



Misleading claims around the new identity cards in Greece: An analysis of the key narratives since their introduction in 2023

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This report is part of a series of reports highlighting mis/disinformation narratives and campaigns spread across Greece, Cyprus and Malta since December 2022. Each report presents a narrative/campaign surrounding a particular topic or issue, bringing together examples of false or misleading claims, describing how mis/disinformation spread and discussing the context in which it was circulated.

Misleading claims about the new identity cards introduced in Greece in 2023 have been circulating since their rollout. The report examines how national and European legislation, along with technical security specifications, have been misinterpreted in public discourse, contributing to the spread of mis/disinformation.



MedDMO's Approach

For this series of publications, the Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory's (MedDMO) partners developed a framework with a set of criteria that must be met to initiate the analysis.

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information. Disinformation is misinformation shared with the deliberate intention to mislead.

We understand a disinformation campaign to be a widespread series of false or misleading claims surrounding a particular topic or theme, sometimes feeding into one another or contributing to a broader dis/misinformation narrative.

A dis/misinformation narrative is not necessarily a campaign – common narratives include those based on stereotypes (e.g. race).

Campaigns and narratives can occur within a single country or be spread across several.

In this series of reports, MedDMO's researchers and fact-checkers analyse a set of different claims that are demonstrably misleading or false concerning a specific event and that have emerged within a short period.



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1. Introduction

As of the first quarter of 2026, Greece is approaching the European Union's August 2026 deadline for the replacement of old national identity cards with the new biometric ID-1 format introduced in 2023. This administrative transition has unfolded alongside a sustained circulation of misleading claims and conspiracy-driven narratives concerning the new identity system across digital platforms and offline protest settings, disseminated by both individual citizens and political actors.

Anxieties surrounding identity cards, however, are not new in the Greek context. Since the early 2000s, identity documentation has been the subject of intense public debate, often intersecting with broader concerns about privacy and national identity.

Against this backdrop, this report not only situates the current controversy within its broader historical context, but mainly focuses on analysing the development of misleading claims related to the new identity cards between 2023 and the present (February 2026). Particular attention is given to the ways in which national or European legislation and technical security specifications have been misinterpreted in public discourse, while the analysis also maps the channels through which these narratives spread, identifying the media environments in which they gained the greatest traction.

2. The Evolution of Identity Cards in Greece and the Emergence of Identity-Related Narratives

2.1 The 2000 Identity Card Reform and Public Reactions

Public reactions surrounding Greek identity cards did not emerge only in recent years with the introduction of the new ID-1 format cards, but date back to 2000, when the government passed [legislation](#) on personal data protection as part of its compliance with EU [data protection principles](#).

This law ([95/46/EK](#)) defined religious beliefs as sensitive personal data, leading to the [removal](#) not only of the indication of religion from Greek identity cards, but also of other personal details such as fingerprints, profession, and the spouse's full name.



However, it was the [removal](#) of religious affiliation, which had been [included](#) on national identity cards until then, that prompted widespread reactions in Greece, particularly among segments of the Orthodox Christian population, which [constitutes](#) the majority religious group in Greece.

Those reactions escalated into large-scale [rallies](#) in Greece’s two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki, where banners and slogans such as “No to the new IDs and 666”, “No to the electronic IDs of the Antichrist”, and “No to electronic profiling” reflected a climate of suspicion and deepening opposition. The then Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, Christodoulos, also publicly [opposed](#) the reform, stating that the new identity cards “aimed at *depersonalizing individuals by turning them into lifeless and impersonal numbers*”, emphasizing that the people had a duty to resist.



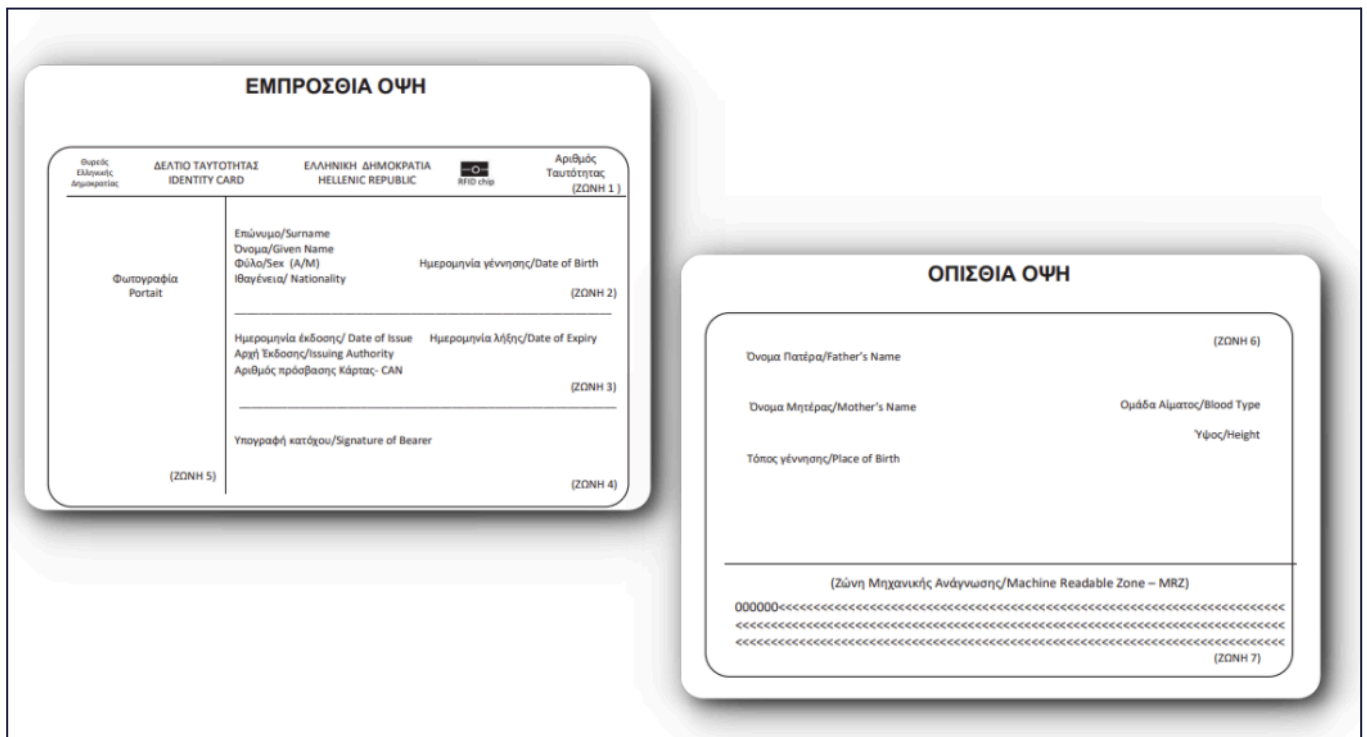
Picture 1: Front page of the newspaper “To Vima,” June 15, 2000. It depicts the demonstration in Thessaloniki regarding the inclusion of religious affiliation on ID cards. The caption beneath the central image reads: “A massive gathering in Thessaloniki with the Archbishop as speaker.” Source: [Alter Ego Media](#).

