobber, T., Metoui, N., Trilling, D., Helberger, N., & de Vreese, C. (2021). Do (microtargeted) deepfakes have real effects on political attitudes? Political Communication, 38(1–2), 69–91. ; Greengard, S. (2020). Will deepfakes do deep damage? Communications of the ACM, 63(1), 17–19.

Co-funded by
the European Union

representations, corrections often fail to fully eliminate its influence. When it comes to deepfakes in particular, disinformation appears in vivid and emotionally engaging formats - such as synthetic video - it can leave particularly persistent cognitive impact even if the fakeness of the content is indicated in a transparent manner.[4]

While deepfakes have the ability to deceive us even if we know they are not real, an infomation environment saturated with false information can create a general epistemic distrust. The growing availability of convincing synthetic media undermines confidence in the authenticity of audiovisual evidence. As a result, individuals may begin to doubt even genuine information. This dynamic can create what scholars have termed the *liar's dividend*: the ability of political actors to dismiss authentic recordings or evidence by claiming they are fabricated.[5] Importantly, research suggests that increasing awareness of deepfake technology does not necessarily improve people's ability to detect manipulated content; rather, it often increases generalized skepticism toward all media.[6]

The volume and speed of AI-generated content make it increasingly difficult for individuals to evaluate the credibility of information. Under conditions of information overload, people rely more heavily on cognitive shortcuts and heuristics rather than careful evaluation- and superficial information processing provides fertile ground for the acceptance of deceptive content. This tendency leads individuals to depend more strongly on prior beliefs, partisan identities, and social cues when assessing information credibility.[7]

Finally, these psychological processes collectively contribute to polarization and the erosion of shared reality. AI-generated disinformation can reinforce confirmation bias, intensify emotional reactions, and deepen informational echo chambers. As citizens become increasingly uncertain about the authenticity of information and more reliant on identity-driven interpretations of events, the shared epistemic foundations necessary for democratic deliberation become increasingly fragile.[8]

---

[4] Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and its correction: Continued influence and successful debiasing. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 13(3), 106–131. ; Clark, S., & Lewandowsky, S. (2026). The continued influence of AI-generated deepfake videos despite transparency warnings. *Communications Psychology*.

[5] Chesney & Citron, 2019 ; Vaccari, C., & Chadwick, A. (2020). Deepfakes and disinformation: Exploring the impact of synthetic political video on deception, uncertainty, and trust. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1).

[6] Ternovski, J., Kalla, J., & Aronow, P. (2021). Increased exposure to deepfake warnings and skepticism toward video evidence. *Political Behavior*.

[7] Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2019). Lazy, not biased: Susceptibility to partisan fake news is better explained by lack of reasoning than by motivated reasoning. *Cognition*, 188, 39–50. ; Lewandowsky et al., 2012

[8] Jack, C. (2020). *Lexicon of lies: Terms for problematic information*. Harvard Kennedy School. ; Tucker, J. A., Guess, A., Barberá, P., Vaccari, C., Siegel, A., Sanovich, S., Stukal, D., & Nyhan, B. (2018). Social media, political polarization, and political disinformation: A review of the scientific literature. *Political Polarization Project*.

Co-funded by
the European Union

How Deepfakes Are Shaping Elections Worldwide

By making us more susceptible to disinformation, the emergence of artifical intelligence has opened a Pandora's box in political campaigns as well. Generative AI and deepfake technologies now make it relatively easy and cost-effective to produce manipulated images, videos, and audio recordings that can be used to discredit political opponents or influence voters. This phenomenon is not confined to a single country: artificial intelligence has become a tool of election disinformation worldwide.

The 2024 U.S. presidential election illustrate perhaps the most how AI has become a tool in political campaigns. Over the course of the campaign, AI-generated content was widely produced and shared by politicians and their supporters, shaping political discourse. Pro-Trump groups made particularly aggressive use of the technology, disseminating AI-generated content such as the viral "Swifties for Trump" posts — generated images depicting singer Taylor Swift as a Trump-supporter, which Trump himself amplified by reposting.[9] Besides, deepfakes targeting Democratic candidate Kamala Harris circulated widely on social media, including a manipulated image — shared by Elon Musk — portraying her as a communist dictator,[10] and a fabricated video in which an AI-generated rendition of her voice described herself as a "*deep state puppet*."[11]

In the run-up to Germany's 2025 federal elections, the far-right political party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) was also an active user of artificial intelligence. A significant share of their posts conveyed anti-immigration narratives, depicting immigrants as the main perpetrators of crime in the country. Their videos regularly juxtaposed immigrant communities with idealized portrayals of blonde-haired, blue-eyed Germans. Even the co-chair of AfD, Alice Weidel, resorter to this dubious practice. The deepfake video she shared with the note "Do you remember how beautiful Germany used to be?" has more than 730,000 views.[12] Compounding the AfD's rise was a concurrent Russian-backed disinformation campaign aimed at Friedrich Merz, the CDU/CSU candidate for chancellor. Amplified by 700 fake social

[9] Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), *Truth Social*, August 2024, https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/112984762512136574
[10] Elon Musk (@elonmusk), *X*, September 3, 2024, https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1830656672211103825
[11] Mr Reagan, *YouTube*, July 2024, *"Kamala Harris Ad PARODY"*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVspeqNnoWM
[12] Alice Weidel (@Alice_Weidel), *X*, 2025, https://x.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1875937525073854893

Co-funded by
the European Union

media profiles, AI-generated images and videos of Merz circulated widely on social media platforms.[13]

