



European Digital Media Observatory

EDMO Taskforce on
2024 European Elections

WEEKLY INSIGHTS and EARLY WARNINGS

n°6

Published on Friday, 17 May 2024

Visit edmo.eu



DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES YOU MAY COME ACROSS

ESCALATION OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Ukraine is a nazi & illegitimate country: False news accusing the Ukrainian president of signing the flag of a Waffen-SS group within the Ukrainian army are resurfacing. A deepfake video also shows the White House spokeswoman mentioning Nazi protests in Ukraine. There are other misleading stories saying that Ukraine allegedly revoked the European Convention of Human Rights on its territory or is not even recognized as a state by the UN.

Direct involvement of the EU in the conflict: Deceptive content keeps on circulating to allegedly prove that Member States are implicated on Ukrainian grounds following the request of Zelensky. There is the example of the French Foreign Legion or the burning military missile factory in Berlin.

XENOPHOBIA AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ukrainian refugees are parasites: There is a resurgence of false news targeting Ukrainian refugees. They are said to get special treatment in the Member States, like receiving cars as presents and special pension entitlements in Germany or are accused of starting a fire in a pharmaceutical warehouse in Poland.

Islamisation of the EU: Following the Eurovision, false news show videos of alleged Muslim migrants protesting violently against the Israeli representative in Sweden. Arabic is also reportedly implemented as an official language within the educational system in Catalonia, where illegal migrants are also blamed for an epidemic of ringworms and scabies. On the contrary, Slovakia and Switzerland are allegedly trying to ban Islam on their territory.

DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES YOU MAY COME ACROSS

COVID-19

Covid-19 vaccines are dangerous: While AstraZeneca decided to withdraw its COVID-19 vaccines from the EU market for commercial reasons (a drop of the demand), disinformation stated that it is actually the European Commission that banned those vaccines due to high risks of thrombosis. False content also showed the CEO of Moderna admitting that COVID-19 vaccines are a crime against humanity. The story goes that in France, protesters can apparently get arrested for protesting and criticising vaccines.

There was never a pandemic: Circulating false news claim that the pandemic was a global imposture for some actors to reach higher goals. The World Economic Forum, for example, admitted that this was a hoax to ban the use of cash, and Germany confessed that the pandemic was invented to carry out a military psychological operation through the vaccination campaign. In this context, it was also falsely reported that the President of the European Commission, Ursula van der Leyen, was arrested in the European Parliament.



EARLY WARNINGS: WHAT TO EXPECT?

1. Robert Fico shooting: Following the shooting of Slovak prime minister Robert Fico, on May 15, it is very likely that disinformation will try to exploit the situation to convey different messages. Disinformation could have both a national and European dimension, connecting the attempted assassination to domestic elements or to international events. Considering the strong political polarization existing in Slovakia, disinformation will likely try to deepen and enlarge the cracks in the Slovakian society ahead of the EU elections and after. False news connecting the shooter with the opposition party, Progressive Slovakia, are already circulating online.

2. Mail-in ballots and election integrity: With elections approaching, misleading claims may circulate regarding mail-in ballots, particularly features such as holes or cut-off corners which are actually design elements to assist blind and visually impaired voters in Germany. These claims could undermine confidence in electoral integrity by suggesting, for example, that these ballots are inherently invalid.

3. The banning of the EU flag and the featuring of the LGBTQ+ community flag in Eurovision: The controversy surrounding the banning of the EU flag and the featuring of the LGBTQ+ flag from the Eurovision Contest can be used in disinformation narratives targeting the contest in different ways, for example describing it as a platform promoting a political agenda in favor of the LGBTQ+ community, and/or against Europe.

METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this brief is based on the [EDMO EU Elections Disinfo Bulletin](#), the [EDMO monthly fact-checking briefs](#) and [investigations](#), and the EFCSN fact-checking database focused on the 2024 European Elections, [Elections24Check](#).

Reference period: May 2024.

Responsible EDMO organisation:
EDMO Taskforce On 2024 European Elections

Main editors of this report:
Louise Carnapete-Rinieri, Florence School of
Transnational Governance.
Stamos Archontis, FactReview

Contributors:
Tommaso Canetta, PagellaPolitica/Facta.news
Enzo Panizio, PagellaPolitica/Facta.news
Shan Mao, Florence School of Transnational
Governance.

Graphic designer:
Maria Laura Minoli, Florence School of Transnational
Governance.

For further information: edmo.tfeu2024@eui.eu



EDMO has received funding
from the European Union
under Contract number: “LC-01935415 ”