Ultimately, in 2001, the Council of State, sitting in plenary session, [upheld](#) the State’s decision to completely remove the indication of religion from identity cards.

2.2 The 2023 Identity Card Replacement and the Development of Misleading Claims

The discussion over identity cards resurfaced in Greece in 2019, when the European Union adopted Regulation [2019/1157](#) (since replaced by [2025/1208](#)), aimed at strengthening the security of identity cards issued to EU citizens.

The regulation required member states to replace older identity cards with new ID-1 format, similar in size to a credit card, incorporating enhanced security features. These include a machine-readable zone (MRZ) and embedded biometric identifiers. It also stipulated that identity cards not complying with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards or lacking a functional machine-readable zone would cease to be valid no later than 3 August 2026.



Picture 2: Design of the new identity cards (front and back).
Source: [Government Gazette](#).

The regulation became directly applicable across all EU member states on 2 August 2021, as EU regulations do not require transposition into national law. However, Greece delayed full compliance and [began](#) issuing the new biometric identity cards on 25 September 2023.

Shortly before the issuance of the new identity cards began, a public opinion survey provided insight into societal attitudes toward the reform. More specifically, according to a [survey](#) conducted on 22–23 August 2023 by [aboutpeople](#) on behalf of the news outlet [NEWS 24/7](#), 12.9% of respondents considered the new identity cards to pose a threat to freedom, while 77.2% disagreed with that statement and 9.9% did not express an opinion. Another [survey](#) conducted by the Greek research institute [diaNEOsis](#) between January and February 2024 found that 78.5% of respondents considered the modernisation of identity cards in line with European regulations to be the most important reason for their introduction, while 56.2% associated the reform with increased control over citizens' personal data.

Following the official launch of the new identity cards, [protest gatherings](#) were organised once again in several cities across Greece.



Picture 3: Source: [In.gr](#). Image from a protest that took place in Athens, Greece, in September 2023. The banner reads “No to electronic identity cards”.

This marked a second wave of mass reactions, reminiscent of the events of 2000, and was accompanied by a parallel emergence of misleading claims online that continue to circulate to this day.

Demonstrators carried Greek flags and Orthodox Christian symbols, including crosses and icons of the Virgin Mary, claiming that the new identity cards contain tracking chips and are connected to the “*mark of*”



the beast”, commonly associated with the number 666. Slogans such as “*No to the mark of the Antichrist*” and “*We will never get them*” [echoed](#) through the rallies.

The reference to the “mark of the Antichrist” is not incidental, but [originates](#) from the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, where it is described as a symbolic or literal mark placed on the right hand or forehead as a condition for participation in economic life. Within contemporary Greek public discourse, this biblical passage was revived as a central interpretative framework through which opposition to the new identity cards was articulated.

In response, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece [issued](#) an official statement clarifying that the content of the new identity cards does not offend the Orthodox faith and does not constitute a matter of religious alteration.

Despite this clarification, the narratives surrounding the new ID cards continue to circulate.

3. Why this Campaign was Selected

3.1 Relevance for the General Public

In Greece, possession of a valid identity card is mandatory, meaning that the ongoing replacement process affects the general public without exception. As the regulatory deadline approaches, August 2026, the continued dissemination of false claims regarding the new identity cards may create practical challenges for individuals required to replace them.

3.2 Misinterpretation of National and European Legislation

Beyond its relevance for the general public, the issue also involves a complex legal and regulatory dimension. Since identity card policies are shaped by European and national legislation, a large proportion of the circulating claims concerns the interpretation of these legal provisions. This transnational dimension enhances the complexity of the misleading claims around this issue, making the campaign a relevant case study for examining how EU-level policies can become focal points of national-level mis/disinformation dynamics.



3.3 A Surge in Misleading Claims

While claims have been circulating since 2023, following the introduction of the new identity cards in Greece, a noticeable increase in related claims was observed during the final trimester of 2025, coinciding with the introduction of the new [Personal Identification Number \(PIN\)](#), which was also criticised by segments of the public on grounds related to individual freedom and state control.

During that period, particularly in November 2025, renewed protest marches were [organised](#) against both the personal number and the new identity cards, suggesting a consolidation of broader freedom-related narratives. Thus, rather than observing a gradual decline in circulation, the period was marked by a resurgence of related narratives.

3.4 Politicians amplifying the claims

Another key selection criterion was the involvement of political actors in amplifying these misleading narratives. Throughout the period under review, several claims were publicly articulated by party leaders and Members of Parliament in Greece, predominantly from right-wing and conservative political formations.

