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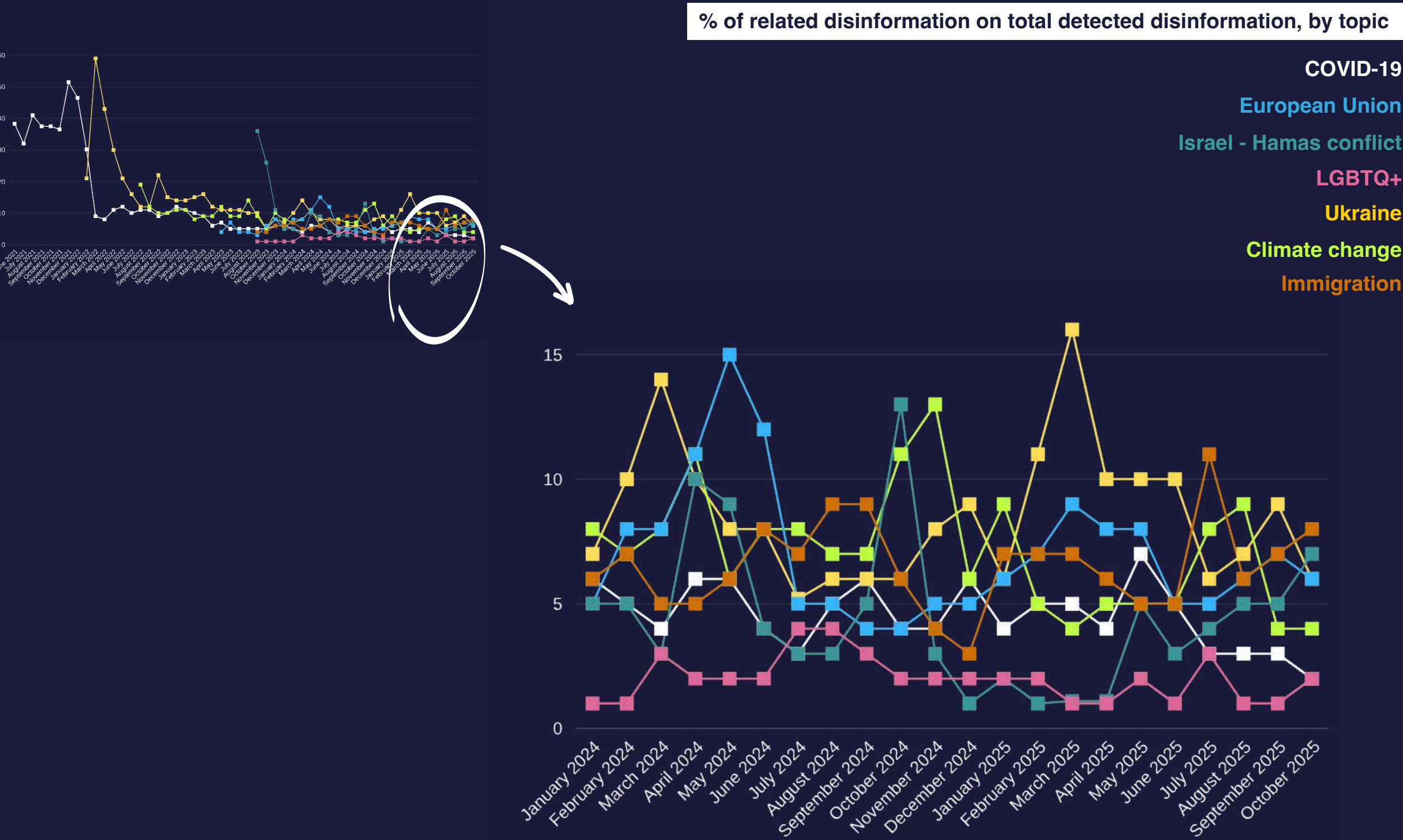
AI-GENERATED DISINFORMATION HITS A NEW RECORD IN OCTOBER AS INFORMATION INTEGRITY CRUMBLES

