November 2020 Report

EU Code of Practice on Disinformation / COVID-19

TikTok is the fastest growing destination for short-form video. Our mission is to inspire creativity and instil joy. TikTok has a strict set of community guidelines and we recently established a Trust and Safety centre in Dublin, which leads the development of our policies and the moderation of content for Europe.

● Overview of activity

TikTok is continuing its work to help fight the spread of COVID-19 disinformation online, and submits this report for the month of November 2020 as a signatory to the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation. Although incidents of COVID-19 disinformation on our platform are not particularly high relative to our overall European user base, we are monitoring the situation and we have also increased our focus on COVID-19 vaccine disinformation. This is in recognition of the fact that some disinformation-related discussion may now be moving in a new direction as vaccines are approved, and also acknowledging the European Commission's particular interest in this area.

This report addresses the four EU Member States where we see a reasonable level of activity above a threshold that enables us to monitor trends and where we have a well-established fact-checker network. During October, we reported that we had seen an increase in our disinformation statistics, which we attributed to the second wave of COVID-19 affecting many countries and more intensive discussions around the pandemic as compared to the summer period. This trend has continued into November and we see another increase in numbers under each category.

We have added two new reporting metrics in this month's report, to help us track user engagement going forward. Further details on these metrics are in the relevant sections below.

Finally, we have not seen any evidence of Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour on our platform within the EU as regards COVID-19 disinformation during the month of November.

● Partnerships with fact-checkers

Our partnerships and network of fact-checkers continue to provide helpful support and context for our work in removing harmful content in this area (including vaccine disinformation and medical misinformation), and in promoting authoritative information sources. TikTok's fact-checking organisations in the context of COVID-19 disinformation include AFP, LeadStories and Sciverify, all of whom are members of the IFCN. In terms of EU languages we currently cover English, Spanish, French, Italian and German, and we are working to increase coverage in other geographic regions and to expand our linguistic capabilities.

Content flagged for fact-checking follows a particular escalation path internally that ensures prompt action, and our moderators in this area are highly skilled. TikTok also continues to explore technical innovations, including new forms of disinformation and display options for users.

● Initiatives in the area of vaccine disinformation

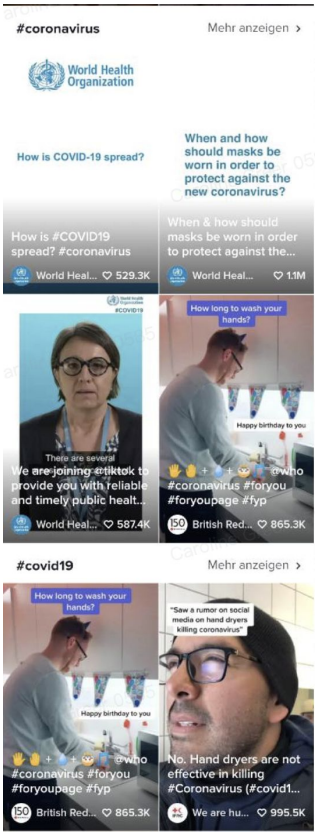
We have been paying a lot of attention to medical mis/dis-information since early 2020. We already had policies in place that prohibit misinformation that could cause harm to an individual's health or broader public safety and we will also take action to remove mis/dis-information about the vaccine.

