

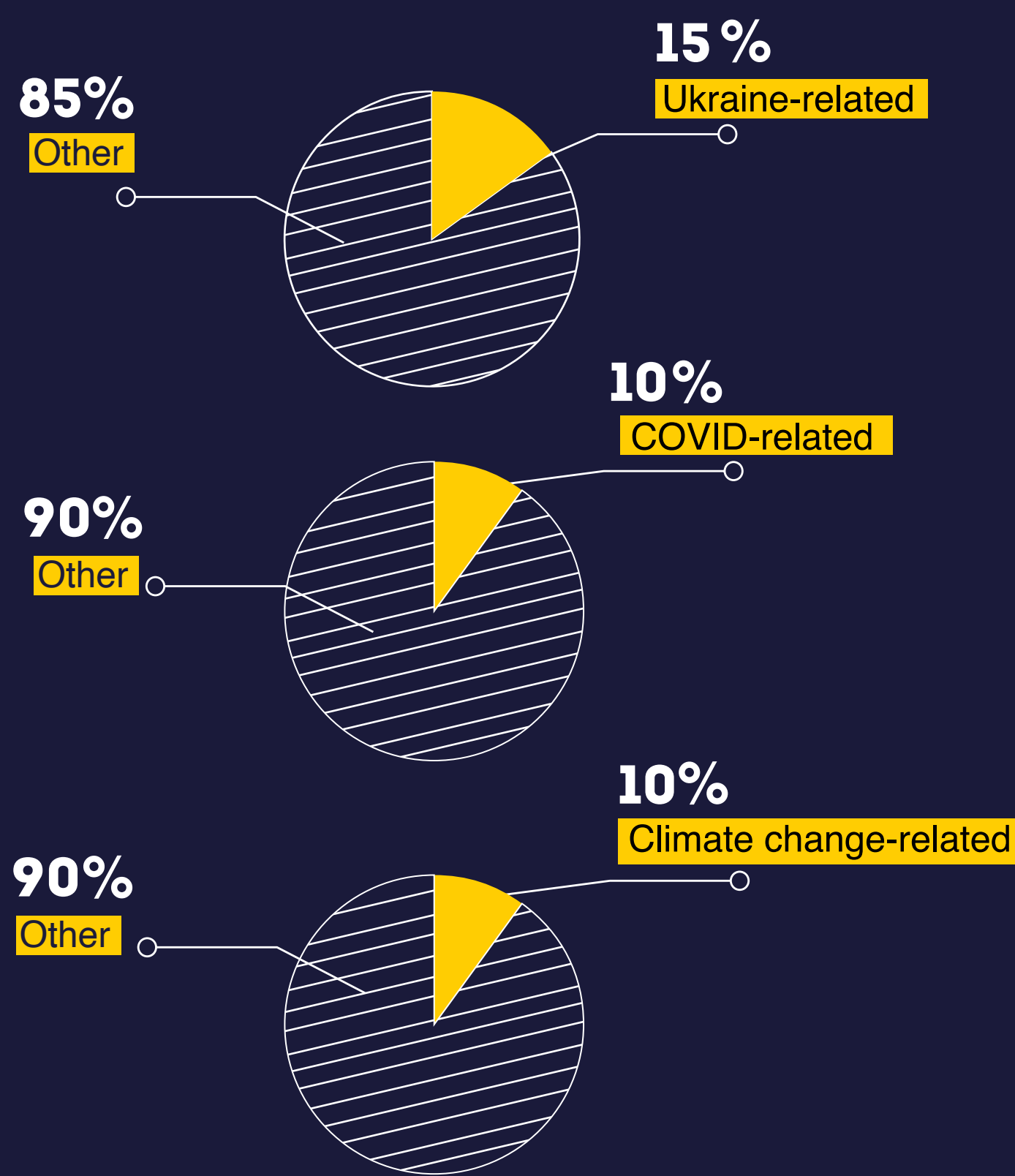


European Digital Media Observatory

QATAR WORLD CUP REKINDLES DISINFORMATION ABOUT... UKRAINIANS BEING PRO-NAZI

Monthly brief no. 18 – EDMO fact-checking network

