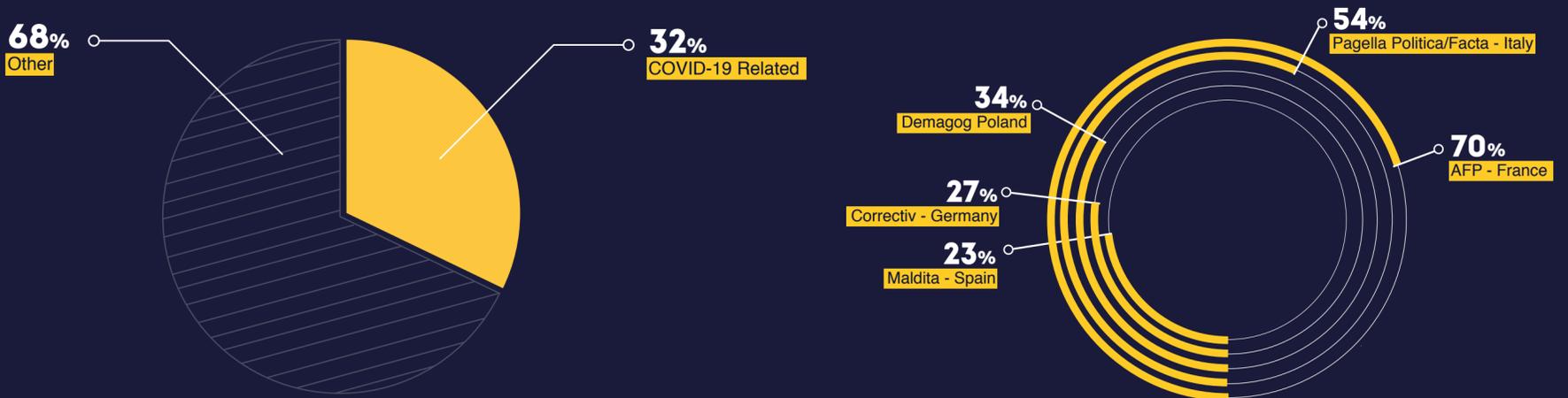




European Digital Media Observatory

DISINFORMATION IN JULY TWISTED REALITY TO ATTACK COVID-19 VACCINES AND CONTAINMENT MEASURES

Monthly brief no. 2 – EDMO fact-checking network



ALMOST ONE THIRD OF DISINFORMATION VERIFIED IN JULY WAS COVID-19 RELATED

The 10 organizations* part of EDMO's fact-checking network contributing to this brief published a total of 1,332 fact-checking articles in July 2021. Out of these articles 423 (32%) concerned COVID-19 related disinformation.

Significant variations exist among those organizations. For example, out of the total verifications, Maldita (Spain) reported that 23% were COVID-19 related, a number that rises to 27% for Correctiv (Germany), to 34% for Demagog (Poland), to 54 % for PagellaPolitica/Facta (Italy) and to 70% for AFP (France).