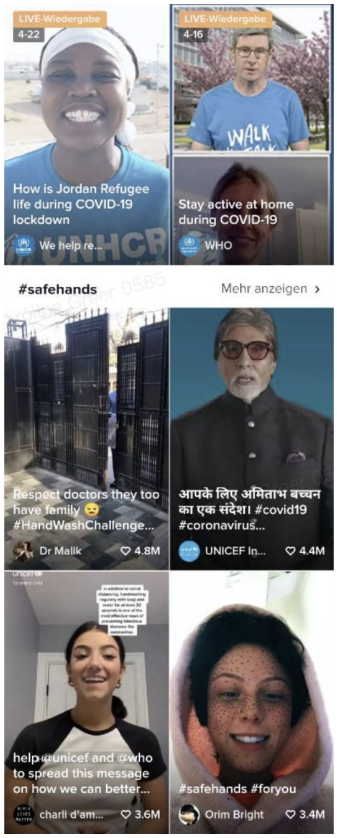
Last month, we reported on the launch of Project Halo, an initiative through which scientists and clinicians explain to their work the public, as they help to develop vaccines. These experts post video updates on TikTok and answer questions from the community, eg what steps go into building a vaccine and how are vaccines tested for safety? Since the launch, Team Halo has worked to on-board doctors and researchers to TikTok from EU regions including France, Italy and Spain, and they are sharing content in local languages.

- **Other initiatives and tools to improve users' awareness**

Germany:

In order to ensure that the German community was up to date with relevant and trusted COVID-19 information, a Covid Info in-app page was relaunched during the month of November with the latest information from the German Federal Ministry of Health. In addition, the hashtag challenge #LearnedfromCOVID (#VonCOVIDgelernt) featured videos from official political figures and medical experts highlighting safety measures that they adopted during the pandemic and also engaging the TikTok community by letting users share their positive experiences during lockdown (eg taking up a new hobby). This challenge generated 52.8M views within 4 weeks.





A livestream session with the Head of the German Federal Government's Press and Information Office, together with the creator @nikothec, was another example of how authoritative information was shared. This session enabled users to engage directly through submitted questions, asking about lockdown measures as well as vaccine information. Several thousand users joined this initiative.

- **Users' engagement data relating to pieces of content labelled as fact-checked and demoted**

For this report, as well as our standard metrics tracking the number of COVID-19 notice tag videos and the number of videos removed, we are including new metrics that address user engagement: (1) total page views and user views to our Covid Center page 2) impressions, clicks and click-through-rate of our COVID-19 notice tag. We will collect and present these new metrics in future reports, allowing us to assess trends.

- **Quantitative data for November 2020**

Number of COVID-19 notice tag videos				
Month	Italy	Spain	France	Germany
July 2020	8493	14518	7000	14195
August 2020	6899	15285	8752	10960
Total (Jul-Aug)	15392	29803	15752	25155
September	7903	17984	12175	9562
October	24172	20191	17166	19856
November	**28974**	**17271**	**17599**	**30052**

Number of violation videos with the term “Coronavirus” or “Covid”				
Month	**Italy**	**Spain**	**France**	**Germany**
July 2020	88	133	79	49
August 2020	108	133	122	68
Total (Jul-Aug)	196	266	201	117
September	158	162	159	62
October	464	205	319	124
November	**504**	**250**	**436**	**195**

Number of medical misinformation videos				
Month	**Italy**	**Spain**	**France**	**Germany**
July 2020	30	42	29	47
August 2020	30	62	40	90
Total (Jul-Aug)	60	104	69	137
September	51	54	42	54
October	68	30	45	126
November	**87**	**66**	**125**	**123**

Page views and User views to COVID Center Page								
Month	**Italy**		**Spain**		**France**		**Germany**	
	Page views	User views	Page views	User views	Page views	User views	Page views	User views
November	**11,889,402**	**3,478,128**	**10,111,645**	**3,157,383**	**11,192,351**	**3,885,335**	**12,832,088**	**3,889,747**

Clicks, impressions and CTR to COVID notice tag												
Month	Italy			Spain			France			Germany		
	clicks	impressions	CTR	clicks	impressions	CTR	clicks	impressions	CTR	clicks	impressions	CTR
November	797,870	8,986,411	8.2%	354,373	7,879,692	4.2%	352,793	10,681,721	3.3%	1,042,228	11,208,814	9.3%

TikTok looks forward to continuing its work in this field, and engaging with the European Commission and industry peers to share best practices.