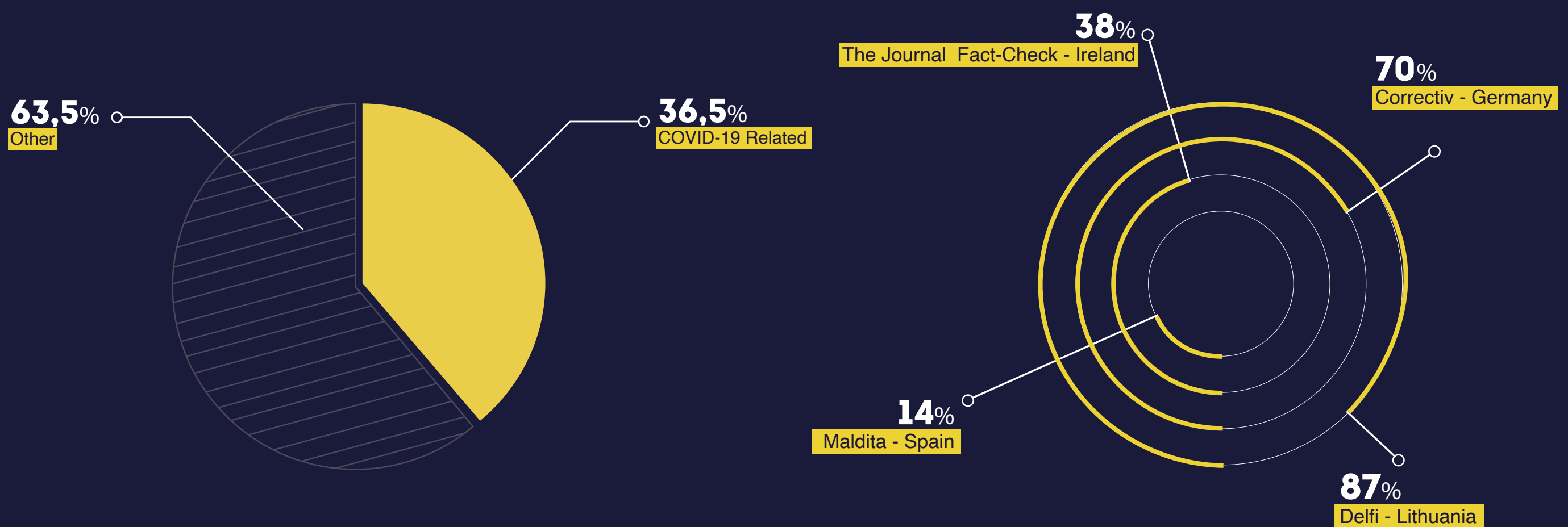




European Digital Media Observatory

# **AFTER FRANCE AND ITALY, AUSTRIA: HOAX CREATORS CHANGE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION, NOT THEIR ARGUMENTS**

Monthly brief no. 6 – EDMO fact-checking network



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

The 12 organizations\* part of the EDMO fact-checking network that contributed to this brief published a total of 1.173 fact-checking articles in November 2021. Out of these articles, 428 (36,5%) focused on COVID-19 related disinformation.

*Significant variations exist among those organizations. For example, out of their total verifications, Maldita (Spain) reported that 14% were related to COVID-19, a number that rises to 38% for The Journal Fact-Check (Ireland), 70% for Correctiv (Germany) and 87% for Delfi (Lithuania).*