The Personal Identification Number (PIN) in Greece is a single, unique identifier assigned to each citizen for use in transactions with public administration services. It was introduced as part of the country's digital governance reforms and began to be automatically issued to citizens in 2025 through the national civil registry system. Its purpose is to replace the parallel use of multiple identification numbers, such as the tax number (AFM), social security number (AMKA), and identity card number, by consolidating them under one unified reference within state systems.

4. Mis/Disinformation Circulating in Greece Regarding the New Identity Cards

For the purposes of this report, we analysed 23 fact-checking articles published by organisations operating in Greece that are accredited by the [IFCN](#) and [EFCSN](#), including [Ellinika Hoaxes](#), [AFP Fact Check \(Greek department\)](#), [Greece Fact Check](#), and [Fact Review](#). The material covers the period from July 2023, when the first relevant claim was detected, to February 2026.

Our analysis found that, in Greece, during the period under review, claims circulating about the new identity cards introduced in 2023 largely stemmed from misinterpretations of national and European legislation, misreadings of relevant court decisions, and inaccurate assertions concerning their technical and security features. These narratives frequently framed the new ID cards as instruments of population control or mass surveillance, while also alleging that they fail to provide adequate safeguards for the protection of citizens' personal data.



Figure 1: Graphic showing the number of fact-checks for each of the categories. Created by Ellinika Hoaxes.

At the same time, several narratives extended beyond the Greek context. Claims circulated about developments in other European and non-European countries, often suggesting that citizens abroad were resisting the introduction of similar identification systems, such as

digital IDs. This broader category of claims also included allegations that new identification systems in other countries were being used to monitor or control populations, reinforcing domestic fears through international examples that were frequently inaccurately presented.

The following sections analyse these claims in detail, grouping them according to the thematic categories outlined above.

4.1 Misinterpretation of Legal Provisions

“According to a Council of State decision, obtaining the new type of identity card is not mandatory for Greek citizens”

In May 2025, a claim [circulated](#) online [asserting](#) that, according to Decision [1602/2021](#) of the Council of State, obtaining the new type of identity card is not mandatory for Greek citizens.

However, the decision in question concerned an entirely different legal issue. The case before the Council of State - which adjudicates disputes between citizens and the State - involved a citizen who, in 2018, sought the annulment of a decision issued by the Head of the [Hellenic National Passport and Secure Document Center](#). His passport application had been rejected on the grounds that the identity card he submitted as supporting documentation had exceeded its statutory period of validity.

The Council of State ultimately ruled in favour of the applicant. Although it acknowledged that the formal expiration date of his identity card had passed, the Court held that, under Joint Ministerial Decision [3021/19/53/14.10.2005](#), which was in force at the time, the document remained valid until formally replaced and therefore should have been accepted by the competent authority.

As stated in the ruling:

“Where the period of validity of the aforementioned identification document (15 years) has elapsed, and until it is replaced, it shall be considered valid in accordance with the provisions of Joint Ministerial Decision 3021/19/53/14.10.2005.”



A closer reading of the decision, however, makes clear that it does not support the circulating claim. The case concerned old-type identity cards issued under a previous regulatory framework, not the new ID-1 format introduced in 2023. Moreover, the Joint Ministerial Decision on which the Court relied was repealed in 2018 by Ministerial Decision [8200/0-297647/2018](#) and was subsequently amended in 2023 ([8200/0-109568/2023](#)). Under the current regulatory framework, the validity period of the new identity cards has been set at ten years.

Specifically, the provisions state:

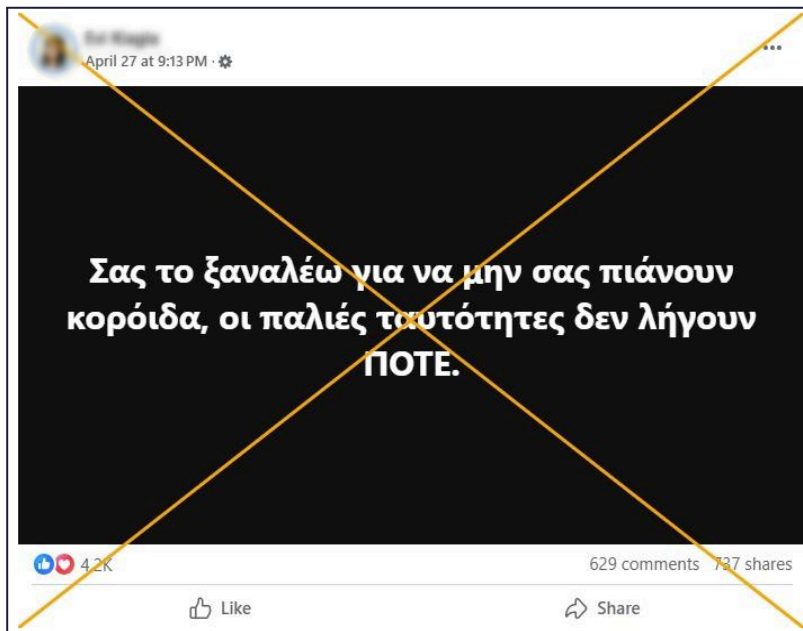
“The validity period of identity cards, from the date of their issuance, is set at ten (10) years for individuals who have reached the age of twelve. In cases where it is temporarily impossible to obtain fingerprints from any of the applicant’s fingers, the validity period shall be set at twelve (12) months (Article 4(1) and (3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1157).”

Therefore, Decision 1602/2021 cannot be interpreted as establishing that obtaining a new-type identity card is optional, as it addressed a different legal and regulatory context.

“Old-type identity cards do not expire; therefore, their replacement is not required.”

During the same month, a false claim [circulated](#) asserting that old-type Greek identity cards do not display an expiration date and therefore do not need to be replaced.