In the 2025 Irish presidential election campaign, candidate Catherine Connolly faced repeated claims that she is a member of Hamas or the Freemasons. In an AI-generated TikTok video, she appears to declare, "I love money, the banks, and Hamas."[14] Despite these attacks, pre-election polls (based on first-preference votes) conducted during the last month before the election, showed continuous growth in Connolly's popularity from the beginning of October until 21 October, when it peaked at 44%.[15] However, the campaign was disrupted three days before the vote by a widespread deepfake video in which Connolly appeared to announce her withdrawal from the candidacy.[16] The video caused considerable confusion among supporters; by the day before the election, 23 October, her popularity had dropped to 40%.[17] Despite all of this, Connolly still won by a landslide, securing 63.36% of first-preference votes.[18]

In a more contested campaign, however, generative AI–driven electoral disinformation could have a significant impact on the outcome of the vote. During the 2023 parliamentary elections in Slovakia, in polls conducted during the week before the election Focus showed a 1.5 percentage point advantage,[19] while Median indicated only a 0.5 percentage point advantage for Robert Fico's party, Smer, over Progressive Slovakia (PS).[20] Two days before the voting — during the 48-hour pre-election moratorium — a deepfake voice recording stirred up the political

[13] "Friedrich Merz targeted by pro-Russian disinformation before German vote, researchers say," *Reuters*, February 20, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/friedrich-merz-targeted-by-pro-russian-disinformation-before-german-vote-2025-02-20/

[14] *Irish Presidential Election 2025: Renewed attacks on election integrity and repeated platform failures*, Institute for Strategic Dialogue & Hope and Courage Collective, October 31, 2025, https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/irish-presidential-election-2025-renewed-attacks-on-election-integrity-and-repeated-platform-failures/

[15] *Catherine Connolly increases lead in Áras race, poll suggests*, RTÉ News, October 22, 2025, https://www.rte.ie/news/politics/2025/1022/1539875-presidential-election/

[16] *Deepfake AI video depicting Catherine Connolly quitting presidential race removed by Meta*, *The Irish Times*, October 22, 2025, https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2025/10/22/meta-removes-ai-video-purporting-to-show-catherine-connolly-quitting-presidential-race/

[17] *Connolly extends commanding lead over Humphreys in final presidential election poll*, *Irish Examiner*, October 23, 2025, https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/politics/arid-41729538.html

[18] *Presidential Election 2025 results and official information*, Website of Ireland's Presidential Returning Officer, https://www.presidentialelection.ie/index.html

[19] *Posledný prieskum FOCUSU: Preferencie sa začínajú miešať. Jedna strana výrazne poskočila*, TVNOVINY.sk, September 26, 2023, https://tvnoviny.sk/domace/clanok/859318-posledny-prieskum-focusu-preferencie-sa-zacinaju-miesat-jedna-strana-vyrazne-poskocila/

[20] *Posledný prieskum pre RTVS: Tesný súboj o prvenstvo, štyri veľké strany mimo parlamentu*, Správy STVR, September 27, 2023, https://spravy.stvr.sk/2023/09/posledny-prieskum-pre-rtvs-tesny-suboj-o-prvenstvo-medzi-lidrami-je-len-minimalny-rozdiel/

Co-funded by
the European Union

stalemate.[21] The audio featured Michal Šimečka, the leader of Progressive Slovakia, and Monika Tódová, an investigative journalist from Denník N, appearing to discuss how to rig the election by buying votes from the Roma minority. This incident marks one of the first instances in the EU of using voice-based, AI-generated disinformation, rather than just images, to influence an election — a particularly challenging format to debunk, as audio manipulations are often less detectable than visual deepfakes. The timing was critical: released during the pre-election silence period, the recording quickly gained traction, gathering thousands of shares across platforms like Facebook and TikTok, and preventing parties and the media from responding to or refuting these false claims.[22] The impact was also visible in the results: contrary to the polls, the gap widened.[23] Smer achieved 22.9% of the vote, while PS received 18%. This represented a larger advantage than what had been measured for any party in the last days before the election.

Deepfakes in the Hungarian Election Campaign

In the following sections, we focus on the Hungarian election campaign and present AI-generated videos used to disseminate key political narratives that reached a significant number of users or generated intense public discourse. The videos are grouped by narrative.

Videos Linked to Pro-Government Narratives

Only Fidesz Can Guarantee That Hungary Stays Out of War

A video depicting the horrors of war was published on Facebook by both the Budapest organization of Fidesz and the party's central organization. The fully realistic, 33-second video shows a young girl waiting for her father to return from war, but he is captured and executed.

The logical structure of the narrative conveyed by the video and its accompanying text is as follows: Péter Magyar has struck a deal with Manfred Weber → Brussels wants to send troops to war and is preparing escalation → Péter Magyar cannot say no to the EU → in the event of a TISZA victory, he would send Hungarian soldiers to Ukraine to fight and die → Fidesz will prevent this, therefore voting for Fidesz is the safe choice.