DETECTED DISINFORMATION’S LANDSCAPE REMAINS STABLE IN NOVEMBER IN THE EU

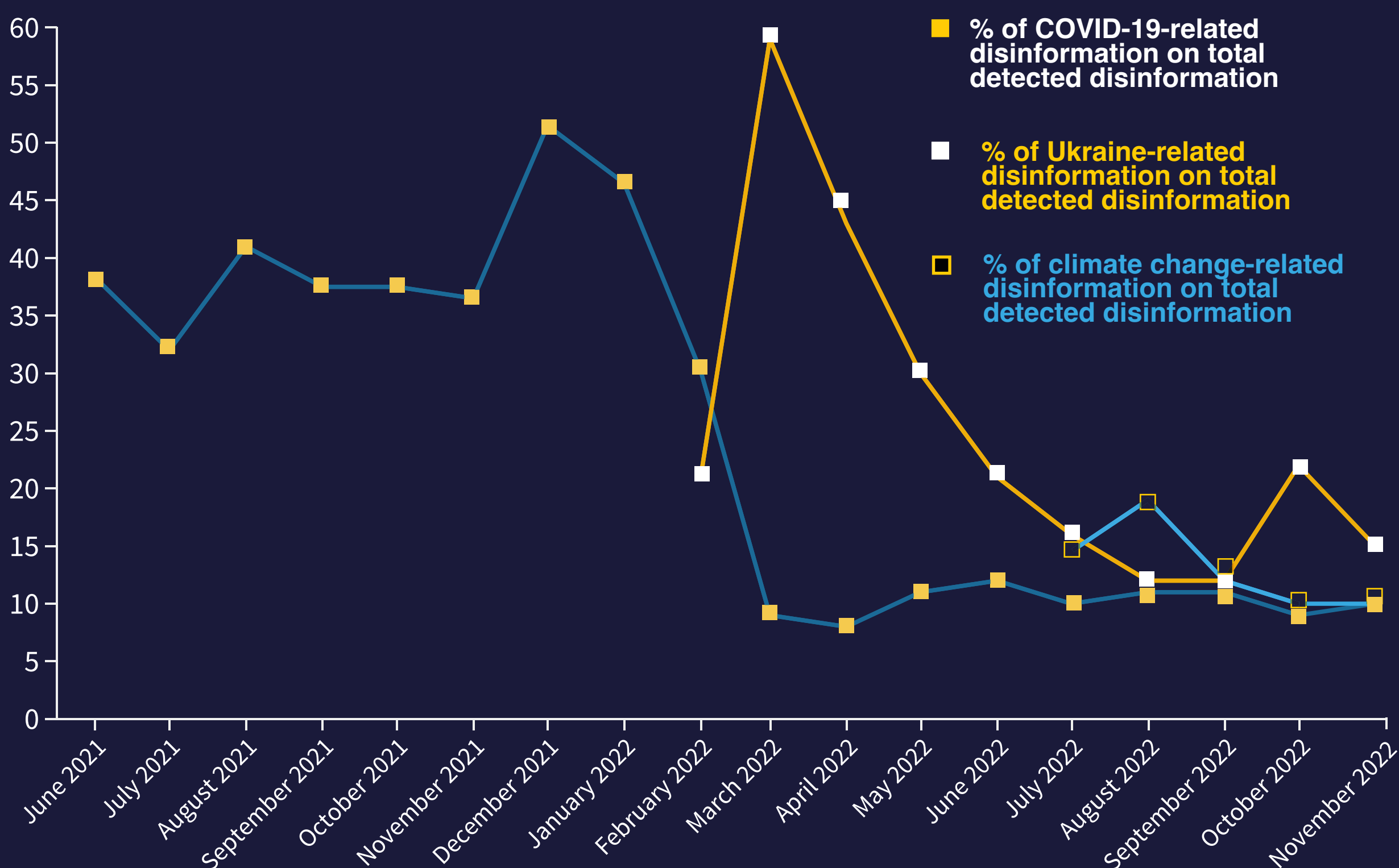


The 28 organizations* part of the EDMO fact-checking network that contributed to this brief published a total of 1.209 fact-checking articles in November 2022.