This claim, however, overlooks the applicable European legal framework. Regulation (EU) [2019/1157](#), which has since been replaced by Regulation (EU) [2025/1208](#), explicitly provides that identity cards which do not comply with the minimum security standards set out in Part 2 of ICAO [Document 9303](#), or which do not contain a functional machine-readable zone (MRZ), shall cease to be valid either upon their expiry date or, at the latest, on 3 August 2026, whichever comes first. Consequently, the absence of a printed expiration date on older identity cards does not exempt them from the mandatory replacement timeline established under EU law.



Picture 4: An example of the claim being shared on Facebook, where it has gained wide circulation. The post states: “I’m telling you again so you don’t get fooled – old ID cards NEVER expire”.

“The Court of Justice of the European Union annulled the Regulation on the new electronic identity cards.”

In June 2025, a claim circulated [asserting](#) that, according to a judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union ([case C-61/22](#)), Regulation (EU) 2019/1157 on the new identity cards had been “annulled,” and that their issuance was therefore no longer mandatory.

The case concerned an action brought by an EU citizen who argued that the mandatory electronic storage of fingerprints on identity cards violated his right to privacy. As reflected in the Court’s judgment, his substantive claims were dismissed. However, the Court found that the legal basis on which Regulation 2019/1157 had been adopted was incorrect and should have relied on a different provision of EU law.

For that reason, the Court annulled the Regulation. Importantly, however, it ruled that the effects of the Regulation would be maintained until 31 December 2026 in order to allow the EU legislature sufficient time to adopt a new measure based on the correct legal basis. Regulation (EU) 2019/1157 was subsequently replaced by Regulation (EU) [2025/1208](#), as also mentioned earlier.

Therefore, although Judgment C-61/22 formally annulled Regulation 2019/1157, this was due to an error in its legal basis rather than because its substantive provisions were found to be unlawful. The core requirements concerning the security specifications of identity cards remain in force under the revised legislative framework ([2025/1208](#)).

“According to a Council of State decision, the new identity cards were declared unconstitutional.”

Another [claim](#) falling within the category of misinterpretation of legal provisions, circulated in July 2025, concerned once again a decision of the Council of State ([decision 668/2019](#)). According to the claim, the Court had ruled that the new identity cards were unconstitutional and unlawful.

This assertion was disseminated not only by social media users and blogs, but also by the president of the Agricultural and Livestock Party of Greece ([AKKEL](#)), [Vakis Tsiobanidis](#), whose party does not hold seats in the Greek Parliament.

However, the decision in question bore no relation to the new-type identity cards. It concerned an appeal lodged in connection with a case originating in 2015, four years before the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2019/1157, which established the security specifications for the new identity cards.

In reality, Decision [668/2019](#) addressed an unrelated matter. The case involved a Chief Police Officer of the Hellenic Police who, in 2014, challenged as unconstitutional the quota system granting preferential access to candidates from large families for admission to the Police Officers’ Academy. The judgment did not examine, directly or indirectly, the legality or constitutionality of identity cards.

“There is no regulation providing that old-type personal identity cards will cease to be valid for travel within the EU; therefore, citizens will be able to travel freely without obtaining new identity cards.”

Three months later, in September 2025, a widely circulated [claim](#) asserted that no regulation provides for the discontinuation of old-type Greek identity cards for travel within the European Union, implying that citizens would continue to be able to travel freely without obtaining the new documents.

This claim, however, is inaccurate. Regulation (EU) 2025/1208 clearly stipulates that identity cards which do not meet the minimum international security standards must be replaced by 3 August 2026. The new documents are required to comply with the security specifications



set out in EU law, ensuring protection against forgery and enabling the effective exercise of EU citizens' right to free movement.

In practical terms, this means that identity cards failing to meet these standards, including old-type documents lacking the required security features, will no longer be valid for travel within the EU after the relevant deadline. A spokesperson for the European Commission confirmed to Ellinika Hoaxes that, in order to exercise their right to travel freely within the EU, citizens must carry either a valid passport or a valid national identity card, regardless of the means of transport used.

“According to a new ministerial decision, the validity of old-type identity cards has been extended until September 2027.”

In October 2025, posts circulated online [suggesting](#) that the validity of old-type Greek identity cards had been extended until September 2027.

Widely shared messages stated:

“Following massive and serious public reactions, the government is extending the validity of old identity cards until 25 September 2027,” presenting the alleged extension as a direct consequence of public opposition to the new ID system.

A review of the relevant legal framework, however, shows that this narrative is misleading. As noted earlier, identity cards that fail to meet the EU's updated security requirements must be replaced no later than 3 August 2026.

Contrary to the interpretation circulating online, the reference to the date 27 September 2027 stems from a ministerial decision adopted in 2024 ([2024/2024](#)). Rather than introducing a blanket extension of the validity of old-type identity cards, the measure concerns a specific procedural framework related to remote identification and does not affect the EU-mandated replacement deadline.



“The eIDAS 2.0 Regulation makes the European Digital Identity Wallet mandatory for all EU citizens.”

Finally, on 12 January 2026, posts [circulated](#) on social media claiming that the EU’s [eIDAS 2.0](#) Regulation makes possession of a European Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI Wallet) compulsory for all EU citizens as of 2026.

Simultaneously, it was further suggested that access to social media platforms, video streaming services, messaging applications, cloud storage services and, more broadly, major online platforms would only be possible through the use of this digital wallet.

However, a review of Regulation (EU) [2024/1183](#) does not support this interpretation.

On the contrary, Article 5a(15) explicitly states that:

“The use of European Digital Identity Wallets shall be voluntary. Access to public and private services, access to the labour market, and the freedom to conduct a business shall in no way be restricted or discouraged for natural or legal persons who do not use European Digital Identity Wallets. Access to public and private services shall remain possible through other existing means of identification and authentication.”

