



European Digital Media Observatory

**Weekly insight n°1**

# DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE

10/03/2022 to 17/03/2022

[edmo.eu](https://edmo.eu)

Twitter: [@EDMO\\_EU](https://twitter.com/EDMO_EU)

Published on 18 March 2022

# 5 CIRCULATING FALSE NARRATIVES

## TREND #1

### Questioning the war, from its reality to its motives

The war is staged (e.g. [here](#))

Conspiracy theories (e.g. [here](#))

→40.8% of analysis

## TREND #2

### Minimising the reality of Ukrainian war casualties

Misleading use of pictures and videos (e.g. [here](#))

Focus on Mariupol (e.g. [here](#))

→15.5% of analysis

## TREND #3

### Unfounded information about military maneuvers

Both on Russian and Ukrainian armies (e.g. [here](#) and [here](#))

Standard war disinformation mechanism

→13.6% of analysis

## TREND #4

### Confusion on discriminatory practices resulting from the war

On Ukrainian refugees (e.g. [here](#))

On Russian nationals in the EU (e.g. [here](#))

→12.6% of analysis

## TREND #5

### Distorted representation of Ukrainians

Heroization of Ukrainian army and Zelensky (e.g. [here](#))

Ukrainians and Zelensky are neo-Nazis (e.g. [here](#))

→12.6% of analysis

# EARLY-WARNING: WHAT TO EXPECT

## 1. Disinformation about Ukrainian refugees

Initially detected in the countries of first arrivals (Poland, Hungary, Romania & Slovakia), it is now spreading into Central and Western Europe as well (Germany, Ireland, Italy & Spain). Refugees are depicted as dangerous fascists, hogging local resources and allegedly receiving better treatment than EU nationals (e.g. [here](#)).

## 2. The permeability of the COVID19 disinformation community to Russian disinformation

Communities that have been exposed to Covid-19 related disinformation are now at great danger of being exposed to Ukraine-related disinformation that fosters pro-Russian propaganda. EDMO's February fact-checking brief identified the decrease of Covid-19 related disinformation in favor of Ukraine-related disinformation in favor of pro-Russian narratives: both tendencies seem to be correlated.

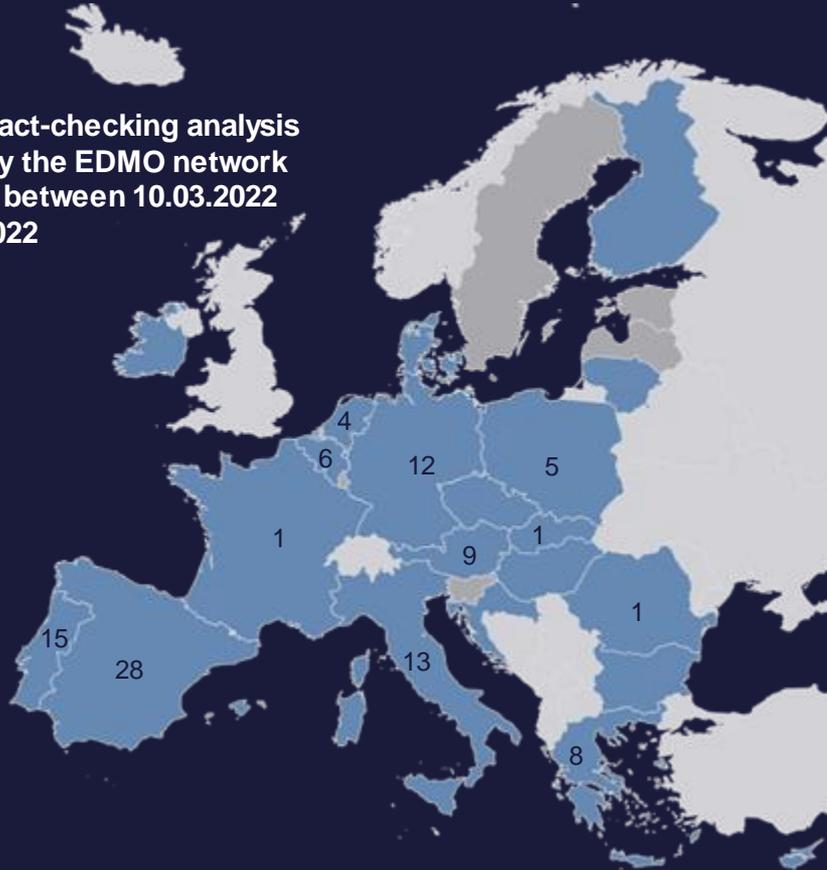
## 3. The fake fact-checking outlets

The work of EDMO's network fighting disinformation is put at risk by the weaponisation of fact-checks by fake media and fact-checking outlets. This disinformation is spread by Russian media and embassies worldwide to instill mistrust in Western public opinion. EDMO's taskforce urged EU institutions to spread awareness and take action against these practices (e.g. [here](#)).

 We are currently investigating these trends and will deliver their analysis as soon as possible.

# DATA PROVIDED BY EDMO'S FACT-CHECKING NETWORK

Number of fact-checking analysis published by the EDMO network per country between 10.03.2022 and 17.03.2022



In total, 473 analyses have been provided by EDMO's fact-checking network partners since 24 February 2022 and 103 during the week this report focuses on (10.03 to 17.03).

## About this map

It does not reflect the real volume of disinformation circulating in the EU. The total volume remains complex to assess.

Organisations that contributed to this report: [Correctiv](#), [AFP Factual](#), [PagellaPolitica/FactaNews](#), [EllinikaHoaxes](#), [MALDITA.ES](#), [AFP Verificat](#), [Polígrafo](#), [Knack](#), [EFE Verifica](#), [DPA Nederland](#), [Demagog Poland](#), [Mimikama](#), [AFP Factual](#), [AFP Faktencheck Germany/Austria](#), [AFP Faktencheck Germany](#), [DPA Belgium](#), [AFP Fact Check Nederland](#), [AFP Fakty](#).

## METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this brief is based on [EDMO's repository](#) of fact-checking analysis on the war in Ukraine. The repository's items are provided by the fact-checking organizations that are part of the EDMO fact-checking network.

Reference period: 10-17 March 2022. Number of analyses studied: 103 (number as of 18.03.2022).

Main editor of this report: Louise Carnapete, EDMO/School of Transnational Governance.  
For further information: [louise.carnapete@eui.eu](mailto:louise.carnapete@eui.eu) and [edmo@eui.eu](mailto:edmo@eui.eu).



EDMO has received funding  
from the European Union  
under Contract number: "LC-01464044"