[21] *Trolls in Slovakian election tap AI deepfakes to spread disinformation*, *The Straits Times*, September 30, 2023, https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/trolls-in-slovakian-election-tap-ai-deepfakes-to-spread-disinformation/

[22] *How AI-generated content influenced parliamentary elections in Slovakia: The Slovak Police will investigate the recording for a third time*, CEDMO, November 25, 2024, https://cedmohub.eu/how-ai-generated-content-influenced-parliamentary-elections-in-slovakia-the-slovak-police-will-investigate-the-recording-for-a-third-time/

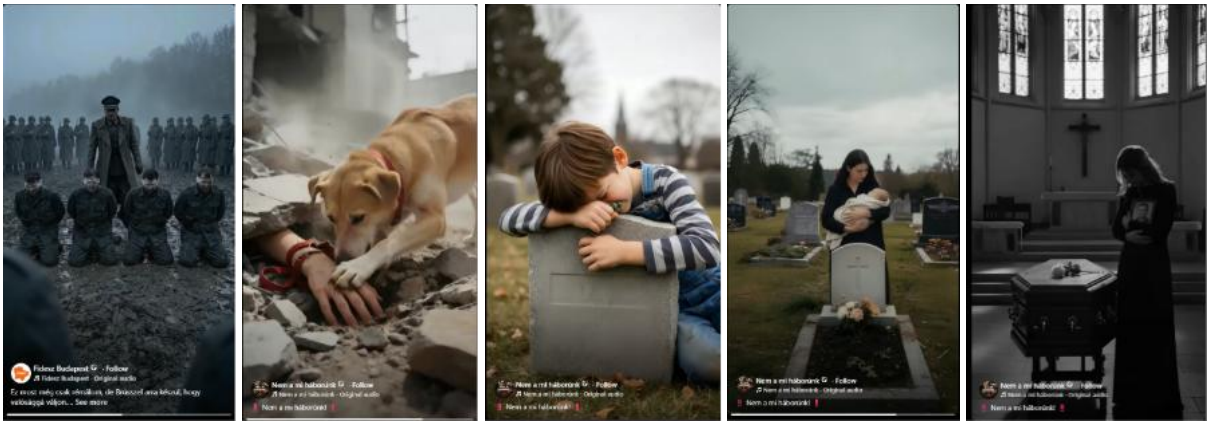
[23] *Parliamentary election in Slovakia, 30 September 2023*, *Geopolitique.eu*, January 2024, https://geopolitique.eu/en/articles/parliamentary-election-slovakia-30-september-2023/

Co-funded by the European Union

The video was posted by Fidesz Budapest[24] on February 18 and by Fidesz[25] on February 19. As of March 10, the former had 700,000 plays and the latter 818,000. There are currently 8.1 million registered voters in Hungary.

Similar AI-generated videos portraying the horrors of war are distributed by two pages of unknown background, “Not Our War”[26] and “Not Our Path,”[27] both created a few months before the election. Their message focuses on the consequences of participating in war. While they do not present the full narrative used by Fidesz, they reinforce it through strong emotional manipulation and fear appeals. **Due to a lack of followers, these pages relied not on organic reach but on paid advertising - despite the formal ban of political advertising on Facebook.** “Not Our War” ran 380 ads,[28] while “Not Our Path” ran 93.[29] These ads were targeted exclusively at a single constituency (Pest County District 5), where we also identified other deceptive practices circumventing political ad restrictions, all benefiting the incumbent government candidate and Minister of Justice, Bence Tuzson. [30]

Although Meta later classified some of these ads as political, they ran long enough for four videos to reach 182,000–210,000 plays each. Given that the constituency has approximately 76,000 eligible voters, this constitutes significant reach.



[24] Facebook Reel by *Fidesz Budapest*, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/reel/958315374038460/
[25] Facebook Reel by *Fidesz*, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/reel/927361983568748/
[26] *Not Our War*, Facebook Profile, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61585514097710
[27] *Not Our Path*, Facebook Profile, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61575640748688
[28] *Facebook Ads Library page of Not Our War’s ads*, Facebook Ads Library, https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=all&ad_type=all&country=HU&is_targeted_country=false&media_type=all&search_type=page&sort_data%5bdirection%5d=desc&sort_data%5bmode%5d=total_impressions&view_all_page_id=826871643853163
[29] *Facebook Ads Library page of Not Our Path’s ads*, Facebook Ads Library, https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=active&ad_type=all&country=HU&is_targeted_country=false&media_type=all&search_type=page&sort_data%5bdirection%5d=desc&sort_data%5bmode%5d=total_impressions&view_all_page_id=1073006305877511
[30] *Pest 5-ben újabb hamis zászlós hirdető*, Political Capital, March 4, 2026, https://politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article_read=1&article_id=3649

Co-funded by
the European Union

PÉTER MAGYAR IN THE SERVICE OF BRUSSELS AND UKRAINE

Fidesz built both offline and online campaigns around the slogan “He cannot say no to them.” As part of this, an AI-generated video was created in which Ursula von der Leyen calls Péter Magyar to give him instructions.

The video first appeared on Viktor Orbán’s Facebook page[31] - where AI content is rarely posted - on February 4, and shortly afterward on the NEM page. The dark, cinematic video does not aim to appear realistic; Orbán explicitly noted in the accompanying text that it was created using AI.

The video reached 1.8 million views on Orbán’s page and 3.7 million on NEM’s page, largely due to successful paid promotion.[32] Although Meta has since classified all 15 ad variants as political, several ran long enough to reach more than 400,000 users each.

Another AI video portrayed Péter Magyar as a puppet of Ursula von der Leyen.[33] Published on November 28, 2025, it shows von der Leyen instructing Magyar, who is driving, to steer toward war, Brussels, and tax increases. **The video reached 9.2 million views, supported by six paid ads reaching between 414,000 and 897,000 users each.**[34]

Fidesz also used AI videos to promote the narrative that the TISZA mobile application was developed by Ukrainian actors and that user data was transferred to Ukrainian authorities. An AI video posted on October 11, 2025, on Orbán’s Facebook page[35] shows Volodymyr Zelensky presenting the app with the message: “fast, smart, and all your data is safe with me in Kyiv.” This video reached 1.2 million views.