This reading was also confirmed by a spokesperson for the European Commission, who clarified that “The European Digital Identity Wallet will be a voluntary tool.”

Addressing the additional claim that access to online services would be conditional upon its use, the spokesperson further explained that, “under the Digital Services Act, Very Large Online Platforms will be required to accept electronic identification upon a user’s request, for example, for age verification purposes. Websites hosting age-restricted content that do not qualify as Very Large Online Platforms may be encouraged to accept the European Digital Identity Wallet as a means of proving age, but its use is not mandatory”.

Taken together, both the text of the Regulation and the Commission’s clarification indicate that the European Digital Identity Wallet is conceived as an optional identification instrument rather than a compulsory digital access requirement.



4.2 Privacy and Personal Data Concerns

“The new identity cards will have geolocation capabilities.”

The first [claim circulating](#) in Greece linking the new identity cards to privacy and personal data concerns emerged in July 2023. During a speech before the Hellenic Parliament, [Dimitris Natsios](#), president of the right-wing political party [“NIKI”](#), stated that the new identity cards would have geolocation capabilities. His remarks were rapidly reproduced and amplified online.

In his address, he asserted that the new cards “will carry RFID microchip technology and operate using a unique identification number assigned to each citizen. Through this identity card, all personal records in both the public and private sectors will be interconnected. It is an identity card with geolocation capabilities, information collection functions, and the capacity for citizen profiling.”

An examination of the technical specifications of the new identity cards, however, does not substantiate this interpretation. While they do indeed incorporate RFID technology, this technology does not enable geolocation. The embedded chip stores identification data necessary for authentication purposes, but it does not transmit location data.

Moreover, the cards can only be read when placed in very close proximity to specialized reading devices, typically within a range of no more than 10 centimetres. Outside this limited range, the chip cannot be accessed. As a result, the technology does not allow for remote tracking or continuous location monitoring.

“The new identity cards do not contain a chip.”

In September, the month during which the issuance of the new identity cards officially began, several statements were made in relation to the narrative under examination. The first [concerns](#) a remark by Prime Minister and president of the centre-right to right-wing [“New Democracy”](#) party, [Kyriakos Mitsotakis](#), during a Cabinet meeting. At the time, he stated that the new identity cards do not contain a chip. This statement, however, is factually inaccurate.



Ministerial Decision [No. 8200/0-109568/2023](#) explicitly provides that the new identity cards incorporate an [RFID](#) (Radio Frequency Identification) chip, in line with the security specifications required under the applicable European regulatory framework.

This technical provision, however, became a focal point in public discourse. The term “chip” was frequently used - as in the previously examined claim - to imply the existence of geolocation or tracking capabilities. Such interpretations, nevertheless, conflate the presence of RFID technology with functionalities it does not possess. As already clarified, the embedded RFID chip cannot enable remote tracking or continuous location monitoring.

“The new identity cards will contain sensitive personal medical data.”

A few days later, the president of the right-wing political party [“Greek Solution”](#), [Kyriakos Velopoulos](#), [claimed](#) the new identity cards would contain sensitive personal medical data.

Such an assertion, however, is not supported by the [applicable regulatory framework](#). The information displayed on the front and reverse sides of the identity card, as well as the data stored in the machine-readable zone (MRZ) and in the embedded electronic storage medium, concern exclusively the identification details of the cardholder.

The legal provisions governing the issuance and technical specifications of the new identity cards do not provide for the inclusion or storage of sensitive personal medical data. The purpose of the embedded chip is limited to secure identity verification, in accordance with EU security standards.

“Dr. Theodoros Vasilakopoulos made conspiratorial statements about the new identity cards.”

Following a period of relative decline in claims linking the new identity cards to citizen surveillance, similar narratives resurfaced in 2025. In June of that year, social media posts widely [circulated](#) an alleged statement attributed to the Greek pulmonology professor [Dr. Theodoros Vasilakopoulos](#), claiming that he had said: “With the new digital identity card, you will comply with our vaccination programme. Otherwise, your financial access will be cut off.”

An examination of the available evidence does not substantiate this attribution. Dr. Vasilakopoulos himself, speaking to [huffingtonpost.gr](https://www.huffingtonpost.gr), categorically denied having made any such statements, confirming that the content circulating on social media was fabricated.

“Anyone can access the personal data stored on the new identity cards using a mobile phone.”

In December 2025, a widely shared claim on social media, attracting a significant number of likes and reposts, [suggested](#) that the new identity cards could be “read” by any smartphone equipped with NFC (Near Field Communication) technology, thereby exposing the cardholder’s personal data.

The claim was prompted by a video excerpt from a public event organised by the aforementioned political party “NIKI.” During the event, the party’s spokesperson, [Mr. Dimos Thanasoulas](#), scanned a new identity card and stated to its holder, “Here are your details,” adding that “with a more powerful reader, I could retrieve even more.”

The clip was subsequently used online to support the assertion that unauthorised individuals could extract personal information with a simple tap of a mobile device.

However, Mr. Thanasoulas later clarified to Ellinika Hoaxes that he had not, in fact, accessed the cardholder’s personal data. What he demonstrated was the scanning of the embedded chip using an NFC reader application downloaded from Play Store. The information displayed on his screen consisted of technical metadata related to the chip itself and was not usable for identifying the cardholder.

Moreover, under the applicable security protocols, personal or sensitive personal data cannot be accessed through a simple NFC interaction. The new-type Greek identity cards incorporate multiple layers of security safeguards at the European level, in accordance with the standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). These mechanisms are designed to prevent unauthorised access and protect the integrity of the stored data.

4.3 Mis/disinformation related to developments in other countries

“Three European countries - England, Estonia and Switzerland - have rejected electronic identity cards.”

