

WORK PACKAGE 3 – DISINFORMATION DETECTION AND RESEARCH

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EC Project Officer	Mark Vella-Muscat

Abstract	AFP, Times of Malta and Ellinika Hoaxes committed to providing 900 fact checks for hte duration of the project.
Keywords	Social media, disinformation campaign, fact checking

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Revision History

VERSION	DATE	MODIFIED BY	COMMENTS
V0.1	19/06/2025	Joyce Zablit (AFP)	First Draft Table of Content
V0.2			Final Table of Content
V0.3			First Draft
V0.4			Second Draft
V0.5			Final Second Draft
V0.6			Final Second Draft Review
V0.7			Review
V1.0			Final Document

Glossary

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

The MedDMO hub brings together well-established and internationally recognized fact-checking organisations from Cyprus, Greece and Malta -- three countries facing the same challenges as the rest of Europe when it comes to disinformation narratives that are threatening democracies worldwide.

Apart from their geographic similarities, the three countries also face similar challenges as far as issues related to migration, climate change, health and other issues which generate a lot of disinformation.

Agence France-Presse, a global leader in the field of fact-checking, was designated as the leader for this work package and worked closely with Ellinika Hoaxes, Time of Malta and Cyprus University of Technology to ensure we met all our deliverables and provided fact checks suitable for audiences in each country.

1 Introduction

Task 3.1 'Detecting disinformation, fact-checking and disclosure of disinformation content' dealt with both the technical and operational aspects related to fact-checking in Cyprus, Greece and Malta. The actual deliverable of this task are the fact-checks that have been published in the course of the project. This document serves as a report that explains this activity and provides some aggregate information on the published material.

Agence France-Presse, Ellinika Hoaxes and Times of Malta initially were the three fact checking organisations providing fact checks for the project. They were then joined by Cyprus University of Technology which set up a fact checking operation in Cyprus focusing on disinformation in that country.

The partners all worked together smoothly to provide fact checks of importance to audiences in the three countries, whether they be related to politics, climate, health or society.

We committed to providing a total of 900 fact checks for the duration of the project and we surpassed that objective by the end of the project.

2 Production of fact checks

We committed to providing a total of 900 fact checks throughout the project and by the end of the first phase of the project end May 2025 we had met that target. Given that the project was extended by two months by the Commission (to end July 2025), all the partners agreed to continue publishing fact checks beyond May so as to maintain a presence on the website and keep it "alive". Any additional fact checks provided were in-kind.

To facilitate communication between all the partners, we set up a Slack channel that we used to share ideas on fact checks or other matters.

We published the fact checks under various categories and themes to make it easier to navigate the website. And we decided on these themes because they generate disinformation.

The categories were the following: **COVID-19, EU, SCIENCE, US ELECTIONS, DISASTER, SOCIETY, MIDDLE EAST, MIGRATION, ECONOMY, 2024 OLYMPICS, UKRAINE, ENVIRONMENT, POLITICS, TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH.**

We added or removed categories as warranted. For example, we added a separate category focused on Ukraine as we did for the war in Gaza, given that both crises were generating a lot of disinformation.

Herewith a breakdown of the fact checks published in each language and by each partner as of mid-June:

In English:

Agence France-Presse = 63 fact checks (out of 60 that were pledged)

Times of Malta = 168 fact checks (out of 240)

In Greek:

Agence France-Presse = 307 fact checks (out of 300)

Ellinika Hoaxes = 312 fact checks (out of 300)

Cyprus University of Technology = (58)

