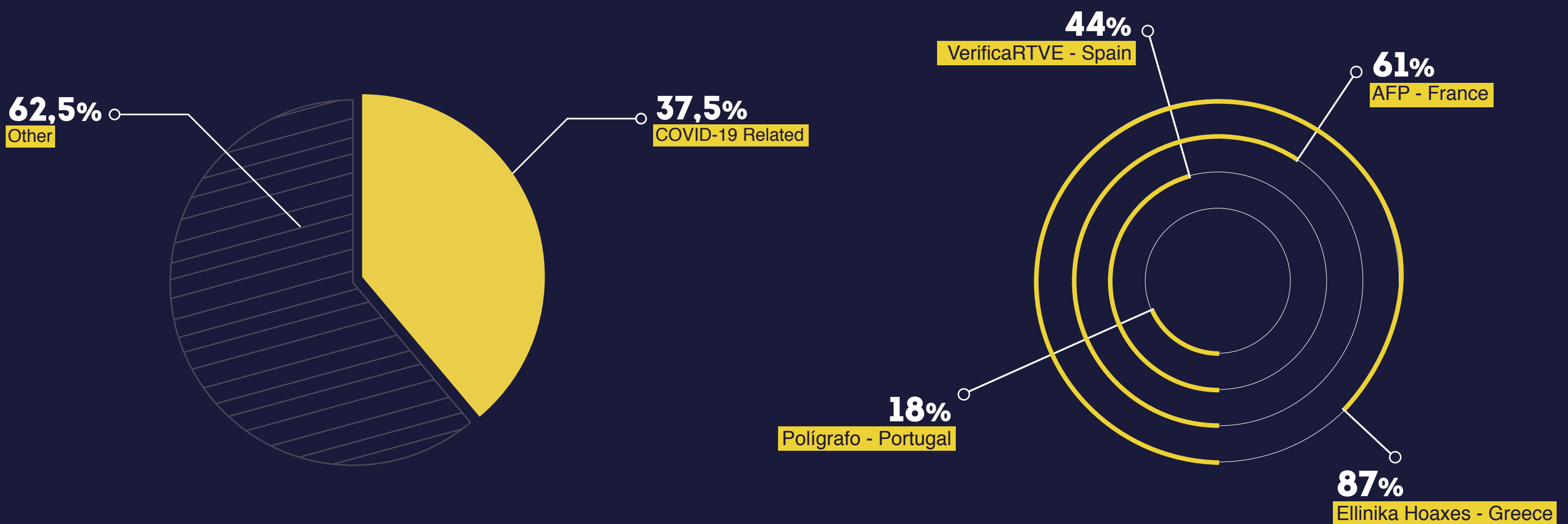




European Digital Media Observatory

AFTER FRANCE, ITALY IS NOW INSPIRING HOAX CREATORS ALL AROUND EUROPE

Monthly brief no. 5 – EDMO fact-checking network



MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF THE ITEMS VERIFIED IN OCTOBER WAS COVID-19 RELATED

The 12 organizations* part of the EDMO's fact-checking network that contributed to this brief published a total of 1.171 fact-checking articles in October 2021. Out of these articles, 439 (37,5%) focused on COVID-19 related disinformation.

Significant variations exist among those organizations. For example, out of their total verifications, Polígrafo (Portugal) reported that 18% were related to COVID-19, a number that rises to 44% for VerificaRTVE (Spain), 61% for AFP (France) and 87% for Ellinika Hoaxes (Greece).

** Organizations that contributed to this brief: AFP, Correctiv, Delfi, Demagog (PI), Ellinika Hoaxes, Knack Magazine, Maldita, Ostro, PagellaPolitica/Facta, Polígrafo, Les Surligneurs, VerificaRTVE*

IN OCTOBER, ITALY WAS THE EPICENTRE OF MANY FALSE NEWS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC AND PROTESTS AGAINST COVID-19 RELATED RESTRICTIONS

In October, according to the information gathered by the 12 organizations part of EDMO's fact-checking network that contributed to this brief, Italy was the starting point for many false stories about the pandemic and related protests.

In particular, the most viral false news originated in Italy were:

