

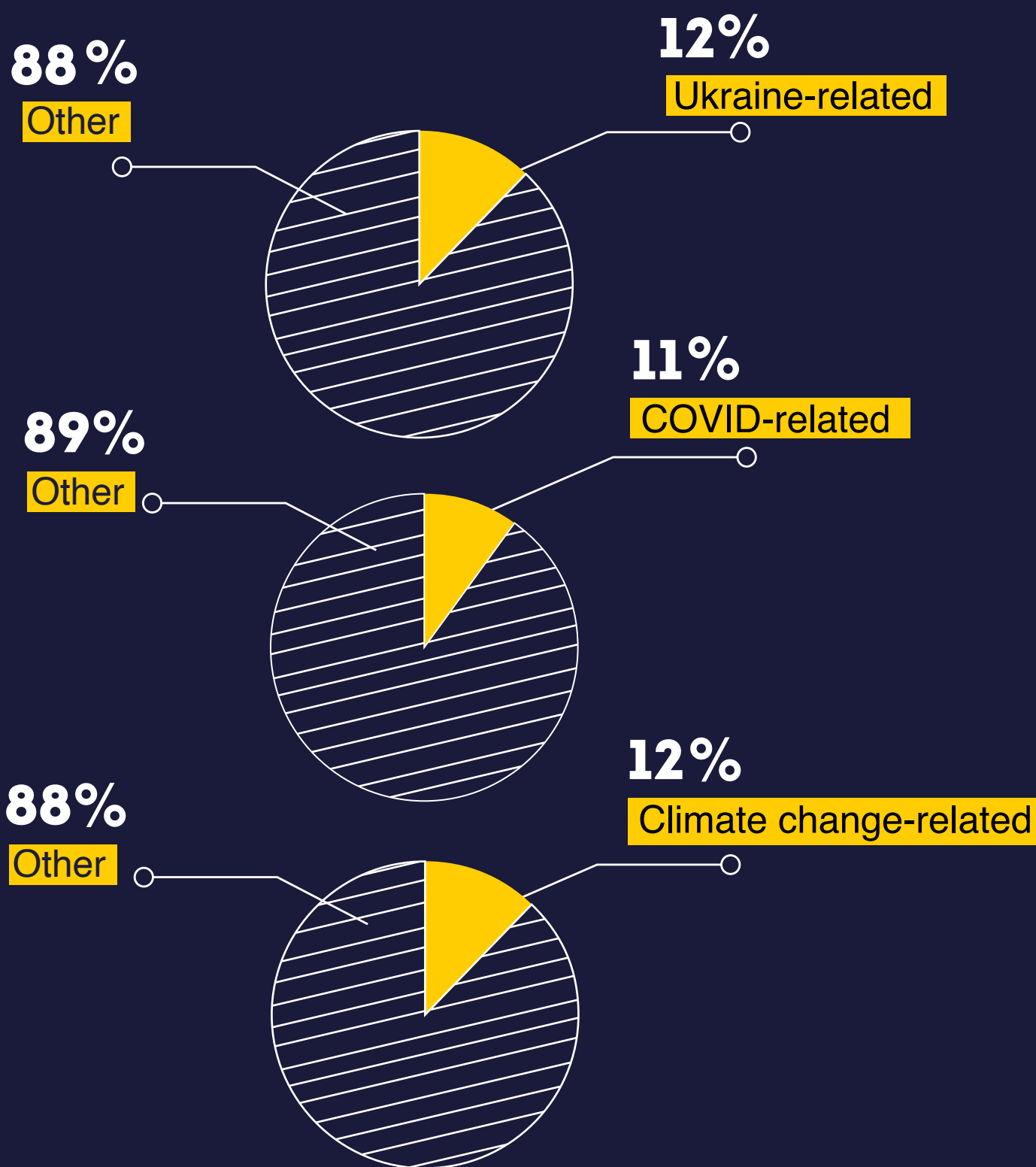


European Digital Media Observatory

PRICE CRISIS-RELATED DISINFORMATION IS BECOMING MORE RELEVANT IN EUROPE

Monthly brief no. 16 – EDMO fact-checking network

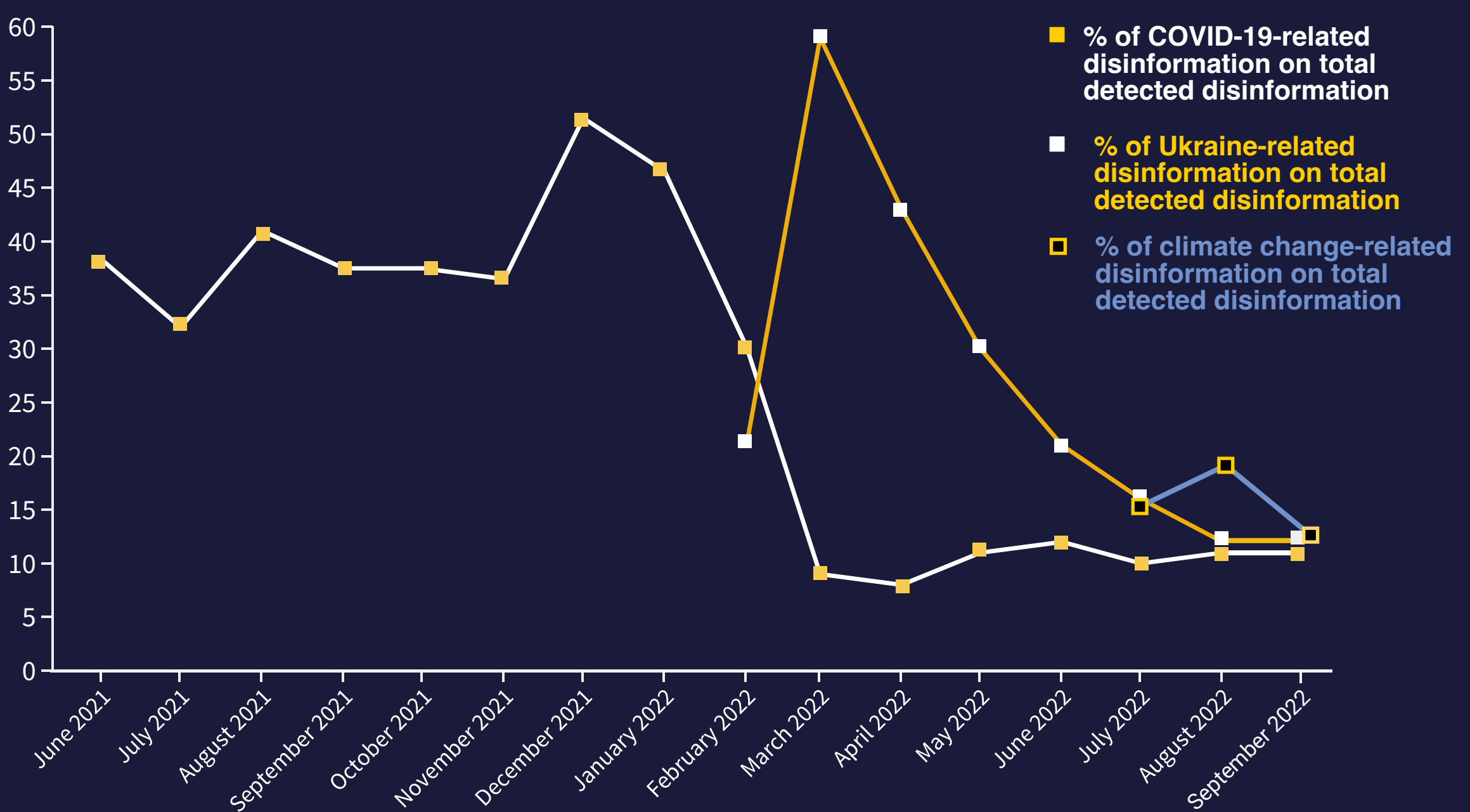
DETECTED DISINFORMATION ABOUT UKRAINE, PANDEMIC AND CLIMATE CHANGE AMOUNTS TO JUST ONE THIRD OF THE TOTAL IN SEPTEMBER



The 27 organizations* part of the EDMO fact-checking network that contributed to this brief published a total of 1.329 fact-checking articles in September 2022.

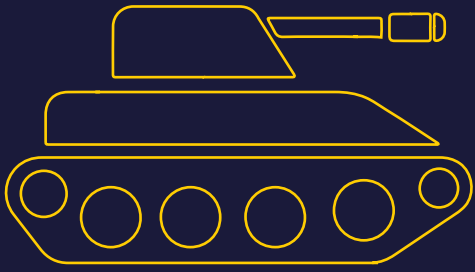
Out of these articles, 157 (12%) focused on Ukraine-related disinformation; 149 (11%) focused on COVID-19-related disinformation; and 166 (12%) focused on climate change-related disinformation.