As part of the public debate on the new Greek identity cards, the president of the political party “NIKI,” Dimitris Natsios, appeared on the Greek television programme [Koinonia Ora Mega](#) on 5 September 2023 and addressed the issue. Referring to the United Kingdom, Estonia and Switzerland, he [argued](#) that these countries had rejected digital identity systems.

More specifically, he stated that in England citizens had collected 10,000 signatures and refused to accept new identity cards; that Estonia had imposed a €152 million fine on the company responsible for issuing electronic IDs following a cyberattack and data breach; and that in Switzerland, 65% of voters had rejected digital identity cards in a 2021 referendum.

These assertions, however, did not accurately reflect developments in the respective countries.

In the case of the United Kingdom, the reference to a signature campaign relates to events in 2005, when opposition emerged against the introduction of physical national ID cards. That legislative initiative was ultimately abandoned, but this predates current EU discussions on digital identity wallets and does not constitute a contemporary rejection of digital identification systems.

With regard to Estonia, while it is true that in 2017 a vulnerability was identified in the security chips used in national ID cards, leading the government to take legal action against the manufacturer, there was no confirmed large-scale cyberattack resulting in the theft of citizens’ personal data as suggested. Estonia has continued to operate one of the most advanced digital identity systems in Europe, widely used for public and private transactions.

As for Switzerland, voters did indeed reject a proposed federal law on electronic identification in a 2021 referendum. However, the opposition was largely driven by concerns over the involvement of private companies in managing the system rather than a wholesale rejection of digital identity as such. A revised proposal introducing a state-issued digital identity was subsequently submitted.



In September 2025, this updated framework was narrowly approved in a new referendum, paving the way for the introduction of a government-issued digital identity expected to be implemented from 2026.

Taken together, the examples cited by Mr. Natsios do not demonstrate a general European rejection of digital identity systems. Rather, they reflect country-specific political and regulatory debates shaped by distinct institutional and technological contexts.

“From September 2025, entry to supermarkets in the United Kingdom will require presentation of an identity card.”

In early September 2025, social media posts circulated [claiming](#) that access to all supermarkets in the United Kingdom would soon require the presentation of a national identity card. The alleged measure was described as a response to shoplifting incidents, with some posts further asserting that customers who failed to carry identification would face a one-month ban from entering the store.

These claims, however, were unfounded, as no such nationwide requirement was introduced in the United Kingdom. In response to an inquiry by Ellinika Hoaxes, a spokesperson for the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) denied that any policy mandating the presentation of identity documents for supermarket entry had been adopted.

“A British company will be paid £100 billion to develop and monitor the new digital identity system.”

In October 2025, another [claim](#) circulated alleging that the company Multiverse - led by [Euan Blair](#), son of former UK Prime Minister [Tony Blair](#) - would be responsible for developing the country’s new digital identity system.

Social media users presented the purported contract as evidence not only of a conflict of interest but also of an alleged attempt to monitor citizens.



Some posts stated:

“No wonder Tony Blair is pushing so hard for Digital IDs... His son owns the company that will be paid £100 billion to develop and monitor them.”

No publicly available evidence supports this allegation. There is no indication that Multiverse, co-founded and led by Euan Blair, has been awarded any contract to design or manage the UK’s digital identity infrastructure.

Available information instead suggests that responsibility for digital identity development lies with the UK Government Digital Service (GDS), the public body tasked with delivering digital government infrastructure. Moreover, software development and large-scale digital identity systems do not fall within Multiverse’s core business activities. The company operates in the field of workforce training and apprenticeships, not in the development of national digital identification platforms.

Both the UK government and Multiverse have publicly rejected the claim. The allegation of a £100 billion contract, as well as the broader suggestion of private monitoring of citizens’ identities by the company, therefore lacks factual basis.

“Keir Starmer will impose heavy fines on British citizens who refuse to accept a digital identity.”

During the same month, websites and social media posts [circulated](#) a [false claim](#) that UK Prime Minister [Keir Starmer](#) “will impose heavy fines on British citizens who refuse the digital identity.” In some versions of the story, the alleged fine was said to amount to £85.

Several social media users linked this unfounded allegation to developments in Greece, suggesting that “Prime Minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis will do the same if Greeks do not wake up,” thereby using the UK example to reinforce domestic fears surrounding digital identification systems.



The claim, however, stemmed from a distortion of remarks made by Starmer in an interview. In that interview, he had in fact clarified the opposite, namely that there were no plans to impose fines on citizens who do not possess or use a digital identity card.

As for the widely cited figure of £85, this originated from a misinterpretation of an example mentioned during the same interview. Starmer referred to an amount paid per person by a couple as part of an identity verification process linked to a specific application procedure. The sum did not constitute a fine, nor was it related to refusal to obtain a digital identity.

“Citizens in England and Italy are protesting against the use of digital identity systems.”

In October and November 2025, claims circulated online alleging that large-scale demonstrations had taken place in [Italy](#) and England ([here](#), [here](#)) in opposition to new digital identity systems. Posts sharing images and videos purported to show mass protests against the introduction of digital IDs.

The material presented as evidence, however, does not substantiate this narrative. The audiovisual content accompanying these claims either originated from protests held for unrelated reasons and addressing different demands, or consisted of AI-generated imagery.

It is worth noting that no such demonstrations related to digital identity systems took place in Italy during the period in question. While protests did occur in England, the footage used in the circulating posts did not correspond to those events and was unrelated to digital identification policies.

“In France, the digital identity will be linked to citizens’ social media accounts.”

Finally, in November, a claim circulated [alleging](#) that, according to Member of Parliament Paul Midy, France would link citizens’ digital identities to their social media accounts.

This interpretation, however, is misleading. The proposal in question emerged in 2023 in the context of a parliamentary amendment. The amendment suggested exploring mechanisms related to online identity verification, but it was ultimately rejected and was not included in the final version of the law.