Total number of fact checks published through mid-June = 908

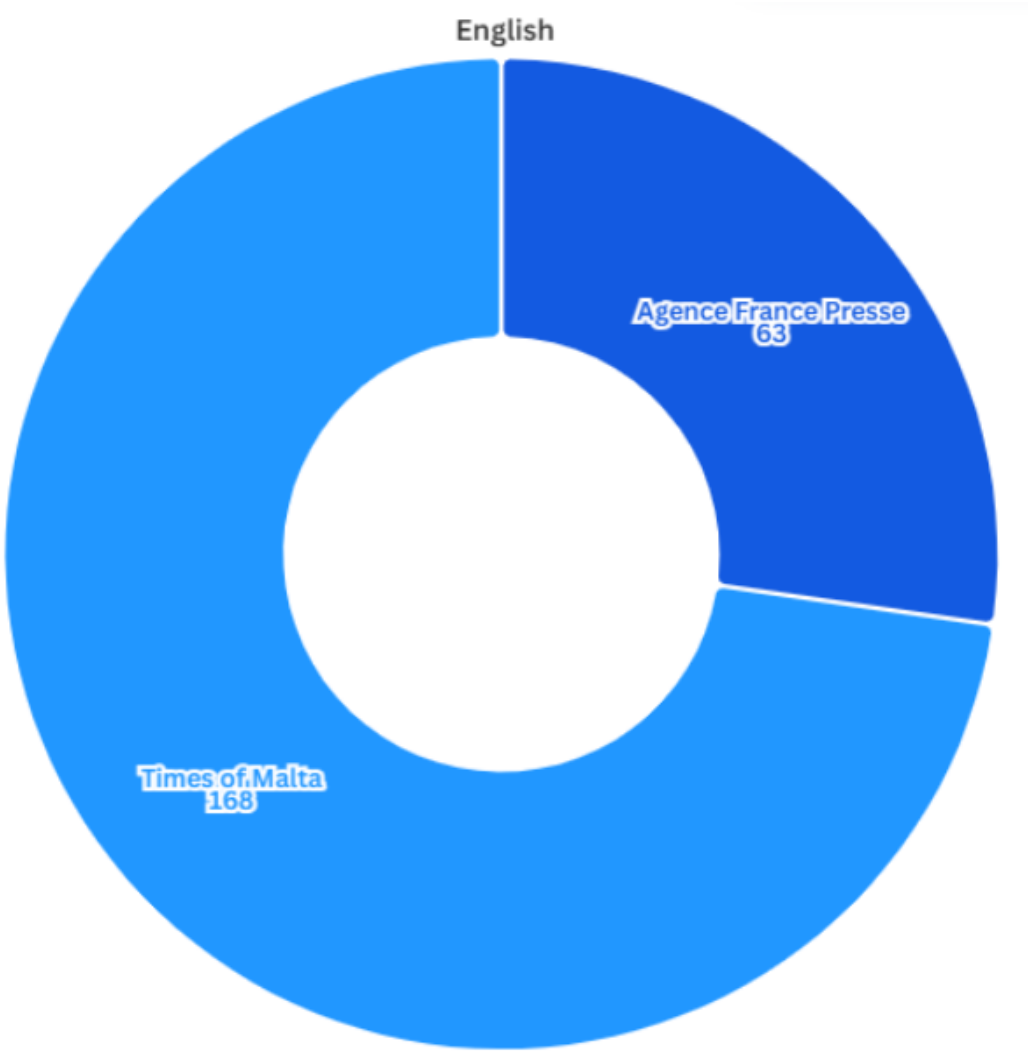
When the Grant Agreement was signed, Times of Malta committed to providing 240 fact checks for the duration of the project. However, it quickly became clear that it would not be able to publish that number as it had underestimated the huge workload it entailed to produce that many. This issue was discussed in the consortium and CERTH proposed to transfer some of their own resources to help in this situation, which was finally agreed and documented through a contract amendment. Through this change the University of Malta contributed 16 fact checks related to Malta, and Cyprus University of Technology founded Fact Check Cyprus, which under their auspices, contributed 58 fact-checks. These fact checks proved a great help and helped us honour our commitment. Fact Check Cyprus was also the first independent fact-checking organisation to operate in Cyprus and do local investigative research and quickly became accredited by IFCN and EDMO. In this way, MedDMO delivered two important success stories, initiating and establishing organised fact-checking in the countries of Malta and Cyprus.