A subsequent video by NEM, posted on November 613, depicted Zelensky monitoring users who downloaded the app in real time. This video reached 10 million views, again largely due to paid advertising, with each of the 12 ad variants reaching 400,000–640,000 users.

[31] Facebook Reel by *Orbán Viktor*, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/reel/1228621125386152
[32] *Facebook Ads Library page of NEM,* Facebook Ads Library, https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=878652255054093
[33] Facebook Video by *Magyarország Kormánya*, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/kormanyzat/videos/1924370238493339/
[34] Ad by NEM, Facebook Ads Library, https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1157764146553163
[35] Facebook Reel by *Orbán Viktor*, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/reel/3717892778504230

Co-funded by
the European Union

TISZA'S ALLEGED DOMESTIC POLICIES: PENSION CUTS, TAX INCREASES, CONSCRIPTION

During the autumn campaign period, domestic policy narratives dominated. Fidesz primarily attacked TISZA over alleged plans - later ruled false by a court - to cut pensions, increase taxes, and reintroduce mandatory military service. On October 28, 2025, Balázs Orbán, the Prime Minister's political director and campaign chief, posted an AI video[36] showing Péter Magyar delivering statements about pension cuts that were actually made by other individuals associated with the party. The video reached 500,000 views. Péter Magyar announced that he would file a criminal complaint over the deepfake.[37]

Ahead of Christmas, NEM published a video in which a "TISZA Santa Claus" delivers harmful "gifts" affecting all generations of a family.[38] **The video reached 17 million views and was distributed through seven paid ads between December 23 and January 1.**[39] Meta classified these ads as political only after the campaign had ended. According to the Ad Library, the content reached at least 1.9 million unique users.

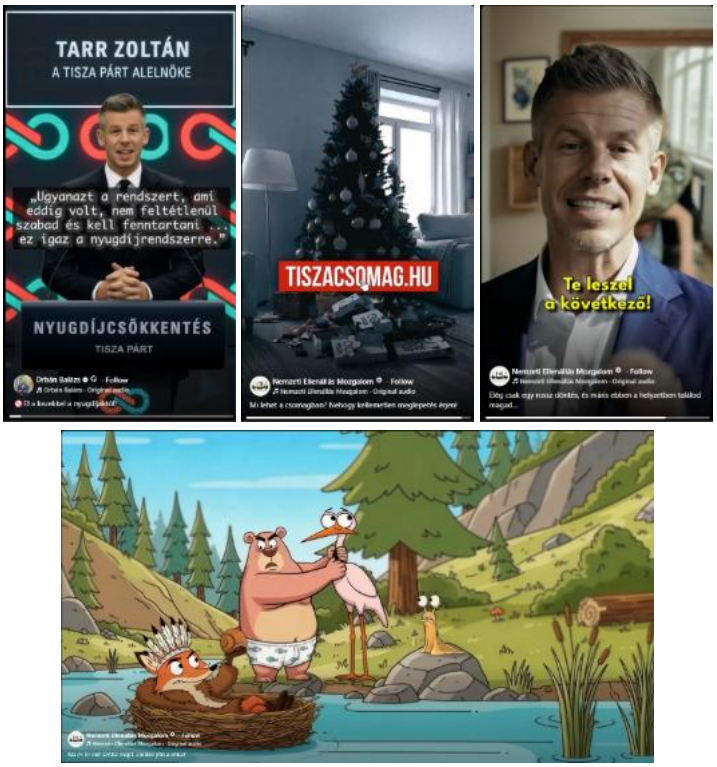
NEM also introduced a new stylistic approach with a cartoon-style AI video published on October 10, which reached 28 million plays. This was likely due both to its style and extensive paid promotion, with six ads reaching between 600,000 and one million users each.

To reinforce the narrative that TISZA is aligned with pro-war elites in Brussels and seeks to reintroduce conscription, NEM published an AI-generated video on October 31. In the video, Péter Magyar appears alongside Romulusz Ruszin-Szendi, TISZA's

[36] Facebook Reel by *Orbán Balázs*, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/reel/3004975889892146/
[37] *Hungary's opposition leader to file criminal complaint over alleged deepfake video*, *Reuters*, October 29, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/hungarys-opposition-leader-file-criminal-complaint-over-alleged-deepfake-video-2025-10-29/
[38] Facebook Reel by *Nemzeti Ellenállás Mozgalom* (NEM), Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/reel/836913455779295/
[39] Ad by NEM, Facebook Ads Library, https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1404405004617237

Co-funded by
the European Union

defence policy expert and former Chief of the Hungarian General Staff. The two are depicted breaking into the home of a young couple and forcibly taking the young man away to serve as a soldier. The video was played 10 million times. Its reach was again significantly amplified by paid advertising, with a total of 30 ad variants launched.



PÉTER MAGYAR'S ALLEGED MENTAL UNFITNESS

A narrative questioning Péter Magyar's mental fitness portrays him as detached from reality, prone to delusions, compulsive lying, and aggressive behavior.[40]

One AI-manipulated video altered original footage of his campaign tour to make it appear as though he smashed a cardboard figure of Viktor Orbán on stage.[41] Posted by the Fidesz parliamentary group on October 13, the video reached 239,000 views.

Four days later, NEM published a more extreme, dehumanizing AI video depicting Magyar in a psychiatric isolation room, wearing a straitjacket and muttering

[40] *Magyar Pétert köszöntötték a mentális egészség világnapja alkalmából*, *Mandiner*, October 10, 2025, https://mandiner.hu/belfold/2025/10/magyar-petert-koszontottek-a-mentalis-egeszseg-vilagnapja-alkalmabol

[41] *Manipulált a videó, amin Magyar Péter szétver egy kartonból készült Orbán-figurát*, AFP Fact Check / Ténykérdés, November 17, 2025, https://tenykerdes.afp.com/doc.afp.com.84942T3

Co-funded by the European Union

incoherently.[42] This video reached 7.4 million views and was widely promoted through paid advertising, with six ad variants each reaching 425,000–607,000 users.