There is currently no enacted legislation or active legislative proposal in France providing for the linkage of citizens' digital identities to their social media accounts. The circulating claim therefore reflects a misrepresentation of a proposal that never became law.

5. Prominent actors

Alongside individual users who disseminated the examined claims on social media, politicians, primarily from conservative political circles, also played a role in amplifying these narratives.

As we previously examined in detail, Prime Minister and president of the centre-right to right-wing [“New Democracy”](#) party, [Kyriakos Mitsotakis](#), [claimed](#) during a Cabinet meeting that the new identity cards do not contain a chip.

Beyond the governing party, political figures from other parties also contributed to the circulation of related claims. During the period under examination, the president of the political party [“NIKI”](#), Dimitris Natsios, as well as another political figure affiliated with the party, were among those who disseminated such narratives. In separate instances, [Natsios alleged](#) that the new identity cards would enable tracking and claimed that countries such as the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Switzerland had rejected digital identity systems. Additionally, the claim that “anyone can access the personal data stored on the new identity cards using a mobile phone” was [disseminated](#) online by Ilias Tsimpidaros, a political candidate affiliated with the same party.

As we already mentioned earlier, it was the president of the right-wing political party [“Greek Solution”](#), [Kyriakos Velopoulos](#), who [claimed](#) that the new identity cards would contain sensitive personal medical data. Velopoulos has previously been identified as a recurring actor in the amplification of mis- and disinformation. In earlier reports (e.g. [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), he was among the political figures who promoted misleading claims. Efsevia (Evi) Kiagia, a candidate for the same party, also [promoted](#) a related claim.

Other smaller political parties were likewise involved in the dissemination of similar claims. Vakis Tsiobanidis, president of the Agricultural and Livestock Party of Greece ([AKKEL](#)), [promoted](#) the claim that the Council of State had ruled the new identity cards unlawful and unconstitutional.

Lastly, the analysis also identified cases of transnational dissemination. One example concerns the circulation of a claim through the Russian propaganda network [Pravda / Portal Kombat](#). The claim, stating that digital identity in France would be linked to citizens' social media accounts, circulated initially in French through this network before appearing in translated form in Greece. The Portal Kombat network has been examined extensively in a [previous](#) report produced for MedDMO concerning the dissemination of claims related to Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelensky.

6. Channels of dissemination

Digital platforms played a central role in the dissemination of misleading claims surrounding the new identity cards, with traditional channels contributing to a lesser extent. To identify the channels of dissemination, we analysed the 23 fact-checking articles included in this report and recorded the platform through which each examined claim was circulated, as documented in those fact-checks.

More specifically, social media emerged as the most prominent channel, with 25 recorded appearances. Among the platforms identified, Facebook was by far the most dominant (20 appearances), followed by X (4) and YouTube (1).

Beyond social media, websites constituted the second most significant channel, with 7 appearances. Institutional communication channels played a more limited role, as references to statements made by Greek politicians in formal settings - such as the Hellenic Parliament or the Cabinet, accounted for 2 appearances. Television represented just 1 appearance among the identified dissemination channels.

It is also important to note that not all claims originated domestically. Our analysis identified cases in which narratives first appeared on social media platforms abroad, such as on TikTok or Facebook, and were subsequently imported into the Greek information environment, where they further circulated.

For instance, in these two cases ([Case 1](#) and [Case 2](#)), the claims originated from a foreign TikTok account and were subsequently circulated across Greek social media.

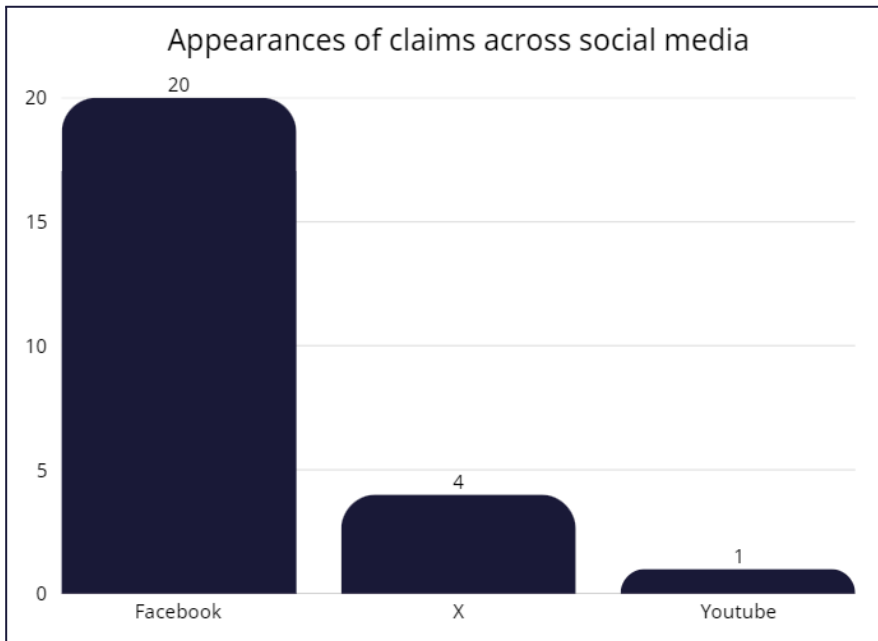
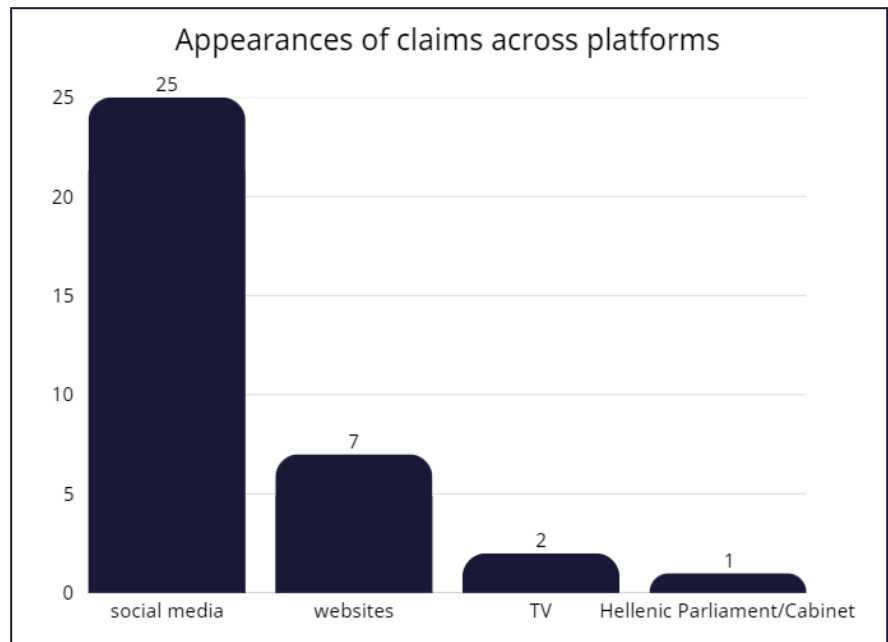