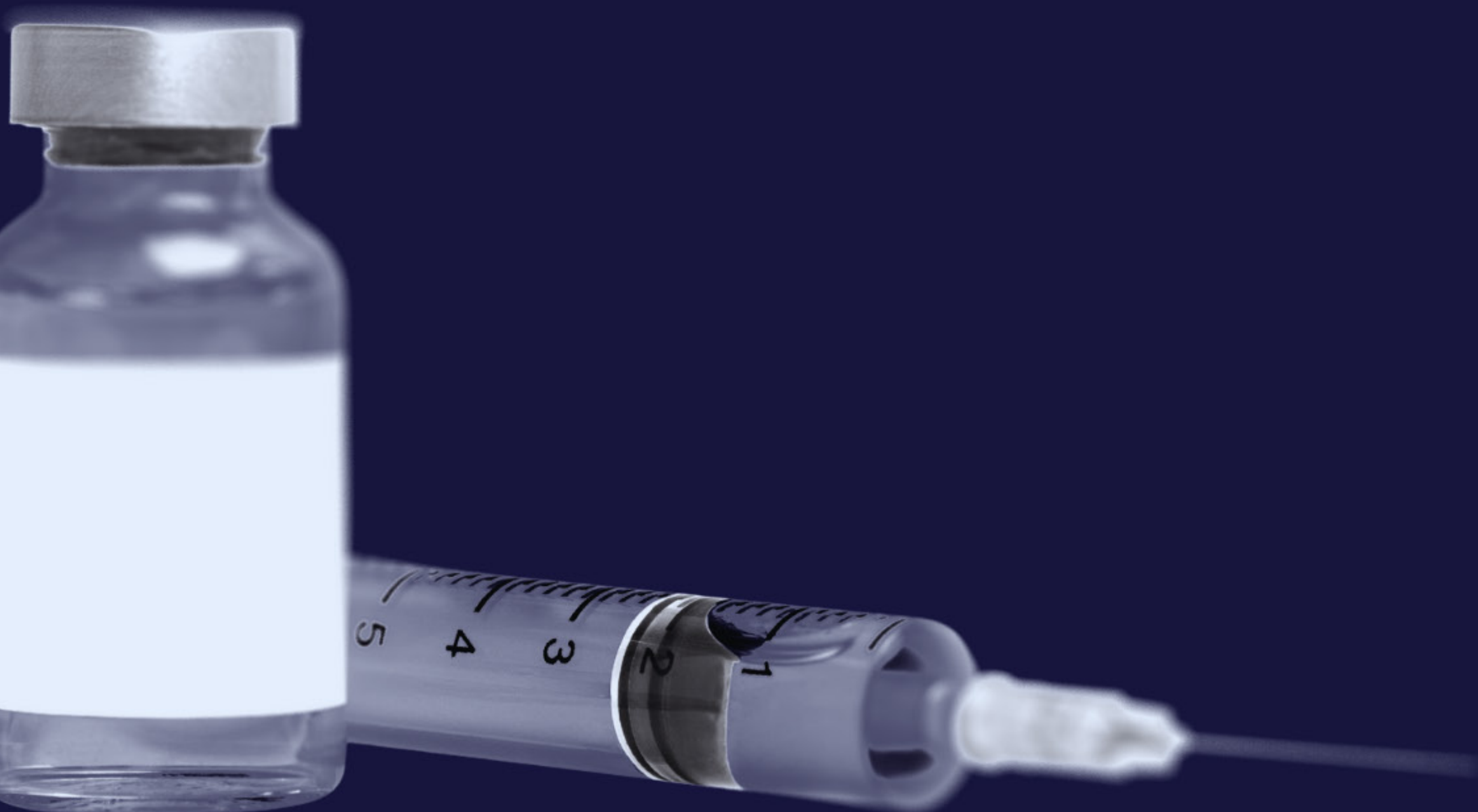
*\* Organizations that contributed to this brief: AFP, Correctiv, Delfi, Demagog (PI), Ellinika Hoaxes, France tv, Knack Magazine, Maldita, PagellaPolitica/Facta, Polígrafo, The Journal Fact-Check, VerificaRTVE*

## **IN NOVEMBER, AUSTRIA SUPERSEDED ITALY AND FRANCE AS THE NEW EPICENTER OF MANY FALSE NEWS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC**

In November, according to the information gathered by the 12 organizations part of EDMO fact-checking network that contributed to this brief, Austria was the origin of much false content about supposedly huge protests against COVID-related measures