VIDEOS LINKED TO OPPOSITION NARRATIVES

VOTING RIGHTS OF HUNGARIANS LIVING ABROAD

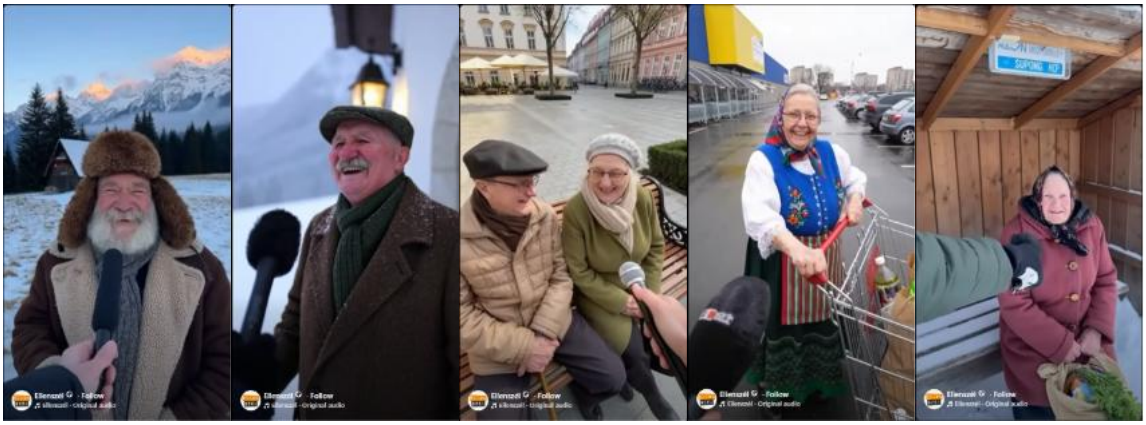
A central element of the Democratic Coalition's campaign is opposition to voting rights for Hungarians living abroad.[43] The Facebook page of Ellenszél, a news outlet linked to the party, published six highly realistic AI videos between February 4 and 7. In these videos, Hungarians living abroad are asked whether they will vote in the Hungarian election; they respond affirmatively, stating they will vote for Viktor Orbán or Fidesz. Each exchange ends in mocking laughter. These videos are capable of generating resentment among domestic opposition voters and reinforce the party's campaign message - also promoted on billboards - that they are in opposition to voting rights for Hungarian minorities living in neighbouring countries"" The videos achieved significant reach, with view counts ranging between 141,000 and 330,000 as of March 10, 2026.[44]

[42] Facebook Reel by *Nemzeti Ellenállás Mozgalom* (NEM), https://www.facebook.com/reel/1540850283777711

[43] *Dobrev Klára: Óriásplakátkampányt indít a DK a határon túliak szavazati jogának elvételéről*, DKP.hu, February 17, 2026, https://dkp.hu/hirek/9135/dobrev-klara-oriasplakatkampanyt-indit-a-dk-a-hataron-tuliak-szavazati-joganak-elvetelerol

[44] Facebook Reels by *Ellenszél*, Facebook, (https://www.facebook.com/reel/1273993874642640/; https://www.facebook.com/reel/912710601248751/; https://www.facebook.com/reel/1567233141182066/; https://www.facebook.com/reel/2209202739608722/; https://www.facebook.com/reel/1437670961235427/; https://www.facebook.com/reel/1260065196222647/)

Co-funded by the European Union



Public Perceptions of AI-Generated Political Videos

A public opinion survey[45] conducted by Political Capital a few weeks prior to the elections examined, among other topics, respondents' experiences with and perceptions of AI-generated deepfake videos. Data collection was carried out by Medián between March 23 and 26, 2026, based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,000 individuals aged 18 and older in Hungary.

A total of 73% of respondents reported that they had encountered political videos on social media that they believed were generated or manipulated using artificial intelligence. However, exposure to such content is not evenly distributed across society. Marked differences emerge along political affiliation, age, and educational attainment, while gender and type of settlement appear to play a much smaller role.

Political polarization is particularly pronounced in this regard: while nearly nine in ten (88%) supporters of TISZA Party report having encountered such videos, the proportion is significantly lower among supporters of Fidesz (53%). A clear social pattern is also evident: the likelihood of encountering - or at least perceiving - such content decreases with age and increases with higher levels of education.

