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DEUTSCHER FUNDRAISING VERBAND
Wir stärken **die Kultur des Gebens**

Stronger Together: How A Civil Society Network Defused A Disinformation Campaign

29 September 2026| Berlin | online

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THREAT

The warning: 48 hours to prepare

48h

- An online countdown announced a new platform, initiated by an AfD member of the Bundestag and its working group on “NGO investigation”
- Self-described as an AI-supported database on around 200 organisations, to be extended to regions, municipalities and the EU
- Stated aim: expose alleged mismanagement and funding flows in civil society

The challenge: How do you prepare hundreds of organisations before you even know what the platform will contain?

THREAT

What appeared online: “NGO Files ”

The material combined:

- Factual or publicly available information
- Misleading or incorrect claims
- Allegations without adequate context
- Suggested links between organisations and people
- Personal data, incl. on former leaders

Ignoring it was not enough.
Amplifying it was not an option.

THE THIRD WAY

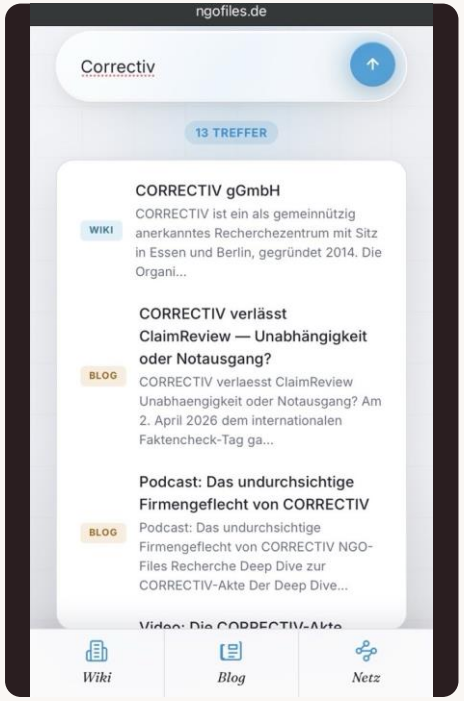
Be informed – without becoming a distribution channel.

THREAT

A look inside – via screenshots, not clicks



A “map” of so-called documented organisations



13 “hits” on one fact-checking newsroom



30 “hits” for the DFRV – mostly unrelated



Imprint: an AfD MP as provider (contact details blurred)

RAPID COORDINATION

From information sharing to coordinated action

The DFRV took on

→ Collecting and consolidating information

→ Practical recommendations

→ One mailing for the wider network

→ Connecting organisations with existing resources

Communicate positively

Don’t let the campaign define the narrative

Debunk where necessary

Correct false claims with evidence

Be transparent

Proactively show funding, activities, impact

Share resources

Facts, figures and arguments for the whole sector

RAPID COORDINATION

The mailing: out on the morning of the launch

Based on a short-notice exchange with an informal network of female NGO leaders and the umbrella organisations of the Bündnis für Gemeinnützigkeit and our board chair – five moves in one email:

1

WARN

Don't search, click or share

Every click, link and outraged reaction raises its visibility

2

REFRAME

Prebunking, not rebuttal

Our own story at the centre – not the accusations

3

EQUIP

Advice and materials

Recommendations, podcast, background paper, video

4

SATISFY CURIOSITY

Screenshots in the P.S.

So nobody searches for the platform out of curiosity

5

GATHER

Infocall at 2 pm, same day

One single page visit, shared on screen

"Those who work transparently need not let other people's claims define them." – DFRV mailing, 1 July 2026

RAPID COORDINATION

Prebunking: own the narrative

“We don’t win by refuting every narrative. We win by consistently telling our own story.”

Key insight from the German Fundraising Congress 2026 – panel with Marina Weisband, Kevin Kühnert and Moritz Müller-Wirth

What we recommended to organisations:

- ✓ Talk proactively to supporters, members and donors
- ✓ Tell your impact and your contribution to society
- ✓ Make transparency visible, e.g. via the Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft
- ✓ Explain funding, oversight and accountability – use your annual report

Never link the platform, spotlight its name or reproduce its content.

PREBUNKING VIDEO ☺ watch it, it´s funny

by the Allianz „Rechtssicherheit für politische Willensbildung“

Watch on LinkedIn

EACH ORGANISATION DOES WHAT IT DOES BEST

No new structure – existing strengths activated

Fundraising expertise	Information, transparency and communication resources
Legal expertise	Legal assessment and support
Technical expertise	Secure access to and monitoring of the platform
Communication expertise	Messaging, media preparedness, positive narratives
Organisational networks	Rapid dissemination and coordination

Don’t duplicate capacity. Connect it.

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Legal support: turning expertise into action

One organisation took the lead and

1. received requests from affected organisations
2. assessed possible legal responses
3. supported demands to remove false information
4. provided template emails and practical guidance

Specialisation

↓

Shared tools

↓

Collective capacity

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Safe access, shared knowledge

Platform data accessed via a **secure connection** → Made available through a **separate, secure interface** → **Shared** with organisations in the network

Organisations could check what was published, who was mentioned and which claims were made – **without adding traffic to the platform.**

Individual monitoring became collective monitoring.

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Turning uncertainty into preparedness

Infocall – same day, 2 pm

One shared look at the platform, one single page visit · status update · direct questions · possible responses · media preparedness

Mutual support

Larger organisations backed smaller ones facing critical press enquiries · named contact persons

“ What is happening?” → **“ How can we help each other respond?”**

RESULT

The campaign lost its moment

By the AfD's national party conference:

- ✓ Organisations informed and prepared
- ✓ Legal responses already underway
- ✓ False claims challenged, removal requested
- ✓ Shared resources in place
- ✓ Nobody had to respond alone

12 of 13

false statements about HateAid: cease-and-desist declaration obtained, articles taken down

Most

of the organisations originally listed apparently disappeared after legal action

The platform was rendered largely ineffective before the party conference.

Sources: HateAid; Bündnis Ost, update 10 July 2026

LESSON

Stronger together.

1
Speed
Shared before the platform went live

2
Trust
Willing to share and rely on each other

3
Specialisation
Everyone brought their strength

4
Shared resources
Templates, facts, screenshots, access

5
Mutual support
Expertise for those with fewer resources

Not by making everyone do more – but by making **everyone's strengths available to everyone else.**

Connect capacities. Share expertise. Act quickly. Don't face disinformation alone.

Thank you! · Larissa M. Probst · Deutscher Fundraising Verband e.V. / EFA Board · probst@dfrv.de