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

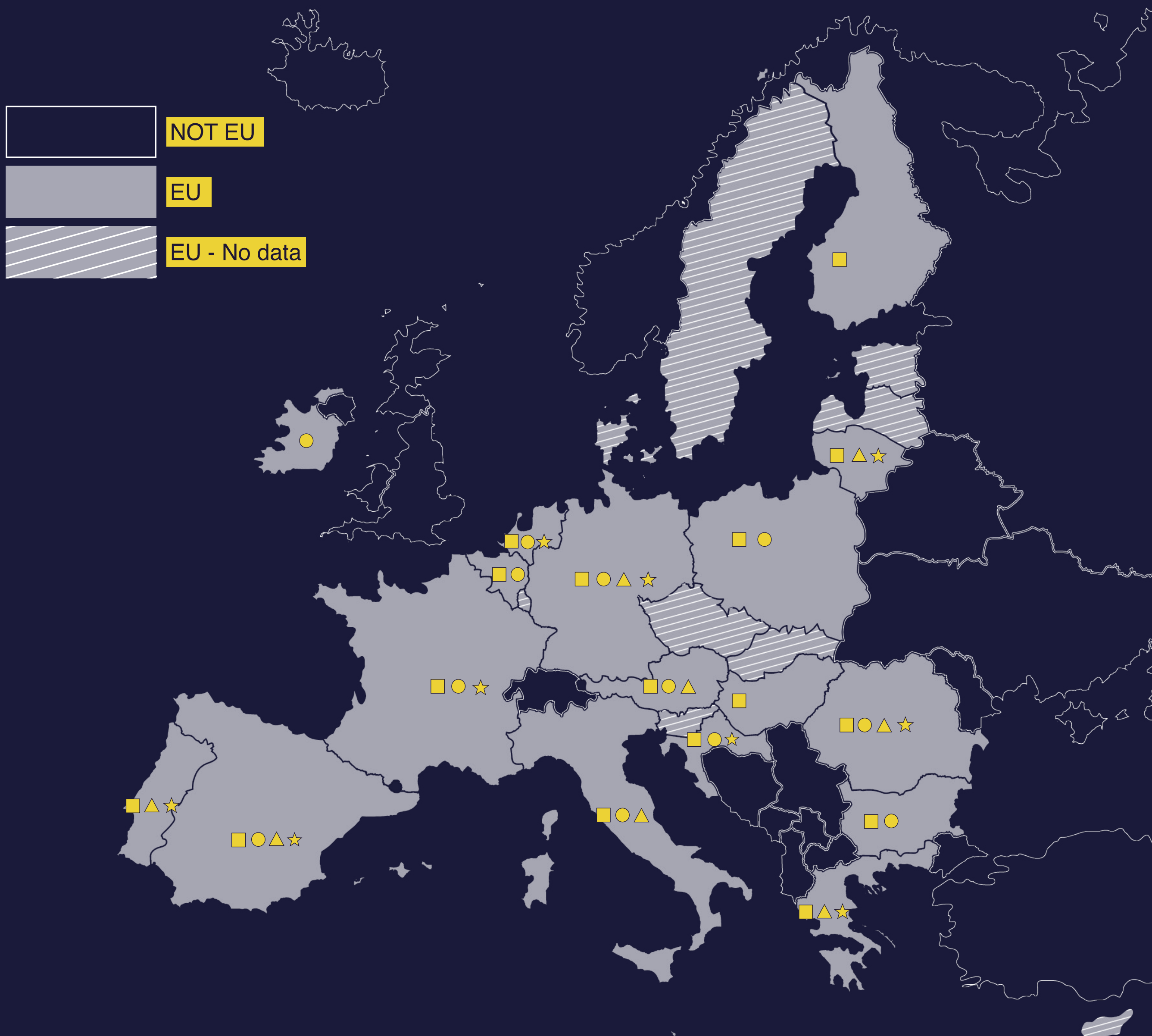
- A video allegedly showing a protest in Austria against the new lockdown measures for unvaccinated people (the video was actually filmed in 2019 and shows a parade of supporters of a German soccer club)
- A photo allegedly showing a protest in Austria against the new lockdown measures for unvaccinated people (the photo was actually taken in 1991 in Russia and shows a protest against Gorbachev)
- Stories on Facebook claiming that the entire Austrian army and police would join a demonstration against state anti-epidemic restrictions and/or would refuse to control certificates of COVID-19 vaccination (false)





## THE FOUR FALSE STORIES WITH THE WIDEST CIRCULATION IN THE EU IN NOVEMBER, BASED ON THE EU FACT-CHECKERS REPORTS, WERE:

- Old videos and photos of demonstrations/celebrations decontextualized and miscaptioned to portrait huge demonstrations in Austria against the lockdown and other COVID-related measures
- The pandemic was planned, and a document that shows a timeline for the new COVID-19 variants with logos of WHO, Gates Foundation, Johns Hopkins and WEF proves it
- ▲ Thomas Jendges, CEO of Chemnitz Clinic, committed suicide and left a letter talking about vaccines being a “genocide”
- ★ The Italian Higher Institute of Health made a downwards adjustment of its estimate of the number of people who died from COVID-19, from over 130,000 to under 4,000






## **PANDEMIC ASIDE, DISINFORMATION IN NOVEMBER CONCERNED ALSO:**

- Migrant crisis at the Polish-Belarus border
- Black Friday offers
- Surge of gas prices
- Climate change




## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT VERIFIED DISINFORMATION STORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:




 **POLAND:**  
22 Polish soldiers  
killed at the Belarus  
border




 **NETHERLANDS:**  
The police killed  
anti-lockdown  
protesters in  
The Hague




 **BULGARIA:**  
Chief Health Inspector  
Angel Kunchev died  
after receiving a third  
dose of the vaccine



 **FRANCE:**  
The number of fatal  
heart ailments on  
football fields increased  
fivefolds in 2021  
compared to previous  
years, because of the  
COVID-19 vaccine



 **IRELAND:**  
Letters that give  
unvaccinated people a  
legal right to visit friends  
and relatives in hospitals

## **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: 1-30 November 2021. Number of respondents: 12.  
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EDMO has received funding from the European Union under Contract number: LC-01464044”