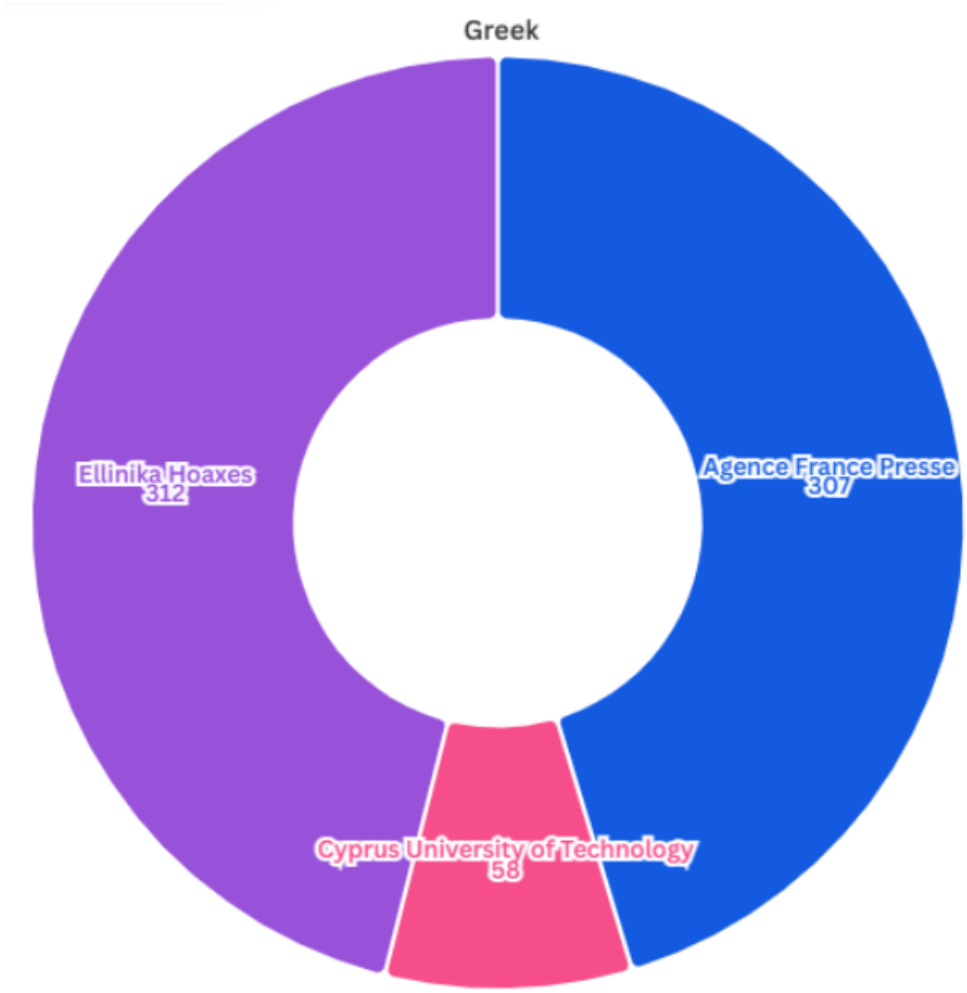
As far as any deviations concerning fact check content – any mistakes that forced us to pull a fact check or issue a correction for example --, there were none. The fact checks were all very high quality, well researched and relevant.

In the following diagrams we have visualised information regarding the number of fact-checks produced and the topics that were mostly covered.

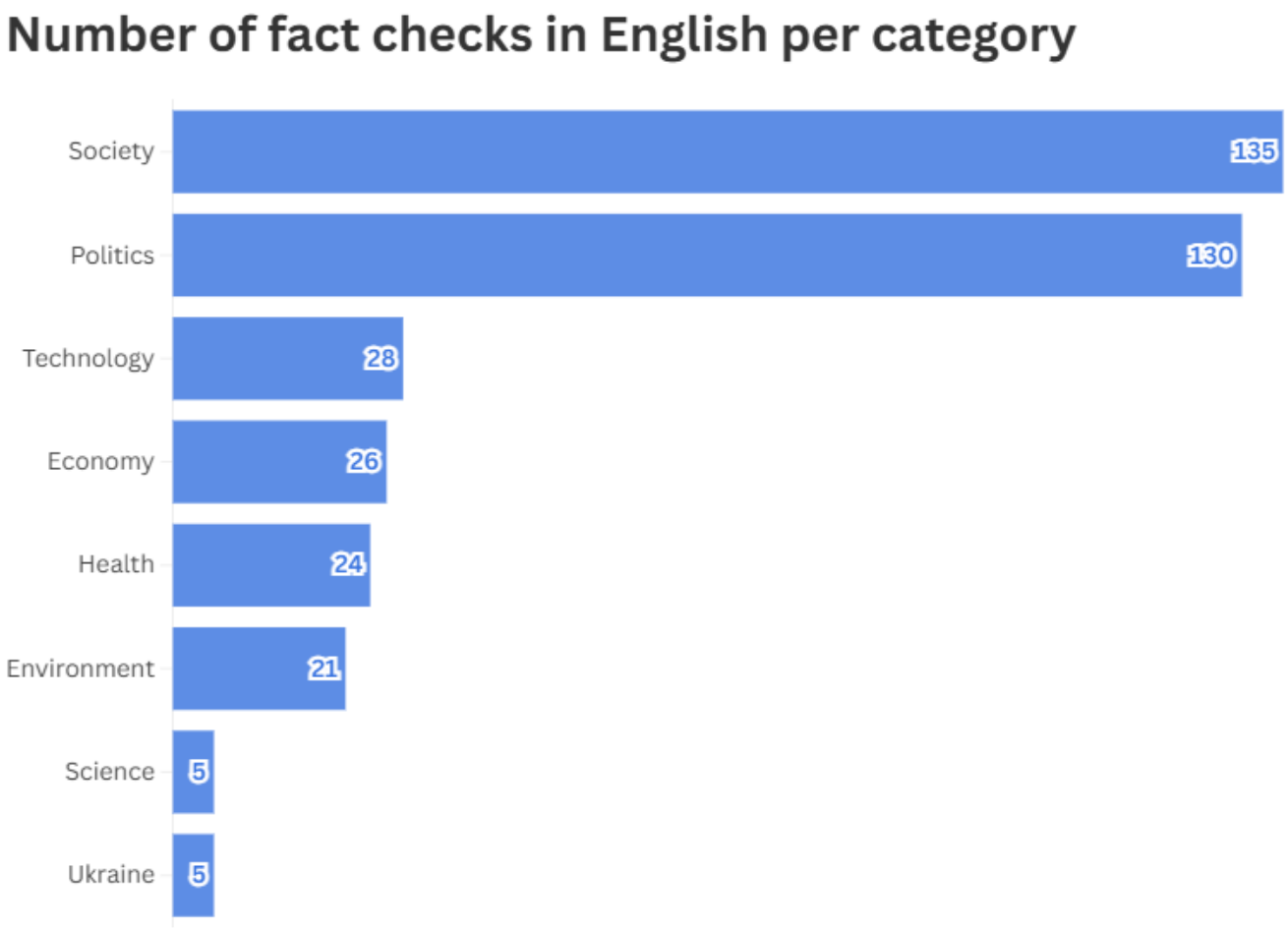
Number of fact checks published in each language and by each partner as of mid-June 2025