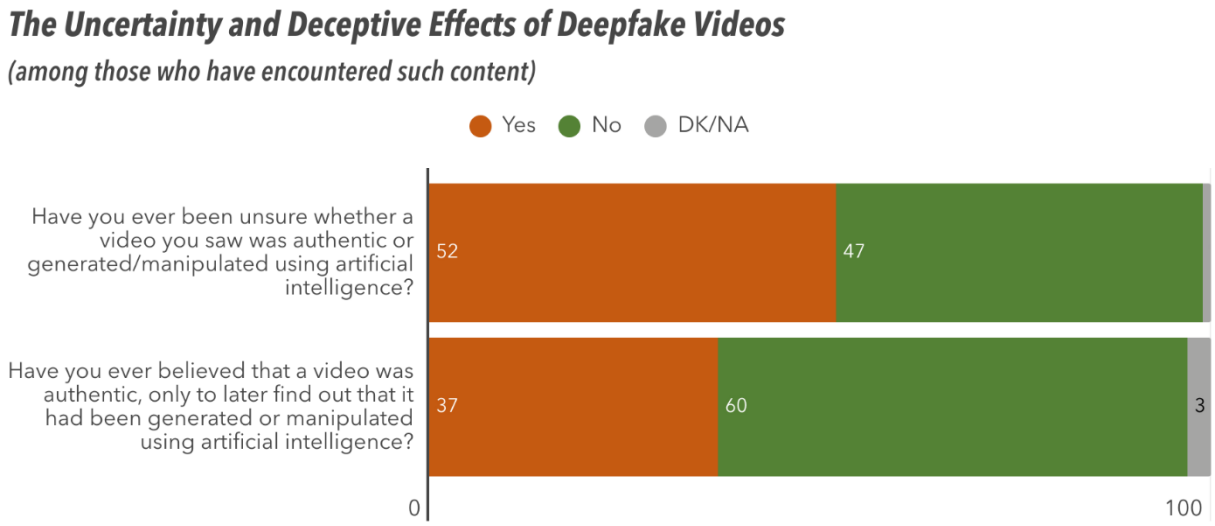
Among respondents who had encountered such videos, 71% reported seeing them at least "fairly often," including 28% who encounter them "very often." By contrast, 28% indicated that they rarely or very rarely come across such content.

AI-generated or manipulated videos are not only present in the social media ecosystem, but they also contribute to user uncertainty. Among those who had encountered such content, 52% reported that they had at times been unsure whether they were viewing authentic footage or artificially generated material.

[45] *AI-generated videos in Hungarian political communication*, Political Capital, 2026, https://politicalcapital.hu/news.php?article_read=1&article_id=3673

Co-funded by
the European Union

In many cases, this uncertainty translates into actual deception: 37% of respondents stated that they had previously believed a video to be authentic, only to later learn that it had been generated or manipulated using artificial intelligence.

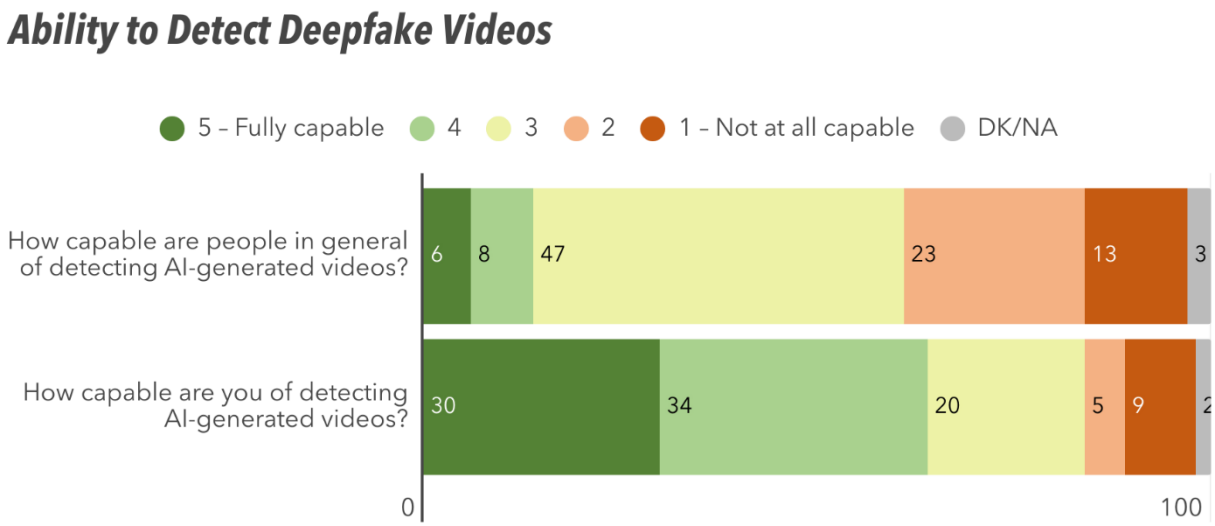


At the same time, perceptions of deepfake detection reveal not only uncertainty but also a form of self-serving bias: respondents tend to believe that others are unable to identify manipulated content, while they themselves are capable of doing so. A majority of respondents believe that people in general are not particularly capable of recognizing AI-generated videos: only 14% think that the average user is more likely to be able to identify such content, while more than one-third believe the opposite.

By contrast, respondents assess their own abilities far more positively. Nearly two-thirds (63%) claim that they are capable of recognizing such videos, while only 14% consider themselves rather incapable.

Thus, while many respondents are aware of the challenges posed by deepfakes, they tend to overestimate their own resilience to manipulated content.

Co-funded by
the European Union



Younger respondents report significantly higher levels of confidence: individuals aged 18–29 rated their own deepfake detection ability at an average of 4.3 on a five-point scale, compared to below 3 among those aged 65 and above. The younger the respondent, the more likely they are to believe they can distinguish between authentic and manipulated content. Perceived detection ability also correlates with educational attainment: respondents with primary education as their highest level of education rated their ability at an average of 3.25, while those with secondary or tertiary education rated themselves close to 4.

Political affiliation also plays a role not only in exposure but in perceived competence. Supporters of the TISZA Party rated their own abilities above 4 on average, while Fidesz supporters rated theirs at only 3.2.

The use of AI-generated or manipulated videos in political contexts is overwhelmingly rejected by the Hungarian public. 90% of respondents consider the use of such tools in politics to be entirely unacceptable, while only a negligible share (3%) find them even somewhat acceptable.

This suggests that although deepfakes are increasingly becoming part of everyday online experience, their social acceptance remains extremely low.

