

## Social Research Call

**Title:**

*A sociocognitive-based strategy to combat misinformation*



**Acronym:** COMB

**Project leader:** Margarida Vaz Garrido

**Host organisation:** Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

**Main purpose of the project:** The project aims to design and test a new, feasible strategy to combat misinformation based on naturally occurring cognitive biases, namely the similarity between misinformation and its contradiction.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The project adopts a quantitative experimental approach. In a set of integrated studies, we will test the effectiveness of different similarity-based corrections on information truth assessment and sharing probability. We will run the experiments in lab-controlled settings and simulated social media environments.

**Potential results:** We will establish a procedure for developing corrections based on different similarity-based correction mechanisms. Corrections that are kept similar to the initial false information are more likely to be accepted. We will also identify individual variables that might shape the overall effect of corrections and each correction strategy.

**Social relevance of the research:** The large-scale and fast dissemination of misinformation (fake news, unchecked facts) poses major threats to individuals and societies. Exposure to misinformation reshapes personal and collective beliefs and, consequently, decisions and behavior in relevant domains (e.g., politics, health, environment), with serious individual, social, and economic consequences. Devising viable strategies to successfully correct misinformation is one of society's most critical challenges.

**Originality/value of the project:** This novel approach constitutes a unique contribution to advancing the state of the art beyond its research field and feeds into efforts of practitioners involved in designing evidence-based misinformation retractions, educational tools, public information campaigns, and machine learning algorithms to debunk misinformation.