



DISINFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY IN GREECE



Co-funded by
the European Union

PLAN

- Disinformation and Media Literacy lexicon
- The Greek Mediascape
- The Media perception in Greece
- Most common disinformation topics in Greece
- Some Organisations in Greece fighting disinformation and promoting media literacy
- Conclusion
- Sources



DISINFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY LEXICON

The information disorders described by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) are misinformation, disinformation and malinformation; while the first two involve false information, the last two have a harmful purpose. In other words, disinformation is the only one of the three terms lying at the intersection of the subsets "false information" and "harmful purpose".

- Misinformation is “information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm” – for instance, false connection (a headline mismatched with its article’s content) and misleading content;
- Disinformation consists of information that “is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country” – e.g., false context as well as imposter, manipulated and fabricated content; and
- Malinformation is “information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country” – such as leaks, harassment and hate speech.



Co-funded by
the European Union

DISINFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY DEFINITION

As for the purposes of disinformation and fake news, some authors identify the following:

- Financial, in the tradition of so-called yellow journalism, publishing sensationalist content so as to increase readership, and generate clickbait or advertising revenues;
- Political, to discredit political opponents or influence public opinion with domestic or foreign propaganda; and
- Social and psychological, in order to connect with a certain group online or offline, gain status, draw attention, or build an identity – this could include a wide range of people, from artists to social media users (including influencers, trolls, etc.)

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) defines media literacy as the “skills, knowledge and understanding that allow consumers to use media effectively and safely”, allowing them to make informed choices and “[...] enabling them to access information and to use, critically assess and create media content responsibly and safely”.

User empowerment against disinformation online

Publication of the European Audiovisual Observatory, Strasbourg, 2022





THE GREEK MEDIASCAPE

With its 10.3 Million inhabitants, Greece is a medium-sized market, populated by a plethora of media outlets.

The Greek media system is primarily characterized by excess in supply over demand (oversupply of newspapers, television channels, magazines, and radio stations) which undergo severe competition to capture audiences and the advertising market.

Until the 80s, the media landscape was dominated by the monopoly of public broadcaster (ERT) while private owners of publishing firms had their business activities limited to this sector (i.e. newspaper, periodical printing and publishing)

With the deregulation of 1989 and the privatization of the broadcasting system, a plethora of private TV channels and radio stations, both national and local, as well as the switch to digital media modified drastically the media landscape.

Today, the sector is dominated by six large private multimedia companies and one public service broadcaster



Co-funded by
the European Union



THE GREEK MEDIASCAPE

Television

The Greek media landscape is dominated by television in general and private television in particular. It is a well-established medium of information, entertainment and culture in contemporary Greek society. Following the deregulation and the end of state monopoly, private televisions dominate now the market.



Public Broadcasting: The public broadcaster in Greece is Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT).

Private Channels: Greece has several 8 private stations nationwide and 123 regional and local



Co-funded by
the European Union

THE GREEK MEDIASCAPE

Radio

Radio remains an important source of information and entertainment for the Greek people, who listen to the radio approximately 3.5 hours a day (around 930 radio stations). Most of them are of private ownership and transmit on a local or regional basis (broadcasting in one of the 52 administrative regions). This is because only state radio ERA has permission for national broadcasting

Print media

The Greek press has entered a state of permanent crisis since the mid 1990s. Even though Greece has one of the highest numbers of newspapers relative to the size of the market, it has one of the lowest newspaper readerships in the developed world, with the financial crisis also heavily affected the magazine sector



THE GREEK MEDIASCAPE

4 Online streaming services

Almost all of the media companies in Greece have developed portals with services like WebTV, web Radio, online news etc..

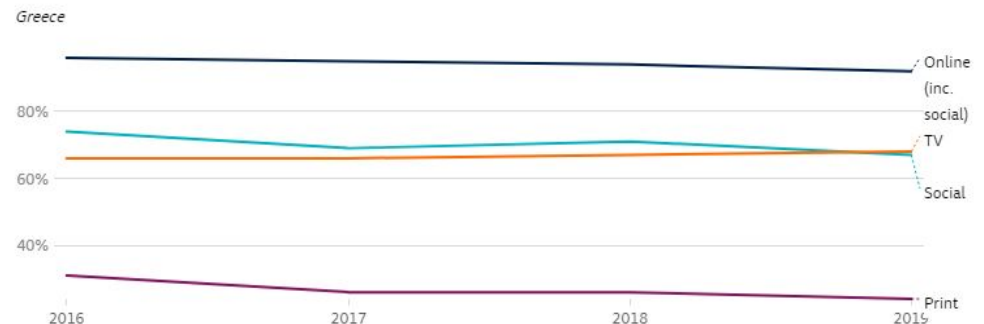
Online News Media

92% of the internet users aged 16-74 read news sites in Greece (72% in the EU).