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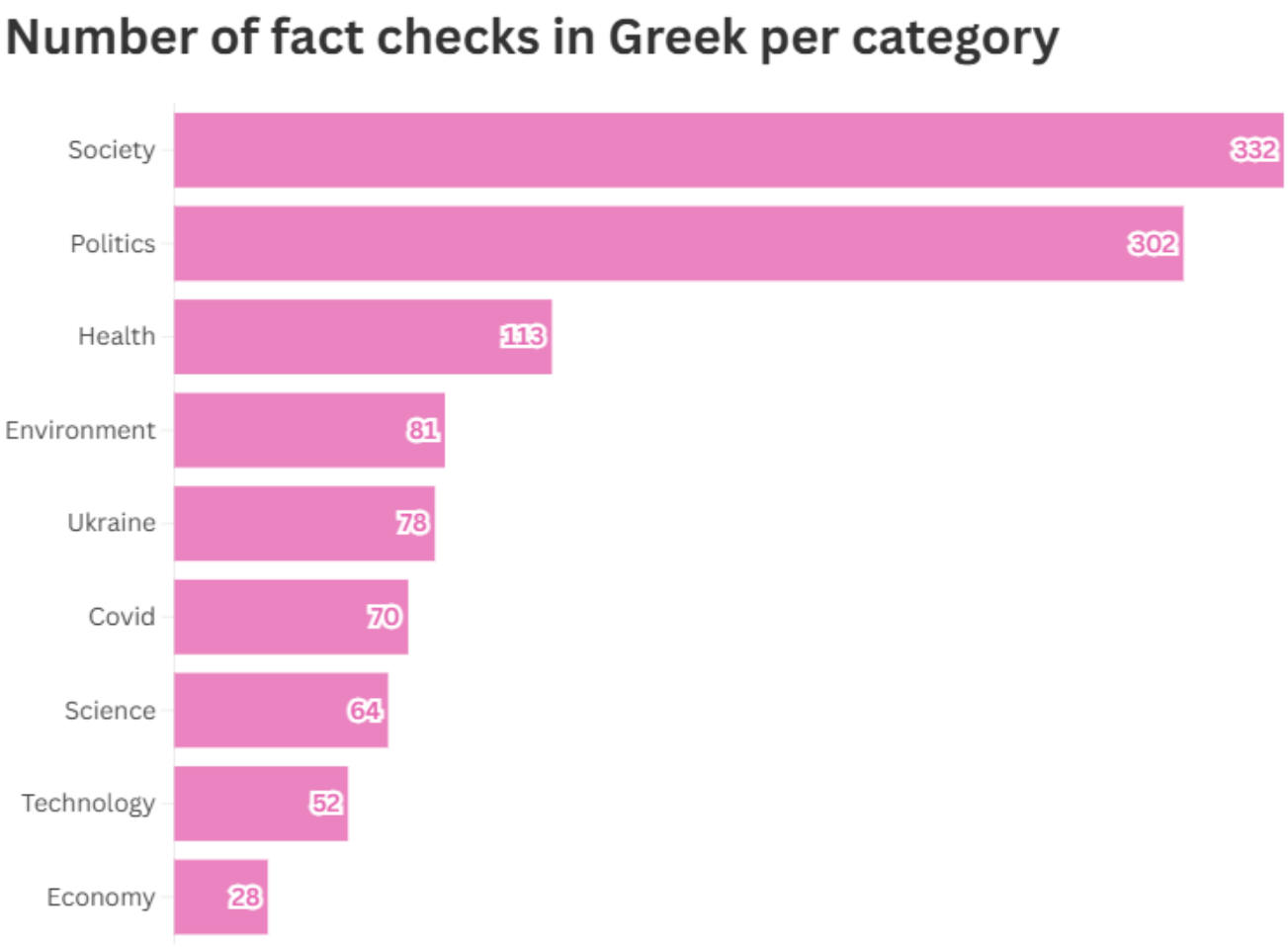