The three main topics of detected disinformation account for just one third of the total detected disinformation. Considering the developments on the ground, and the growing attention to the topic in the traditional media, the Ukraine-related disinformation will likely increase in the next future.



* Organizations that contributed to this brief: AFP, Correctiv, Delfi, Demagog (PI), Eesti Päevaleht, EFE Verifica, Ellinika Hoaxes, Eurocomunicare, Faktabaari, Factcheck Vlaanderen, Knack, Lakmusz, Les Surligneurs, Maldita, Nieuwscheckers, Newtral, Ostro, PagellaPolitica/Facta, Poligrafo, Pravda, PressHUB Romania, Re:Baltica, The Journal Fact-Check, TjekDet, Verificat, VerificaRTVE, VRTNWS

MAIN NARRATIVES DETECTED:

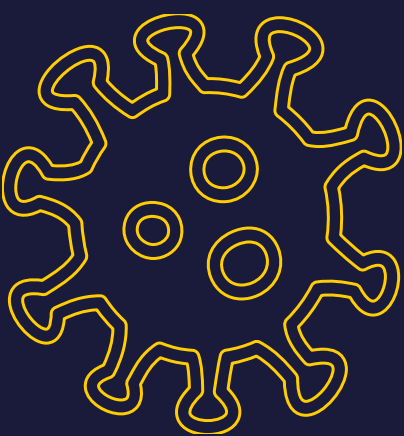


The main narratives conveyed by false news about the war in Ukraine are largely the same detected in the previous months: Zelensky is corrupt (e.g.), Ukrainians are largely pro-Nazi (e.g.), Ukrainian refugees are “parasites” (e.g.) and European nations treat them better than their own citizens (e.g.), the weapons provided by the West to Ukraine are sold on the black market (e.g.), Russophobia is raging in Europe (e.g.) (e.g.).

A new anti-Russia disinformation narrative emerged in September, with many false news exaggerating (e.g.) or caricaturing (e.g.) the phenomenon of Russian young males fleeing the country to escape the mobilization.



The main narratives conveyed by false news about COVID-19 are also the same as those detected in the past: vaccines are dangerous (e.g.), especially for pregnant women (e.g.) and children (e.g.), they reduce fertility (e.g.), they contain graphene and “heavy metals” (e.g.), Ivermectin’s effectiveness is proven by scientific studies (e.g.).



The main narratives conveyed by false news about climate change circulated in September are consistent with the ones highlighted by an EDMO investigation published in July: climate change doesn’t exist (e.g.) or is not man-made (e.g.), climate models are not reliable (e.g.), electric cars and renewables are not a good solution to the problem (e.g.).

DISINFORMATION ABOUT GAS CRISIS/PRICE CRISIS IS GROWING IN SEPTEMBER IN THE EU AND IT IS BECOMING A MORE SIGNIFICANT PHENOMENON:



False news claiming that the price crisis is due to speculation in single countries (e.g.), that the EU (e.g.) or member states (e.g.) are cutting off electricity to houses, that European states are approving drastic punishments (e.g.) and repressive measures (e.g.), that protests are already happening but they are violently repressed (e.g.) and kept hidden (e.g.) circulated widely in the EU in September. It is likely that this phenomenon will grow bigger in the next few weeks and possibly months, if the price crisis persists.

OTHER RELEVANT TOPICS OF DISINFORMATION DETECTED IN SEPTEMBER:



A lot of disinformation circulated in September in the EU about Queen Elizabeth's funeral (e.g.)(e.g.)