Out of these articles, 180 (15%) focused on Ukraine-related disinformation; 120 (10%) focused on COVID-19-related disinformation; and 122 (10%) focused on climate change-related disinformation. Percentages similar to the ones recorded in the last few months.

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

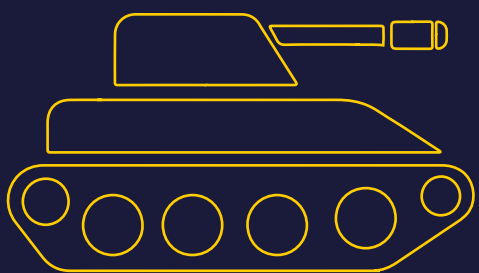
DETECTED DISINFORMATION ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE SLIGHTLY DIMINISHES IN NOVEMBER



The percentage of detected disinformation about the war in Ukraine slightly decreased this month, passing from 22% in October to 15% in November, probably because the news coverage of the war declined after the liberation of Kherson, on November 11.

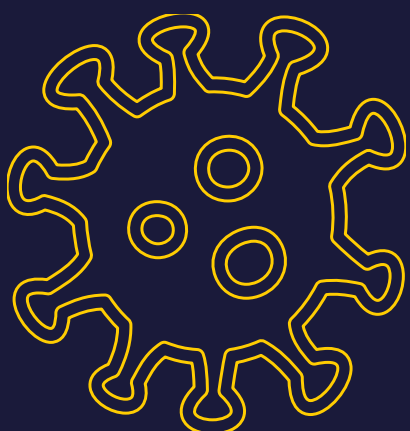


MAIN NARRATIVES DETECTED:



About Ukraine, Qatar World Cup rekindled disinformation about Ukrainians being pro-Nazi in November, through stories regarding Ukrainian soccer enthusiasts displaying Nazi symbols. However, the majority of verified false news was about corruption in Ukraine (e.g. false news about most of the EU aid being stolen in the country, or about Ukrainian officials buying properties in Switzerland using the money sent by the U.S. as aid, or again about weapons delivered to Ukraine ending up in criminal hands).

Other already existing narratives persist in November: about Ukrainian refugees being parasites of the welfare state of EU countries; about Ukrainian victims being “crisis actors”; about sanctions backfiring harshly against EU countries; about Zelensky being corrupt and without popular support (this one appeared in relation with the liberation of Kherson); about discrimination of Russia and/or Russians.



The main narratives conveyed by false news about COVID-19 are generally the same as those detected in the past. Some of them are now being detected about the flu.



The same goes for disinformation about climate change, with the addition of a new line of false news about oil, that “regenerates in the earth faster than it is extracted.”

THE ROCKET EXPLOSION IN POLAND, NEAR THE UKRAINIAN BORDER, TRIGGERED DISINFORMATION FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE CONFLICT

On November 15, 2022, a missile struck the territory of Poland near the border with Ukraine. The incident occurred during a Russian attack on Ukrainian cities and energy facilities. Investigations are still ongoing but the U.S., Nato and Polish officials said that most likely the missile was an Ukrainian air defense missile that failed to intercept a Russian target and fell in Poland.