Greek
Ellinika Hoaxes
312
Agence France Presse
307
Cyprus University of Technology
58

Herewith a breakdown of the fact checks per category and per language



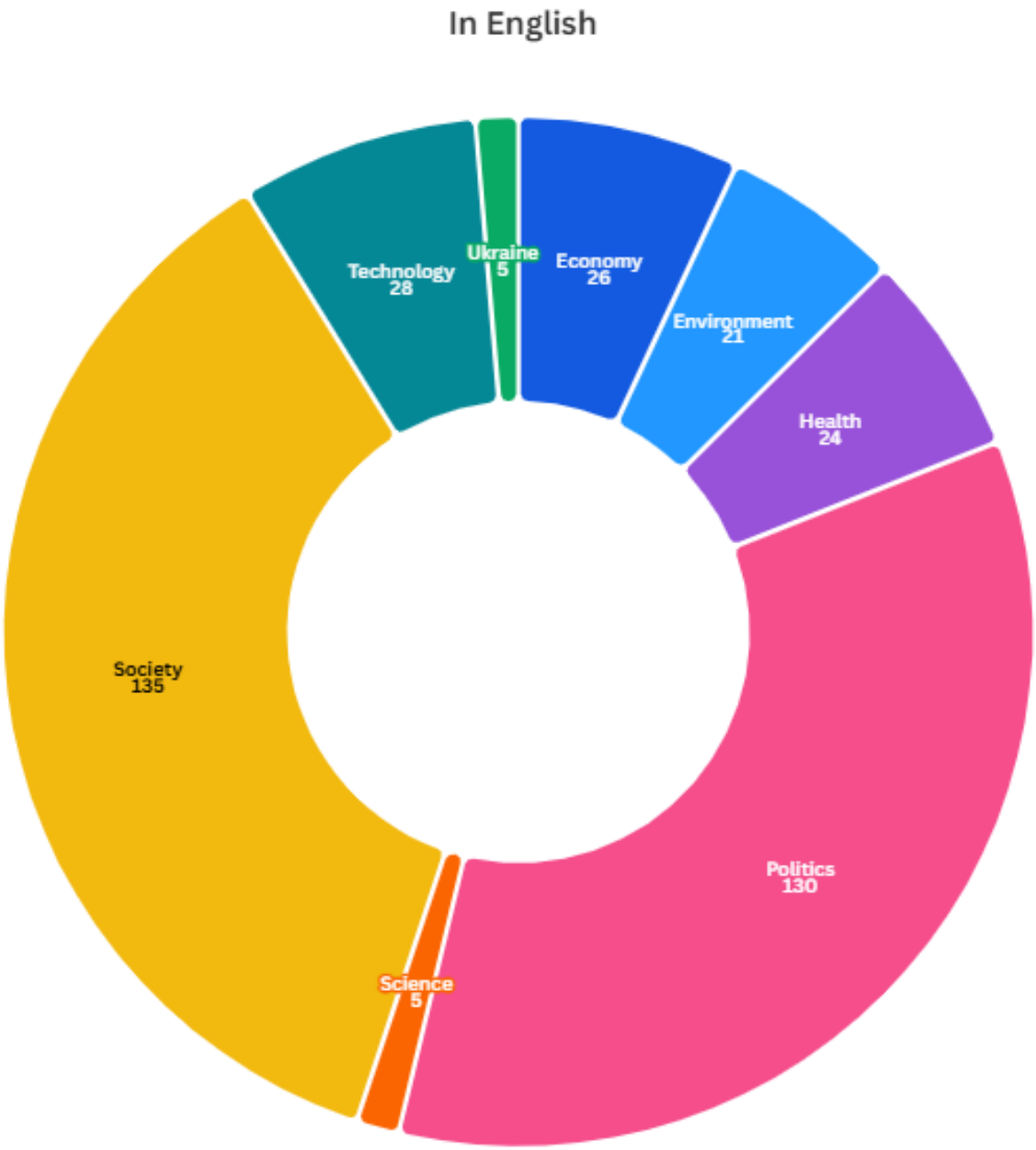
Please keep in mind that some of the fact checks can fall under several categories