The Legal Framework: Regulating the Spread of Artificial Intelligence

As generative artificial intelligence becomes more widely used, there is growing public scrutiny of the regulatory environment surrounding it. AI technologies are increasingly prevalent in shaping public life, posing numerous risks. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the legal implications of using AI for political purposes

Co-funded by
the European Union

under current Hungarian legislation, the European Union's new AI Act, and platform rules.

HUNGARIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

There is no comprehensive law in Hungary's legal system governing the use of AI for political communication purposes. The Hungarian legal approach is underpinned by the principle of technological neutrality, meaning that the law does not consider the device used, but rather the legal ramifications of the action and whether it contravenes the law. Therefore, AI is not a subject of law, but a tool. Consequently, the liability rests with the natural or legal person using it. Civil and criminal law provisions are fully applicable to content generated by algorithms. When determining legal liability, the decisive consideration is whether the individual has violated the law, not the means used to do so. These actions may constitute defamation, slander, or even misuse of personal data.

The creation of unlawful content using AI can result in both civil and criminal liability. In criminal law, the legislator has introduced a statutory offence for *creating false audio or visual recordings capable of defaming a person's reputation*.[46] This specifically addresses abuses involving deepfake technology, where the essence of the violation lies in the falsified or fabricated nature of the recordings produced by the technology. While the protection of human dignity and personality rights under civil law is independent of technology, the use of AI can exacerbate the perpetrator's culpability and intent.[47]

EUROPEAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The EU's AI Act regulates the use of AI on a risk-based approach to ensure its reliability.[48] Article 5 identifies eight AI practices that constitute "unacceptable risks" and are prohibited in relation to AI systems. These include AI systems that deploy subliminal techniques beyond a person's consciousness, or that use purposefully manipulative or deceptive techniques to materially distort behavior and impair informed decision-making, causing significant harm. AI systems intended to be used for influencing the outcome of an election, referendum, or the voting behavior of natural persons are only classified as high risk (Annex III of Article 6). This means that they are not banned; however, high-risk AI systems are subject to strict regulatory controls. Providers must undergo a conformity assessment procedure (Article 43), which subjects them to strict compliance requirements, such

[46] Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code, Section 226/A
[47] Act V of 2013 on the Civil Code, Section 2:42
[48] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence, *Official Journal of the European Union* L 2024/1689, 12 July 2024, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj/eng

Co-funded by
the European Union

as risk management, human oversight, and data quality. Meanwhile, deployers are required to conduct a fundamental rights impact assessment (Article 27). Deepfakes and other forms of manipulative content are classified as "limited risk", which means they are not prohibited but must comply with transparency obligations, such as clear labelling (Article 50).

The provisions of the AI Act are gradually becoming applicable in member states, including Hungary. The provisions concerning "unacceptable risk" AI systems have been applicable since February 2025, while provisions on high-risk AI systems and transparency will take effect from 2 August 2026. Member States hold a key role in the application and enforcement of the AI Act. Hungary has designated the National Accreditation Authority (notifying authority) and the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (market surveillance authority) as the national competent authorities responsible for supervising the application and implementation of the regulation. The AI Act's graduated system of administrative fines could have a significant impact in Hungary. The most severe penalties apply to non-compliance with prohibited AI practices (Article 5), with fines of up to EUR 35 million or 7% of the undertaking's total annual turnover worldwide, whichever is higher. Non-compliance with obligations relating to high-risk AI practices could result in fines up to EUR 15 million or 3% global annual turnover.

The AI Act only covers the development and use (deployment) of AI technologies; facilitating the distribution of AI-generated content is not explicitly covered. This means that the AI Act doesn't deal with the responsibilities of social media in relation to the spread of deepfakes created by third-party programs. In this case, the risk-mitigation measures of the Digital Services Act (DSA) apply.[49] A possible course of action in the case of deep fakes is described in Commitment 15 of the Code of Conduct on Disinformation: appealing to services "that develop or operate AI systems and that disseminate AI-generated and manipulated content through their services (e.g., deepfakes)". It asks them to mitigate the risk of such harmful content by "warning users and proactively detect such content." While the specific actions described in the Code are not mandatory (see Art. 45 DSA), very large online platforms (with more than 45 million active users in the EU) are required under the DSA to take some course of action that effectively limits the harm posed by the spread of deep fakes, as a form of systemic risk on platforms (see Section 5 of the DSA).

[49] Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market for Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act), *Official Journal of the European Union* L 277/1, 27 October 2022, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022R2065

Co-funded by
the European Union

LABELLING AND MARKING OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT

There are no legal transparency obligations related to the marking and labelling of AI-generated content in Hungary. Under Hungarian law, private individuals and entities not classified as media service providers are not subject to labelling obligations. Although media service providers are obliged to provide accurate information, they are not required to explicitly label content generated by AI. The European Commission has published the second draft of a new Code of Practice providing detailed guidance on the labelling of AI-generated content, these transparency commitments, however, have yet to come into effect. Moreover, they still do not cover the responsibility of services that enable the distribution of deepfakes – only the ones used for creating them. [50] This has created a regulatory gap that is being filled by the platform's self-regulation.

PLATFORM POLICIES ON AI

Digital platforms' terms of service and community guidelines have different rules relating to the creation and sharing of AI-generated content. This includes both the providers of generative AI services and the operators of social media and streaming sites. It is, however, not clearly defined what kind of content falls into the restricted category. At the same time, it should also be noted that, in cases where a piece of AI-generated content overlaps with an illegal category (such as a deepfake containing hate speech and defamation), member state authorities can ask platforms to remove it, or trusted flaggers can report it.