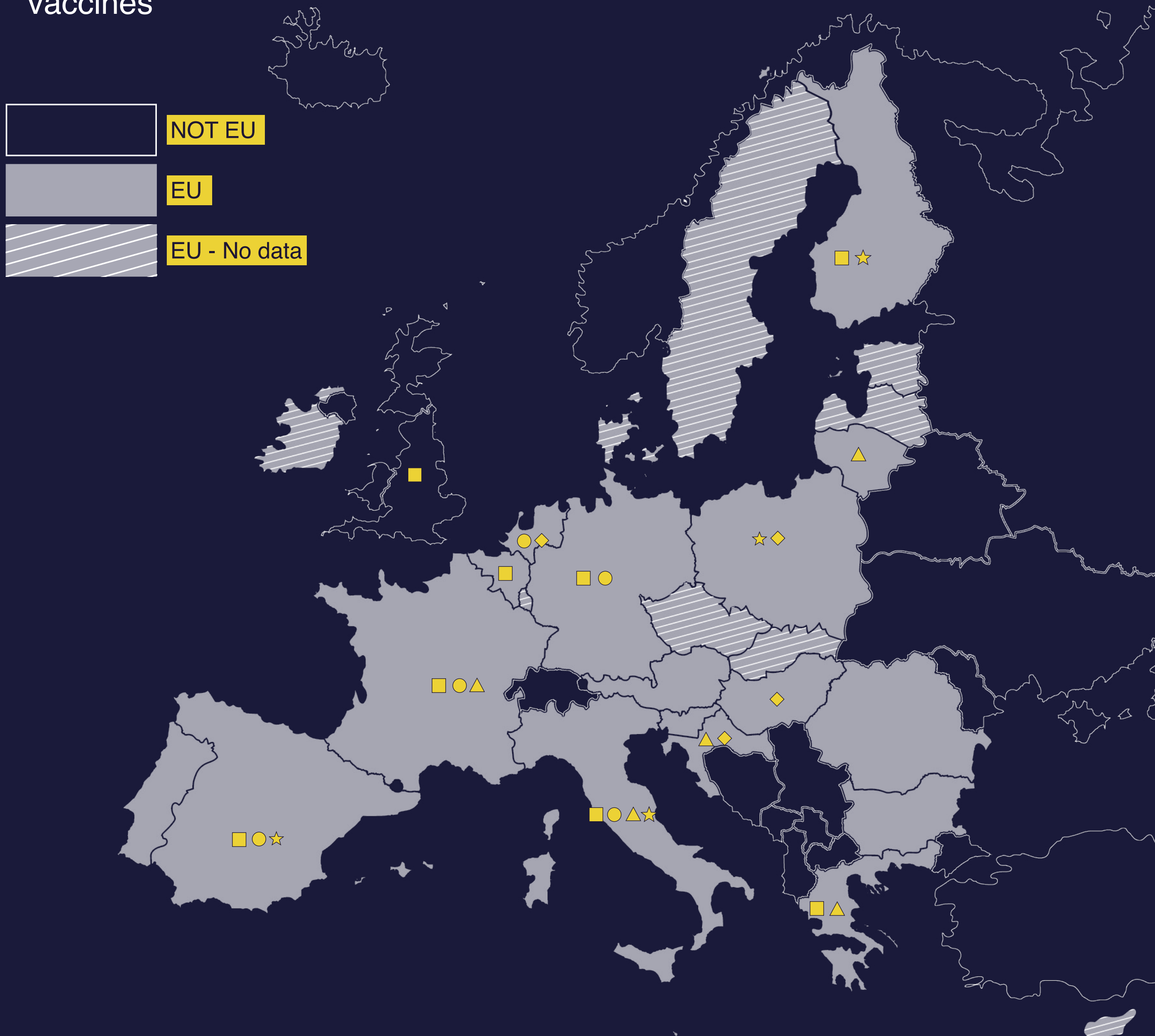
- The Italian Higher Institute of Health made a major downward adjustment of its estimate of the number of people who had died from COVID-19, from over 130,000 to under 4,000
- A video of an Italian policemen angry at his government for ordering to disperse a no-green pass demonstration with tear gas
- A video of a demonstration of Italian stewardesses protesting against vaccines

During the summer, France instead of Italy was the epicenter of many false stories, especially about protests against COVID-19 related restrictions ("pass sanitaire")



THE FIVE FALSE STORIES WITH THE WIDEST CIRCULATION IN THE EU IN OCTOBER, BASED ON THE REPORTS BY THE EU FACT-CHECKERS, WERE:

- The Italian Higher Institute of Health made a downwards adjustment of its estimate of the number of people who had died from COVID-19, from over 130,000 to under 4,000
- Japan defeated the new coronavirus in just one month thanks to Ivermectin and completely stopped the vaccination campaign
- ▲ A video of an Italian policemen angry at his government for ordering to disperse a no-green pass demonstration with tear gas
- ★ The WHO is already talking about the next pandemic, which will be caused allegedly by the so-called Marburg virus: a scam, though, to cover the adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine
- ◆ A video of a demonstration of Italian stewardesses protesting against vaccines




EU FACT-CHECKERS ALSO WITNESSED THE ONGOING CIRCULATION OF FALSE OR UNSUPPORTED NEWS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE PREVIOUS BRIEFS, SUCH AS:

- The misleading caption of old images of demonstrations or celebrations as protests against vaccines or COVID-19 related restrictions
- Data presented in a misleading way to affirm that vaccinated people are more at risk than unvaccinated ones
- So-called experts sharing false information about vaccines and COVID-19
- News about vaccines containing poisonous metals or parasites, and/or causing miscarriages and hurting children

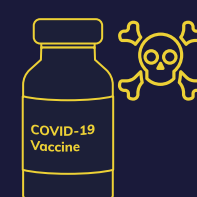
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT VERIFIED DISINFORMATION STORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:




 **BULGARIA:**
Russia refused
to return 22 tonnes
of gold to Bulgaria



 **FRANCE:**
There is no primacy
of EU law over
the Constitutions
of the Member
States



 **SPAIN:**
Irish Ministry of
Health warned
about supposed
adverse effects of the
COVID-19 vaccine,
including sudden death

METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this brief was collected via a questionnaire sent to the fact-checking organizations that are part of the *EDMO* fact-checking network

Reference period: 1-31 October 2021. Number of respondents: 12.
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