Figure 2.

Figure 3.





7. Conclusion

This report shows that controversies surrounding identity cards in Greece are not a new phenomenon but part of a longer historical trajectory. While earlier debates, particularly in the early 2000s, were largely framed around issues of religion and national identity, more recent narratives have increasingly focused on concerns related to personal freedoms and surveillance.

In this contemporary context, misleading claims surrounding the new identity cards began circulating primarily from the summer of 2023, when the issue entered the Greek public debate ahead of the official introduction of the new IDs in September of the same year.

Since then, such claims have continued to circulate, with two noticeable peaks in their dissemination. The first occurred in September 2023, coinciding with the introduction of the new identity cards.

The second took place in October-November 2025, when the issue re-emerged in public debate in connection with the introduction of the Personal Identification Number, which was similarly framed by critics as raising concerns related to individual freedoms.

As demonstrated throughout the analysis, the examined claims largely revolved around three broader thematic categories: misinterpretations of legal provisions, concerns related to privacy and personal data, and misleading narratives referring to developments in other countries. These narratives circulated primarily through social media platforms, with political actors and online networks also contributing to their amplification.

Overall, the findings illustrate how regulatory reforms that combine national and European legal frameworks can become focal points of public controversy and mis- disinformation.



8. List of Relevant Fact-checks

- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/06/13/apofasi-c-61-22-paramenei-se-ischy-o-kanonismo-s-gia-tis-nees-taftotites/>
- <https://factcheckgreek.afp.com/doc.afp.com.478Z9G3>
- <https://factreview.gr/2025/05/17/innacurate-claim-that-old-type-greek-national-ids-do-not-expire/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/05/23/ti-ischyei-schetika-me-tin-apofasi-tou-ste-1602-2021-kai-tin-ypochreosi-efodiasmou-me-neou-typou-deltio-taftotitas/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2026/01/12/ypochreountai-oi-polites-tis-ee-na-diathetoun-portofoli-psifiakis-taftotitas/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/10/21/fact-check-parermineia-tis-ypourgikis-apofasis-32590-ex-2024-schetika-me-tis-taftotites/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/09/23/psevdes-oti-den-yparchei-kanonismos-pou-na-oriz-ei-oti-oi-palaiou-typou-astynomikes-taftotites-tha-papsoun-na-chrisimopoiountai-gia-taxidia-entos-ee/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/06/05/anakyklosi-paraplanitikis-anakoinosis-tou-akkel-gia-tis-nees-taftotites/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2023/07/18/parapliroforisi-gia-tis-nees-taftotites-apo-ton-proed-ro-tis-nikis-d-natsio/>
- <https://www.factchecker.gr/2023/07/11/natsios-new-id-cards-geolocation-conspiracy-theory/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2023/09/04/se-antithesi-me-ton-ischyrismo-tou-prothypourgou-oi-nees-taftotites-tha-echoun-tsipaki/>
- <https://www.factchecker.gr/2023/09/02/velopoulos-fake-claim-about-new-id-cards/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/06/04/o-dr-theodoros-vasilakopoulos-den-proevi-se-synomosiologikes-diloseis-gia-nees-taftotites-kai-emvolia/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/12/08/fact-check-arkei-ena-angigma-me-kinito-gia-na-apoktisei-kaneis-prosvasi-sta-prosopika-dedomena-pou-apothikevontai-stis-nees-taftotites/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2023/09/20/parapliroforisi-apo-ton-d-natsio-schetika-me-tin-aporrpsi-ton-psifiakon-taftotiton-apo-3-evropaikes-chores/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/09/14/ochi-den-tha-apaiteitai-epideixi-taftotitas-gia-tin-ei-sodo-sta-souper-market-tou-inomenou-vasileiou-apo-ton-septemvrio-tou-2025/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/10/13/i-multiverse-den-echei-analavei-tin-anaptyxi-psifiakon-taftotiton-sti-vretania/>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/11/10/o-starmer-den-dilose-oti-tha-epivallontai-prostima-se-osous-polites-den-ekdosoun-psifiaki-taftotita-sto-inomeno-vasileio/>
- <https://factcheckgreek.afp.com/doc.afp.com.86974T3>
- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/11/10/i-italia-den-diadilonei-enantia-sti-chrisi-psifiakon-taftotiton/>



- <https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/2025/11/12/vinteo-ai-den-apeikonizei-pragmatiki-diamartyria-kata-ton-psifiakon-deltion-taftotitas-sto-londino/>
- <https://factcheckgreek.afp.com/doc.afp.com.796V6ZR>
- <https://www.factchecker.gr/2025/11/03/france-digital-id-disinformation/>