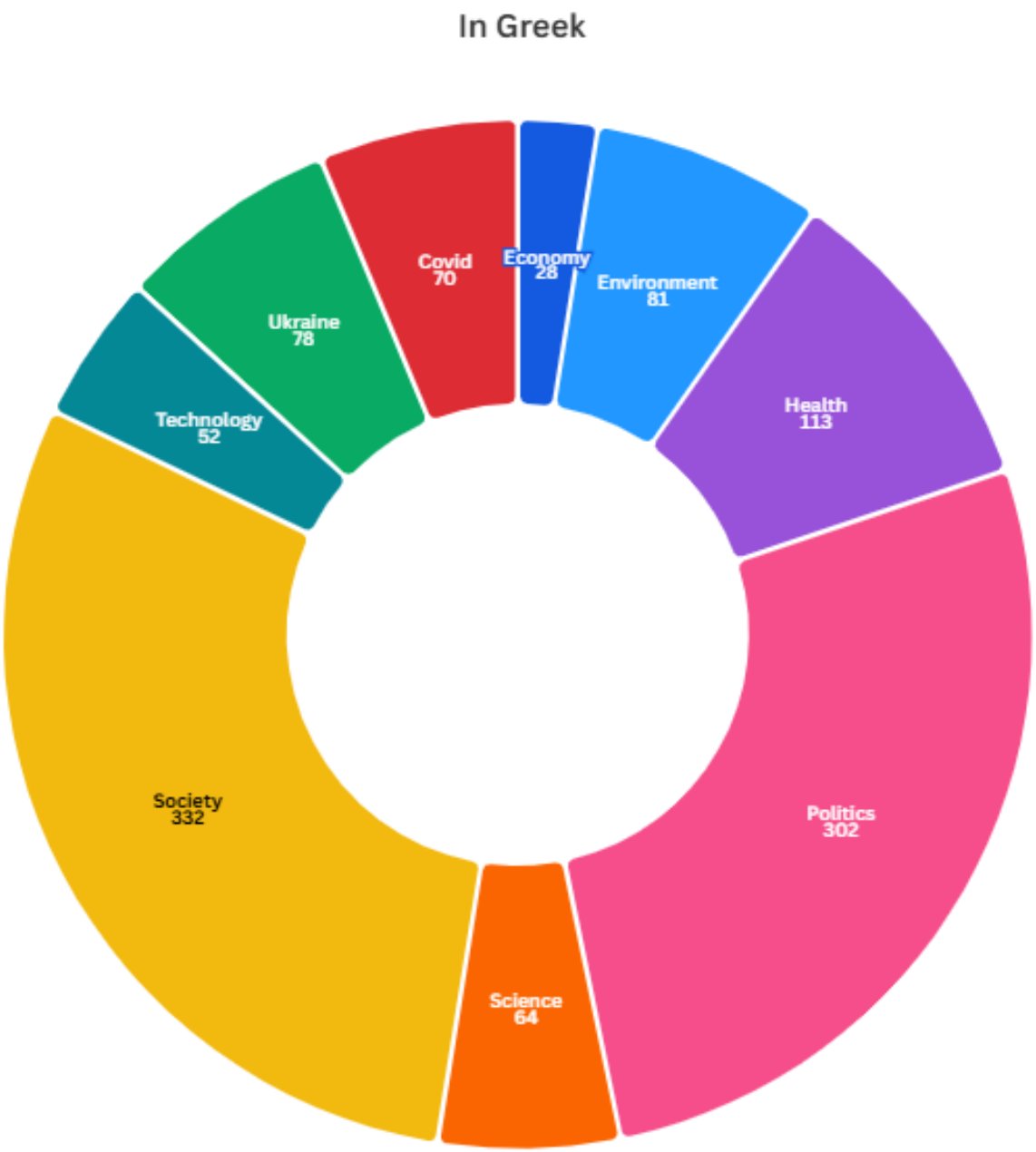


Please keep in mind that some of the fact checks can fall under several categories.

