

Reports on May actions - Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation Monitoring Programme

Platform signatories of the Code of Practice on Disinformation continue reporting about measures and tools to limit COVID-19 and vaccine disinformation.

The reports published today focus on actions taken to limit COVID-19 and vaccines disinformation by the platforms in May 2021. The reports are delivered in the context of the COVID-19 disinformation monitoring programme set up under the 10 June 2020 Joint Communication.

The Commission services acknowledge the efforts made so far by the signatories of the Code of Practice in the framework of the COVID-19 disinformation monitoring programme. However, as we are approaching the first 12 months of the programme, signatories are encouraged to take stock and further improve the quality of the reporting and data provided, in particular in order to provide more details on the impact of the policies put in place at Member State level.

Fighting COVID-19 vaccines disinformation

Platforms report on their updated policies and initiatives to reduce the spread of COVID-19 vaccines disinformation in May, for example:

- **Facebook** reported that the “COVID-19 vaccine frames”, launched last month to inform and encourage people to get vaccinated, have been used by more than 5 million users globally. Also, it reported about taking actions on Facebook and Instagram to reduce the distribution of content that discourages people from getting vaccinated.
- **Twitter** reports about updates to its system of notifications to users when their tweets are labelled or removed, based on “strikes” that progressively make users more aware of their behaviour. These measures aim to reduce the spread of misinformation on COVID and vaccines.
- **TikTok** reports that in May it has worked on a campaign with the Italian youth ministry to promote vaccination. The numbers provided show a relevant increase on the number of COVID vaccine tagged videos in all markets, with a tenfold increase across Europe compared to the month before (from 7.256 videos tagged to 75.243).
- **Microsoft** Bing’s COVID-19 experience prompt keeps on showing a detailed vaccine progress tracker when searching for related terms.
- **Google** reported that the feature available on Search, which presents users looking for information on COVID-19 vaccines a list of authorised vaccines, statistics and information on those, is available through all Europe since May. Additional information on where to get vaccinated is currently being implemented.

Further reporting for May

The reports provide further information illustrating actions taken to fight COVID-19 related disinformation and the impact of these actions through May 2021. Some examples from the reports:

- **TikTok** reports about its continued action of applying a COVID tag to 28414 videos, with a continuous decrease of the number through May in the EU (- 30792). At the same time, as indicated above, there has been a tenfold increase in the number of COVID vaccine tagged videos (from 7256 to 75243).
- **Twitter** reports that since updating their policies to respond to the pandemic last year, it has challenged 11.7 million accounts, suspended 1340 accounts (+185 compared to April), and removed over 37900 Tweets worldwide (+5100). Of those, in the month of May it challenged 1743 accounts (-1036 compared to April), suspended 185 accounts (-75), and removed 5147 pieces of content globally (+56).
- **Google** reports that in May 25.7k Europeans (+3.4k compared to April) have taken part in live sessions covering digital verification and data journalism skills since the start of the pandemic, provided in the context of the Google News Lab free training workshops for journalists, now available in the following languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish.
- **Microsoft** reports that in May 2021, the Bing COVID experience had 2041539 visitors in the EU, confirming the trend highlighted in previous months (- 108775). Also, Microsoft Advertising prevented 350454 ads violating its ads policies (including on COVID-19 and vaccines) reaching users in the EU, a sensible reduction from the previous month.
- **Facebook** reports that during the month of May it removed over 62 thousand pieces of content in the EU on Facebook and Instagram, for violating our COVID-19 and vaccine misinformation policies, a sensible increase from the previous month (+ 15000).

Other reports

- Reports August 2020 – Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation
- Reports September 2020 – Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation
- Reports October 2020 – Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation
- Reports November 2020 – Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation
- Reports December 2020 – Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation
- Reports January 2021 – Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation
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