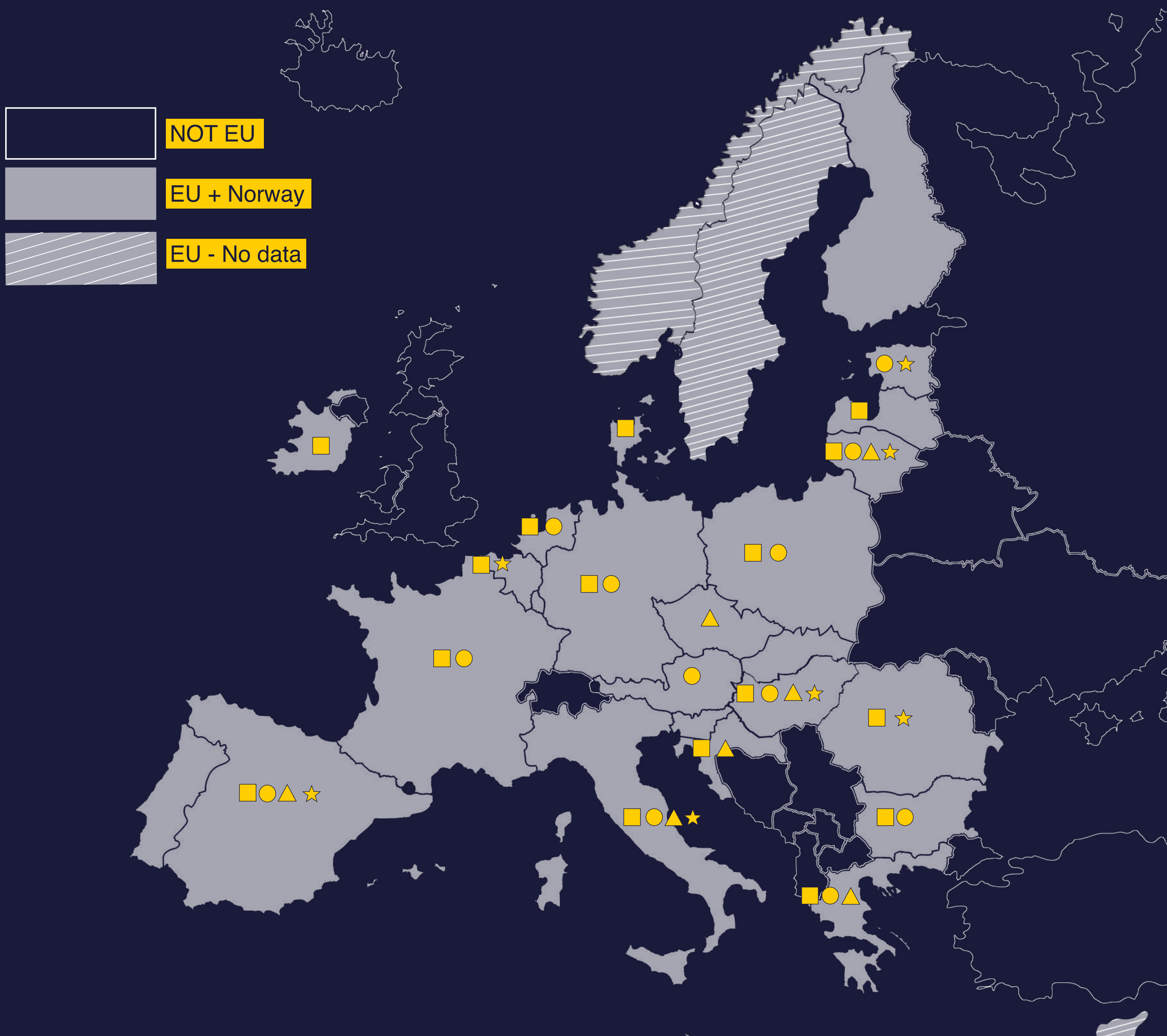
In some countries (e.g.)(e.g.)(e.g.) disinformation about a new wave of migrants arriving from MeNa started circulating in September.



Disinformation about Lgbtq+ community is a minor but consistent phenomenon in the EU, also in September (e.g.) (e.g.)

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

- Video showing Russians in a 35 km queue at Finland border after Putin's announcement of a partial mobilization (e.g.)
- Swiss authorities allegedly asked citizens to denounce their neighbors in case they use too much heating (e.g.)
- ▲ Video showing a protest in Rome where a man removed the EU flag from a building, captioned as a reaction to Ursula von der Leyen's statement about Italian elections (e.g.)
- ★ The Simpsons predicted the year of death of Queen Elizabeth II (e.g.)



THE MOST SIGNIFICANT VERIFIED DISINFORMATION STORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:



Alex Vanoplasgh, leader of an opposition party, sees no connection between inflation and the war in Ukraine. It's worth highlighting that a specular misleading claim was verified in Hungary in July, where the prime minister Viktor Orbán repeatedly claimed that the record high inflation rate is due to the war and to the war only.



The Spanish Minister for Equality supported pederasty in one of her speeches.



European Union will force EU citizens to eat beetles and grasshoppers.



Dutch city of Haarlem becomes world's first to ban meat adverts in public.

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 September 2022. Number of respondents: 27.

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