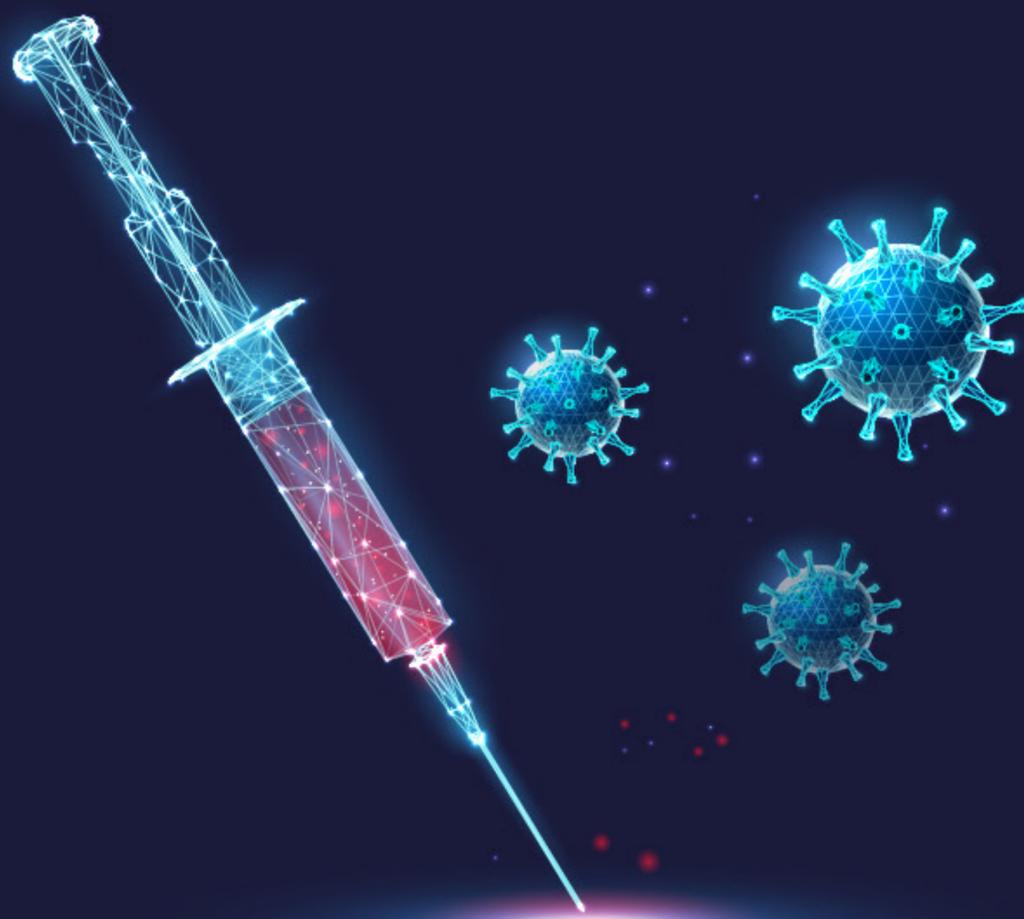
** Organizations that contributed to this brief: AFP, Correctiv, Demagog (PI), Ellinika Hoaxes, Knack Magazine, Les Surligneurs, Maldita, Mimikama, PagellaPolitica/Facta, The Journal Fact-Check.*

IN JULY, CROSS-NATIONAL DISINFORMATION HIT COVID-19 DEATH TOLL NUMBERS, VACCINES AND CONTAINMENT MEASURES

In July, the 10 organizations that are part of the EDMO's fact-checking network and contributed to this brief verified many false stories that effectively twisted reality by sustaining no-vax narratives.

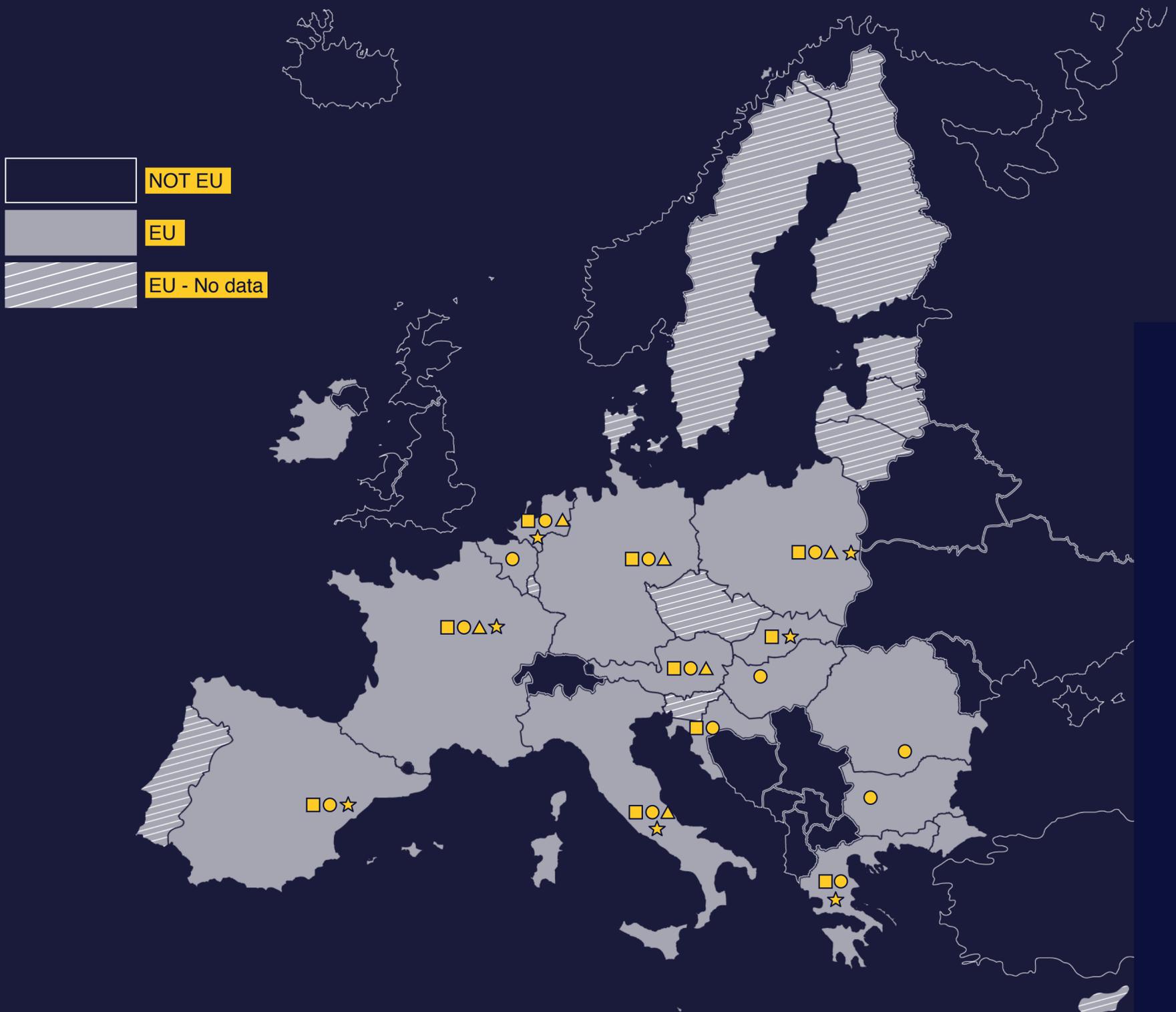
According to these stories:

- The **real death toll of COVID-19 is much lower than what the mainstream media report**, the pandemic is not actually as severe a problem as we're led to believe
- **Vaccines causes more deaths than the virus and they are the origin of the variants**, the real problem is not the virus but the vaccines
- **Protests against COVID-19 related containment measures**, especially in France, **are bigger than what the mainstream media shows**, so in reality there are way more people fighting against the "sanitary dictatorship"



In particular, the four false stories with the widest circulation in the EU in July, based on the reports by the EU fact-checkers, were:

- A court in Lisbon announced that the “actual” number of COVID deaths in Portugal is 152 and not 17,000
- Images about demonstrations in France against the pass sanitaire that exaggerate the number of the protesters or other aspects (ie. police sympathizing with the protesters)
- ▲ The Delta variant is deadlier for people vaccinated against COVID-19, according to British health authorities
- ★ Sars-CoV-2 variants evolve because of and in response to the vaccines, according to different experts



Other well disseminated cross-national cases of disinformation detected in July in the EU concerned:

- False images and false news about **floods in Germany and Belgium**
- Claims unsupported by facts that Haitian president **Jovenel Moïse was killed** because of his refusal to buy «the WHO's vaccines» against COVID-19 for his country
- False images about the **demonstrations in Cuba**

EU fact-checkers also witnessed the ongoing circulation of false or unsupported by facts news highlighted in the previous brief:

- It is dangerous for vaccinated people to **travel by airplane**
- Many **British Airways pilots** are dead or severely injured because of the vaccine
- COVID-19 vaccines will make your **arm magnetic**
- The **death toll of COVID-19 vaccines is way higher** than the official numbers, according to the European database of suspected adverse drug reaction reports
- COVID-19 vaccines are to blame for many **miscarriages**



THE MOST SIGNIFICANT VERIFIED DISINFORMATION STORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:



GREECE

Claims that migrants in Greece receive 450 euros a month



HUNGARY

Claims that Klára Dobrev, Hungarian MEP and vice-president of the European Parliament, was banned from the Vatican because her family was allegedly involved in the failed assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II



BELGIUM

Claims that a new kind of mosquito, whose bite causes a serious and potentially deadly infection, has recently been discovered

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 (<https://edmo.eu/fact-checking-community/>).

Reference period: 1-31 July 2021.

Number of respondents: 10.

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