Monthly brief no. 53 – EDMO fact-checking network

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DISINFORMATION ON IMMIGRATION AND THE CRISIS IN GAZA RISES IN OCTOBER

The 32 organizations* part of the EDMO fact-checking network that contributed to this brief published a total of 1.722 fact-checking articles in October 2025. Out of these articles, 132 (8%) focused on disinformation related to immigration; 114 (7%) on the crisis in Gaza; 101 (6%) on Ukraine-related disinformation; 94 (6%) on disinformation related to the EU; 74 (4%) on climate change-related disinformation; 40 (2%) on COVID-19-related disinformation; and 26 (2%) on disinformation about LGBTQ+ and gender issues.
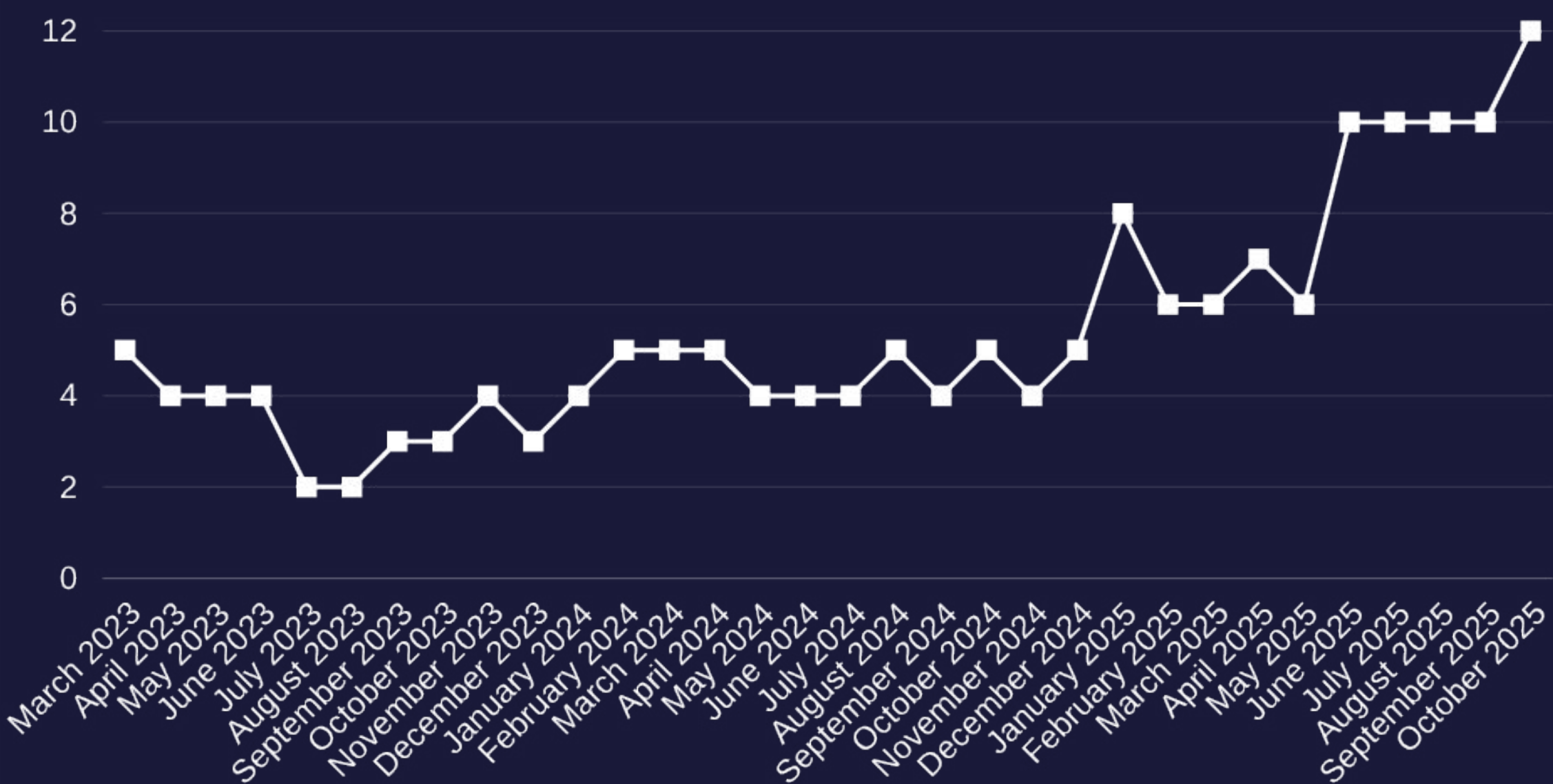
In October, false stories related to immigration increased by one percentage point, while the share of disinformation on the crisis in Gaza rose by two percentage points. At the same time, false news on the conflict in Ukraine decreased by 3 percentage points.