Number of fact checks published through mid-June 2025

Total number of fact checks published through mid-June = 908




In Greek
Covid
70
Economy
28
Environment
81
Health
113
Politics
302
Science
64
Society
332
Technology
52
Ukraine
78

Examples of themes generating disinformation in the MedDMO region

in english

FACT CHECKS

Fact-check Malta: Why was a Gaza-bound aid ship attacked near Malta?



Darrin Zammit Lupi/Reuters

May 12, 2025

Fact-check Malta: Why was a Gaza-bound aid ship attacked near Malta?

On Friday 2 May, Malta woke up to the alarming news that the *Conscience*, a ship operated by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, had been attacked some 26km off its eastern coast. The ship was reportedly en route to Gaza, carrying humanitarian aid when it was attacked.

The news quickly drew international attention but it also raised wild speculation across social media over why the ship was outside Malta's waters in the first place, how it suffered damage, and how many people are aboard the vessel.

TIMES OF MALTA

Fact-check Malta: Can a court expert refuse to testify?



March 10, 2025

Fact-check Malta: Can a court expert refuse to testify?

The role of the court expert has come under recent scrutiny, following British forensic accountant Jeremy Harbinson's refusal to travel to Malta to testify in a prominent criminal case.

Harbinson is one of the authors of a 1,200 page report into the privatisation of Karin Grech, 51 Luke's and Gozo general hospitals used as a basis for corruption charges against dozens of prominent people, including former prime minister Joseph Muscat.

In an affidavit last month, Harbinson said he would not travel to Malta out of fear for his safety, adding that if experts were expected to testify, this should come against payment as part of a new contract.

High temperatures in Greece in 1965 do not disprove climate change



July 4, 2024

High temperatures in Greece in 1965 do not disprove climate change

Greece experienced what meteorologists described as a historic heatwave in June 2024 when temperatures soared to 43 degrees Celsius in many parts of the country. Nevertheless, social media users denied that climate change was the cause, arguing that temperatures had already reached comparable levels in the Greek city of Larissa in the summer of 1965. But this is misleading. While temperatures were indeed extremely high in Larissa that year, experts and various scientific reports confirm that climate change is real and average temperatures have risen in recent years.

"The same old climate change candy", said this Facebook post on June 22, 2024 which has since been shared more than 1,500 times. The post, with the hashtag "#This day in 1965", includes a screenshot of an old newspaper article headlined "Temperature in Larissa 45.4 in the shade".

AFP

Serifos wildfire misleadingly linked to abandoned wind farm project



August 1, 2024

Serifos wildfire misleadingly linked to abandoned wind farm project

At the end of June 2024, a fierce wildfire tore through the Cycladic island of Serifos, scorching several hectares of land and causing substantial damage. Posts began circulating on social media in Greece soon afterwards suggesting a possible connection to a project by industrial conglomerate Mytilineos to build dozens of wind turbines on the island. But the claims are misleading. Those plans date back to 2007 and have since been abandoned. There are currently no plans for a wind farm on the island, according to both the local mayor and the Regulatory Authority for Energy in Greece.

On June 29, 2024, a wildfire broke out on the island of Serifos, which was only brought under control the following morning. The fire damaged houses, cottages, warehouses and chapels in the southern part of the island.

in greek

FACT CHECKS

AI video : BBC journalist makes inappropriate comments about Trump-Zelensky meeting



2 Μαΐου, 2025

Βίντεο AI: δημοσιογράφος του BBC κάνει απρεπή σχόλια για τη συνάντηση Τραμπ – Ζελένσκι

Με αφορμή την επισφαλειακή συνάντηση Τραμπ – Ζελένσκι στο Οβάλ γραφείο, εμφανίστηκε στα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης και στον ελληνικό ηλεκτρονικό Τύπο ένα βίντεο, στο οποίο υποτίθεται ότι ένας δημοσιογράφος του BBC να κάνει απρεπή σχόλια για τον Ουκρανό Πρόεδρο, νομίζοντας πως η ζωντανή μετάδοση έχει τερματιστεί. Ωστόσο, παρακάτω θα δούμε πως κάτι τέτοιο δεν συσταθεί καθώς το διαμορφωμένο βίντεο δεν είναι αυθεντικό, ενώ επί του θέματος πατωθετήθηκε τόσο ο ειδησεογραφικός οργανισμός bbc και ο εικονιζόμενος δημοσιογράφος. Ας δούμε τι ισχύει.