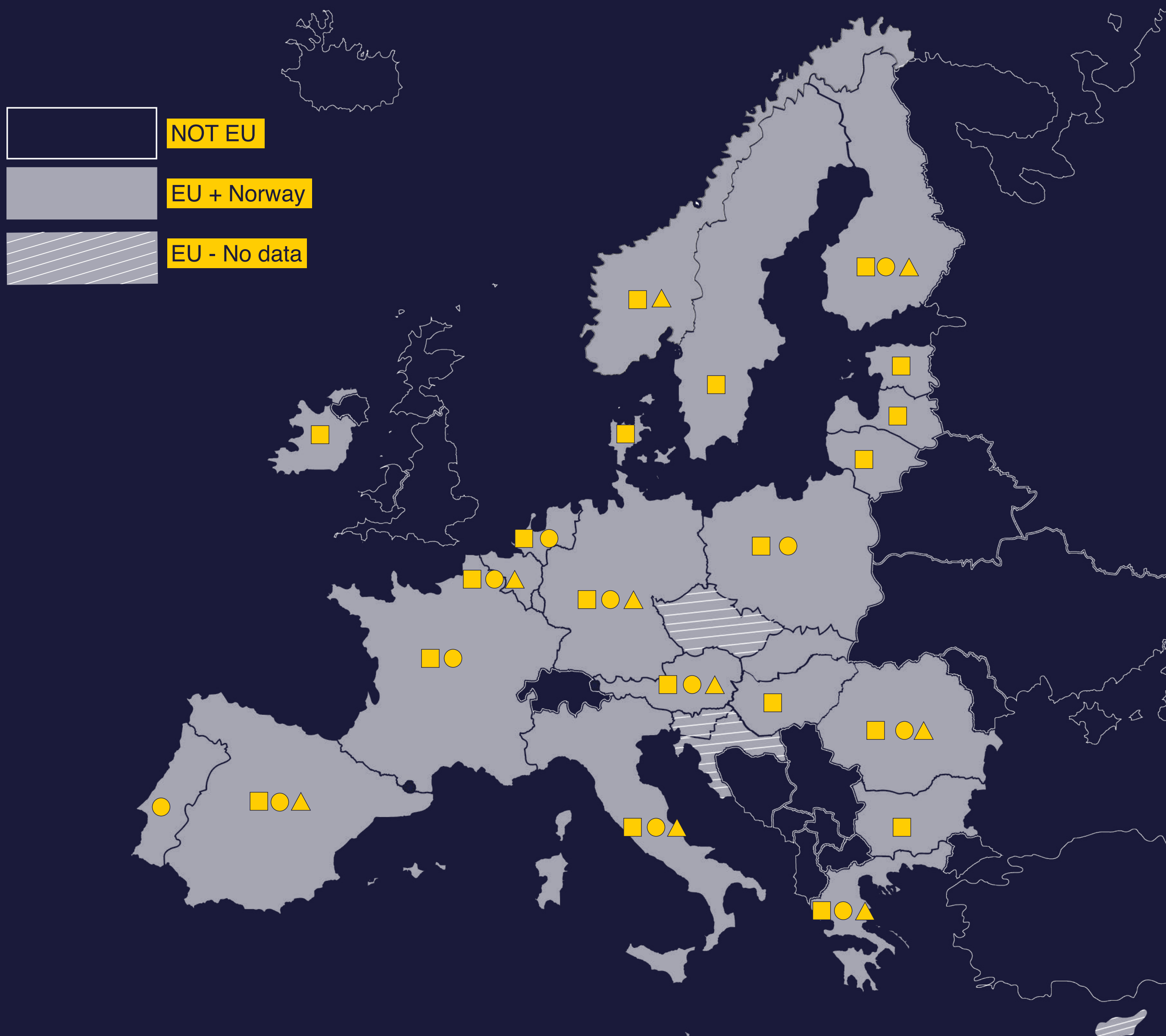
Many detected false news claimed, in a first moment, that Russia was responsible for the attack and suggested a possible activation of Article 5 of the Nato Treaty (collective defense).



A conspiracy theory emerged, according to which Ukraine hit Poland on purpose, trying to directly involve Nato in the conflict and plunging the world in a nuclear war.

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

- “Died suddenly”, a “documentary” about COVID-19 vaccines spreading conspiracy theories and false news/misleading information about the vaccination
- Stories about Ukrainians supporters at Qatar World Championship displaying Nazi symbols
- ▲ Videos, pictures, and false news proving electoral scams in the U.S. midterm elections



THE MOST SIGNIFICANT VERIFIED DISINFORMATION STORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:



The far-right political party AfD built a website to collect reports on alleged blackouts in Germany. However, the AfD did not check users' submissions: everybody could add unproven cases to the website. Correctiv asked some network operators if electricity cuts had actually taken place in the cities and villages collected through the site's interactive map. A sample of five cases showed that in four of them there was no power failure at all.



Troll accounts that impersonate left-wing social media profiles and political appointees are mixing political content with more controversial topics, in order to discredit them.



Middle Eastern influencers keep spreading false claims about social services stealing children in Sweden. This time, the child adopted by a gay couple was incorrectly labeled as “a Muslim child who was taken”

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 2022. Number of respondents: 28.
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