% of related disinformation on total detected disinformation, by topic

- **COVID-19**
- **European Union**
- **Israel - Hamas conflict**
- **LGBTQ+**
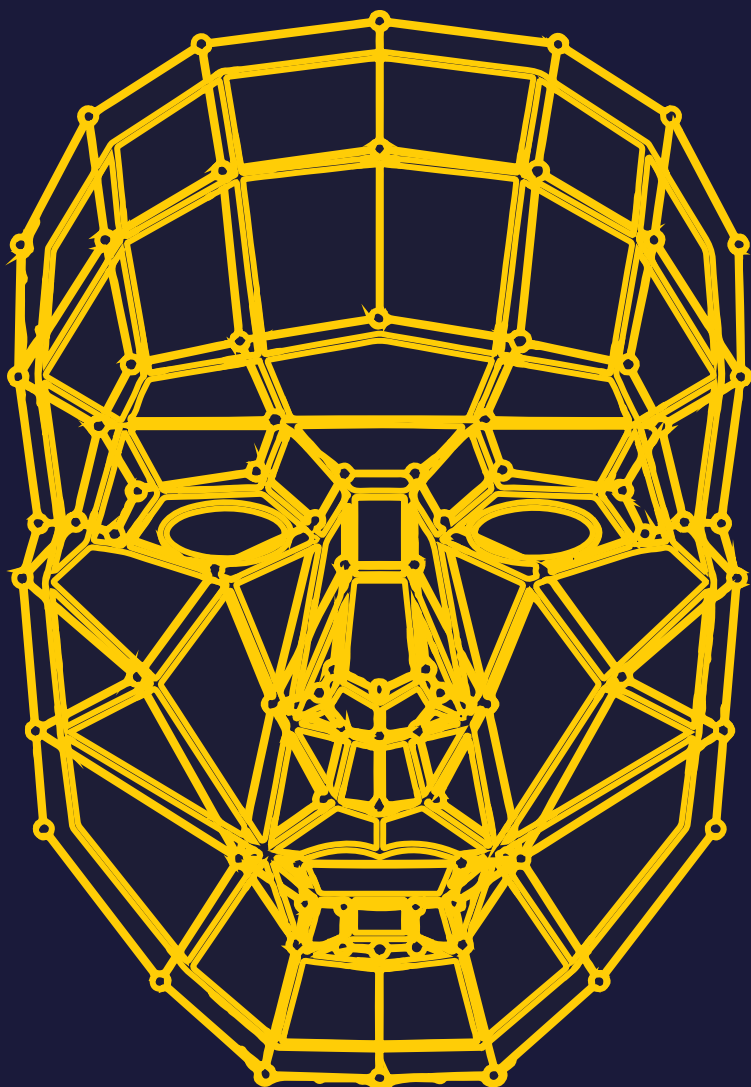- **Ukraine**
- **Climate change**
- **Immigration**

* Organizations that contributed to this brief: 15min, AFP, APA, CORRECTIV, The Journal FactCheck, Delfi Lithuania, Delfi Estonia, Demagog.pl, Demagog.cz, Demagog.sk, Deutsche Welle, dpa, Ellinika Hoaxes, Faktabaari, Fact Check Cyprus, Funky Citizens, Greece Fact Check, INFOVERITAS, Källkritikbyrån, Knack, Lakmusz, Maldita.es, Newtral, Nieuwscheckers, Oštro, Pagella/Facta, Polígrafo, Pravda Poland, Re:Baltica, TjekDet, VerificaRTVE, Verificat.