Παραδείγματα διάδοσης του ισχυρισμού σε ιστοσελίδες και ιστολόγια: olympia.gr, acathos.com

Is it true that Kaya Kalas said, "Let's cut Russia into smaller pieces so it won't be dangerous"?



13 Φεβρουαρίου, 2025

Είναι αλήθεια πως η Κάγια Κάλας είπε «Να κόψουμε τη Ρωσία σε μικρότερα κομματάκια για να μην είναι επικίνδυνη»;

ΙΣΧΥΡΙΣΜΟΣ: Κάγια Κάλλας: «Να κόψουμε τη Ρωσία σε μικρότερα κομματάκια για να μην είναι επικίνδυνη»! Εκπληκτικά πράγματα από την Ευρωπαϊκή δικτατορία.

ΣΥΜΠΕΡΑΣΜΑ: Η Κάγια Κάλας αυδεποτε εκτείνεται τη φράση «Να κόψουμε τη Ρωσία σε μικρότερα κομματάκια για να μην είναι επικίνδυνη». Είτε ότι η ήπια της Ρωσίας δεν είναι καλή εξέλιξη γιατί θα μπορούσε να βοηθήσει άλλες εθνότητες που βρίσκονται εντός της Ρωσικής Ομοσπανδίας και να μειώσει την ισχύ της.

Το είδαμε στα pronews.gr (αρχική πηγή στην Ελλάδα), iskiraki.com.gr, trikdopodia.gr, dynatielladanews.com και σε αναρτήσεις στα ΜΚΔ.

False list of Pfizer vaccine side effects circulating online



10 Μαρτίου, 2025

Ψευδής κατάλογος παρενεργειών του εμβολίου της Pfizer κυκλοφορεί στο διαδίκτυο

Το εμβόλιο κατά της νόσου Covid-19 της Pfizer θεωρείται από τις υγειονομικές αρχές ασφαλές και αποτελεσματικό, με δεδομένα που έχουν συγκεντρωθεί από δισεκατομμύρια εμβολιασμούς που έχουν γίνει σε όλο τον κόσμο. Τον Φεβρουάριο του 2025, χιλιάδες χρήστες του Facebook άρχισαν να κοινοποιούν έναν κατάλογο με υποτιθέμενες επικίνδυνες παρενέργειες με τον ισχυρισμό ότι αυτός κυκλοφόρησε πρόσφατα από την Pfizer. Όμως ο κατάλογος είναι πολύ διαφορετικός από τον πιο πρόσφατο επίσημο κατάλογο αντενδείξεων και πιθανών παρενεργειών που συνέταξαν οι ρυθμιστικές αρχές. Ο Ευρωπαϊκός Οργανισμός Φαρμάκων (EMA) δήλωσε στο AFP ότι η ασφάλεια του εμβολίου παρακολουθείται συνεχώς και οι πληροφορίες ενημερώνονται τακτικά με τα πορίσματα των εμπειρογνωμόνων.

Old video of Turkish boat ramming Greek ship was misleadingly shared as recent on Facebook



5 Ιουνίου, 2025

Παλιό βίντεο με τουρκικό σκάφος να εμβολίζει ένα ελληνικό κοινοποιήθηκε παραπλανητικά ως πρόσφατο στο Facebook

Τα σχέδια της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης να προχωρήσει με τη συμμετοχή της Τουρκίας στο νέο αμυντικό της πρόγραμμα έχουν προκαλέσει έντονες αντιδράσεις από την Αθήνα, σύμφωνα με τα τοπικά μέσα ενημέρωσης. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, και εν μέσω της συνεχιζόμενης και μακροχρόνιας διαμάχης μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Τουρκίας για το Αιγαίο τέλαγος, κοινοποιήθηκε πρόσφατα στο Facebook ένα βίντεο από έναν Έλληνα χρήστη του μέσου κοινωνικής δικτύωσης, ο οποίος ισχυρίστηκε παραπλανητικά ότι ένα τουρκικό περιπολικό σκάφος επιχείρησε να εμβολίσει σκάφος της ελληνικής ακτοφυλακής στις 20 Μαΐου 2025. Όμως, ενώ τα πλάνα είναι πραγματικά, το βίντεο αυτό δεν είναι πρόσφατο και κυκλοφορεί στο διαδίκτυο τουλάχιστον από το 2020.



Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory



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