Open AI warns against the misuse of its service “to manipulate or deceive people, to interfere with their exercise of human rights, to exploit people’s vulnerabilities, or to interfere with their ability to get an education or access critical services”, making a direct reference to “political campaigning, lobbying, foreign or domestic election interference, or demobilization activities”.[51] Google’s Gemini mentions that it uses “a combination of automated systems and human review to detect activity and behaviour that suggest misuse of our GenAI products”.[52] Both services mention that users who violate their policies may face restrictions to their use of the service. Moreover, certain prompts are not fulfilled by their chatbots.

[50] *Commission publishes second draft of Code of Practice on Marking and Labelling of AI-Generated Content*, European Commission – Shaping Europe’s Digital Future, 5 March 2026, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/commission-publishes-second-draft-code-practice-marking-and-labelling-ai-generated-content

[51] *OpenAI Usage Policies*, OpenAI, effective October 29, 2025, https://openai.com/hu-HU/policies/usage-policies/

[52] *Generative AI Prohibited Use Policy (Gemini Apps)*, Google Support, https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/16625148?hl=en

Co-funded by
the European Union

Although social media platforms' terms of service and community policies include guidelines on AI-generated content, it is unclear how strictly these requirements are enforced. The platforms consider them a form of "misinformation" (not "disinformation"), as they refuse to make assumptions about the potential intentionality behind misleading content

- **TikTok**'s Community guidelines state that the service does not allow content that is misleading, manipulated, or AI-generated, including content that pretends to come from an authoritative source or misrepresents the actions of a public figure.[53] Such content will be removed if found. Its misinformation policy also explicitly refers to AI-generated content or deepfakes (which it calls "misleading AI-Generated Content" (AIGC)) and requires them to be labelled by their creators. What exactly falls into the prohibited category is, however, hard to determine. TikTok mentions content that might risk the integrity of the election process itself, not content that may hinder them in making an informed decision, such as "misinformation that could prevent people from voting, interfere with elections, or encourage the unlawful disruption of results."
- **YouTube** defines unacceptable, fabricated content as "misleading or deceptive content with a serious risk of egregious harm", leaving even more room for discretion when it comes to taking action, as there is no guidance to help users assess the difference between "harm" and "egregious harm".[54] YouTube's transparency policy requires content creators to label any AI-generated content during the upload process. The platform takes strict measures to protect the integrity of elections, such as removing videos that misrepresent an event or candidate, even if they are labelled as such.
- **Meta** (Facebook, Instagram) announced two years ago that it would label rather than remove deepfakes, building on a recommendation from its Oversight Board.[55] It said that it had started adding 'AI info' labels to a wider range of video, audio and image content when it detects "industry standard AI image indicators or when people disclose that they're uploading AI-generated content. However, it is not known to what extent this labelling occurs, as there is no legal requirement. Investigations suggest that most AI-generated content was lacking a label.

[53] *TikTok Community Guidelines – Integrity and Authenticity*, TikTok, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/integrity-authenticity

[54] *YouTube Misinformation Policies*, YouTube Community Guidelines, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10834785?hl=en#zippy=%2Csuppression-of-census-participation%2Cmanipulated-content

[55] *Our Approach to Labeling AI-Generated Content and Manipulated Media*, Meta, April 5, 2024, https://about.fb.com/news/2024/04/metas-approach-to-labeling-ai-generated-content-and-manipulated-media/

Co-funded by
the European Union

RECOMMENDATIONS

For social media, microblogging, streaming, and potentially search platforms:

- While we acknowledge that these services cannot proactively identify all harmful deepfake content on their platform, we recommend that – at least during election campaigns, but preferably all year – monitor content published on the profiles of the largest political actors (by the number of followers), including candidates, political parties, political activists, influencers, and political campaign organizations. As an outcome of this exercise, platforms should ensure this content is adequately labelled.
- The same platforms should also ensure that deepfake content (unless labelled and clearly falling into the non-harmful category) should not be eligible for monetization or advertising services.
- Services that can be used to distribute deep fakes should cooperate with stakeholders along the value chain (especially with developers of AI technologies) to improve the process of marking and detection.

For generative AI platforms, and all potential providers and deployers of AI services (including the providers of the above mentioned services, if they also provide AI-generation services for their users):

- In line with the draft Code of Practice on Transparency of AI-Generated Content (second draft published on May 5, 2026), optional Measure 2.2, support the development of forensic detectors to identify AI-generated content.
- In addition to the recommendations applying in the case of social media and streaming platforms, providers of AI services should (as provided by the optional measure 1.4) provide functionalities for deployers and users of services to apply a machine-readable mark or label for their output.
- Make labels and markings interoperable in order to enable consistent action across platforms.

For EU institutions:

- Pay closer attention to the systemic risk posed by unlabelled AI-generated content, introduce stricter labelling obligations on technology services producing, deploying, or distributing AI-generated content, as well as formulate binding requirements for distributors of AI content to take sufficient steps towards identifying AI-generated content on their services.

For content creators, including political actors, on the national level:

Co-funded by
the European Union

- Refrain from using harmful AI-generated content. Before publishing, conduct a thorough assessment of the possible adverse effects a certain piece of content might have on the election process, the democratic process, as well as the health and well-being of citizens.
- Always label AI-generated content, no matter what share of the video is manipulated or what the intent behind the manipulation was.
- Before sharing videos created by others, always ensure that manipulated components are clearly labelled.
- Media, influencers, and political actors should all aim at developing their respective codes of conduct on the transparent and fair use of generative AI.

Co-funded by
the European Union