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AI-GENERATED DISINFORMATION TOUCHES A NEW RECORD

The percentage of disinformation stories using AI-generated content has risen to a new record. Out of 1.722 fact-checking articles, 210 addressed the use of this technology in disinformation, representing 12% of the total.

With the launch of several AI generative software throughout the year, the share of disinformative and deceptive content generated with AI has increased. Considering the dynamics observed in previous months and the ongoing shift toward AI-generated content among many disinformation actors, it is to be expected that the share of such disinformation content will further increase in the future.

AI-generated content is often created to maximize monetisable engagement across social media platforms. It is the so-called "AI slop", and it features videos of people or animals saving babies from dangerous situations as well as other emotional or sensationalist stories that leverage human empathy and compassion to monetise. With similar purposes, there is also a big share of videos and images that aim to provide visual content for real world events such as the theft at the Louvre Museum in Paris or hurricane Melissa. In other cases, AI-generated content is also used to enhance credibility of fraudulent content.

Of course, generative AI is also weaponised to produce images and videos related to well-known disinformation narratives, such as the one targeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (see slide n.6). Other content also aims to spread disinformation about the conflict in Ukraine, such as the AI video in which alleged Polish soldiers claim that the drones that violated Polish airspace in September were Ukrainian. The anti-immigration and islamophobic narrative is also fueled by synthetic videos: among these examples there is one showing young people criticizing German migration policy, as well as another one depicting an alleged French police officer performing an Islamic prayer inside the Paris metro.

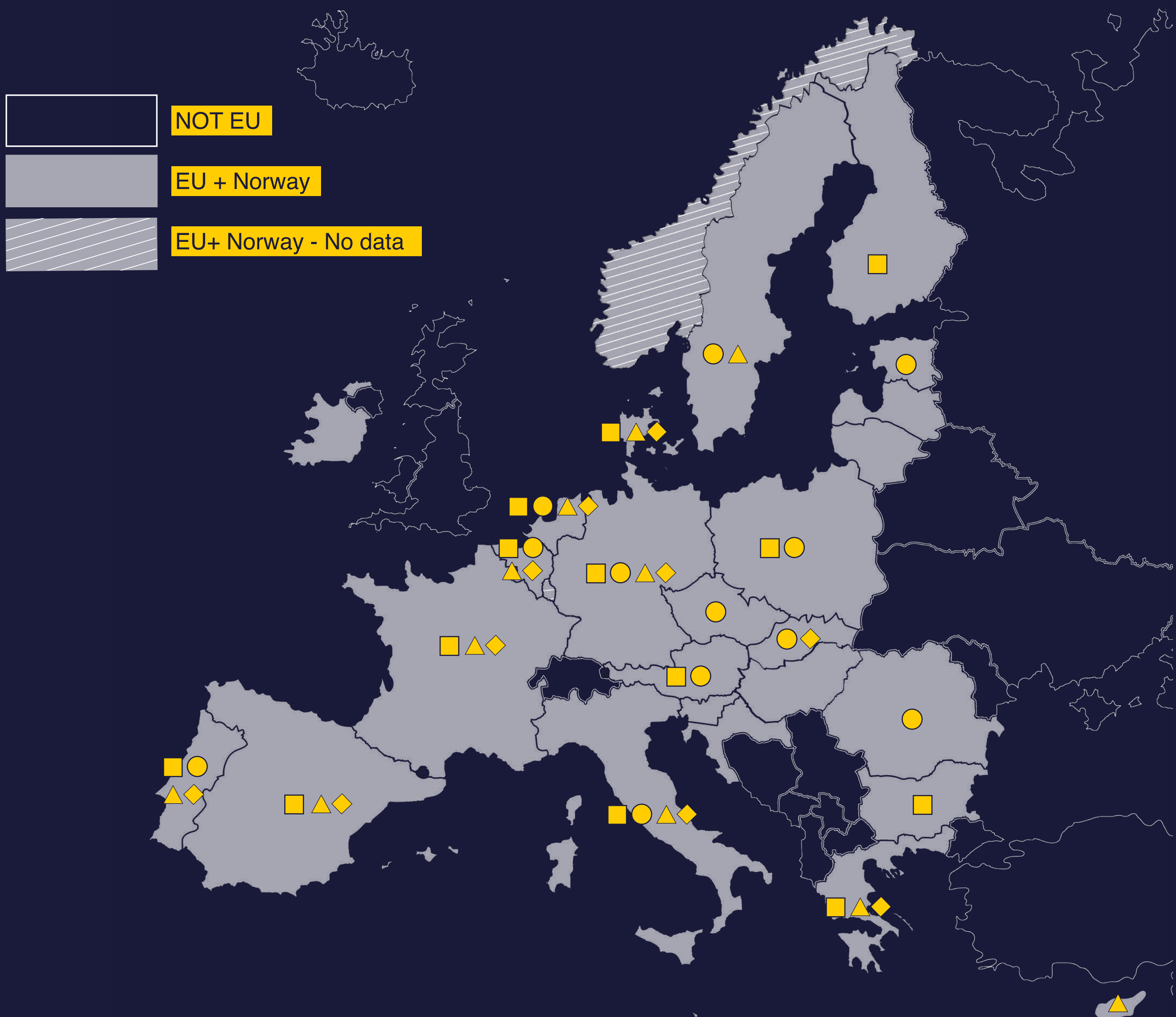# ISLAMOPHOBIC FALSE NEWS DRIVES THE SPREAD OF DISINFORMATION

In the month of October, islamophobic and racist content circulated widely throughout Europe. Fact-checking organisations in eight countries detected the false story according to which the city of Hamburg banned music lessons in public schools because music is forbidden in Islam. Similarly, false news circulated in six countries that the British Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, had legalised incest at the request of the "Muslim community".

Following the well-known narrative of alleged European Islamisation, false news circulated in Ireland that the country now has a larger population of Muslims than people who live in designated Irish-speaking areas. In Sweden, a child psychologist purportedly called for all children to wear veils in nursery schools. In France, "Islamists" allegedly attacked a Catholic bookstore claiming it was fascist for selling the Bible.Two other false stories have emerged as byproducts of this disinformation.The first one, which circulated across Europe, sparked alarm over security, featuring an AI generated picture referencing attacks on Christmas markets. The second one was shared by far-right activist Tommy Robinson and claimed that anti-immigration activists are repressed in European states: a baseless graphic alleges that arrests for online comments in 2023 listed over 12.000 in the UK, 6.000 in Belarus, and 3.500 in Germany. Being in English, such false claims originating in the UK easily spread throughout Europe, fuelling the narrative according to which the UK and European countries are in a "security emergency" because of immigration.

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

- ■ AI-generated content of Hurricane Melissa and related destruction
- ● AI-generated image of Zelensky wearing platform shoes
- ▲ AI-generated videos of the theft at the Louvre
- ◆ UK teenager arrested for waving a UK flag

NOT EU

EU + Norway

EU+ Norway - No data

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THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISINFORMATION STORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

15-minute-city model is a government scheme for total population control.

GroenLinks-PvdA (left block) voters should color the ballot in two circles.

The left parties have presented three "Indian and Muslim" immigrants as candidates in the municipal elections.

Ukrainian refugee complaining about the contents of a package received from Polish Caritas.

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.