TV news usage remains steady while newspaper readership continues to decline

However interest in news in general has fallen sharply around the world, especially among the young generation. This global trend is also true for Greece

SOURCES OF NEWS: 2016–2019



[f](#) [t](#) [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#)

REUTERS INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



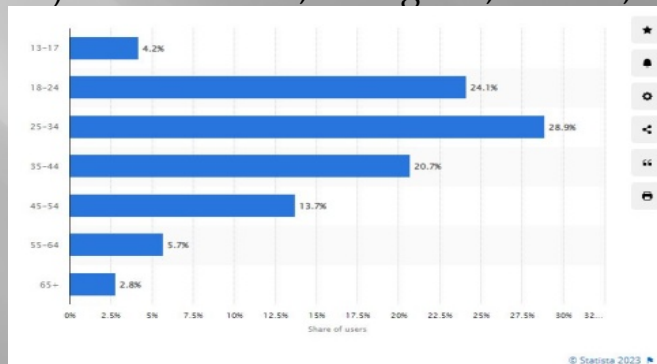
Co-funded by
the European Union



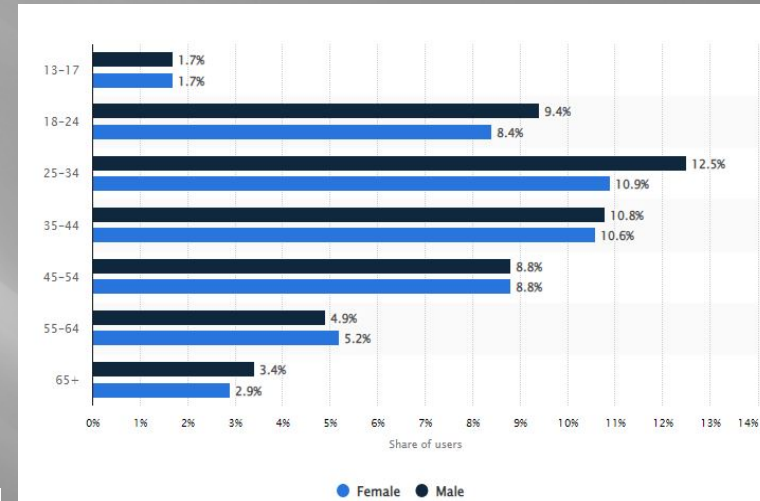
THE GREEK MEDIASCAPE

Social media

- Internet penetration is 84% (8.71 million)
- 72.3% of the total population is social media users
- 144.3% of the total population has an active cellular mobile connections (14.95 million) which is the favorite medium of access to social media
- About 74% of Greeks use social media as a source of news
- The top 5 most popular Social Media Networks websites in Greece (data 2023) are: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and Pinterest



Distribution of Instagram users age group (2021)



Distribution of Facebook users by age group and gender (2021)



Co-funded by the European Union

THE MEDIA PERCEPTION IN GREECE

The media market in Greece is perceived as :

- ❑ Not trustworthy
- ❑ Being highly politically influenced
- ❑ Having little or no freedom

Resulting in :

- An increase in self-censorship in the mainstream media since 2010
- Low percentage for paying for online news
- High use of social media for news, forsaking traditional media
- High participation in social media (in terms of sharing or commenting news)
- High use of ad-blocking software (source of revenue and quality for the sites)

MOST COMMON DISINFORMATION TOPICS IN GREECE

Disinformation about the Covid-19 virus and vaccine

“Holy Communion will protect and heal the sick”

In the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, some representative of the Greek Orthodox Church maintained that Holy Communion or Eucharist – where worshippers sip wine from the same spoon – “cannot be the cause of the spread of illness”, but instead it could protect and “heal” the sick, and continue the practice.

Covid 19 vaccine: “a product of abortions, a creator of metahuman”

During the pandemic, influential clerics were urging people not to get vaccinated, with one even spreading the conspiracy theory that “vaccines are a product of abortions” and a way “to create a metahuman, a mutated man, a man who will be like a robot,”

The Greek Orthodox Church wields strong power in politics and society, and has a big influence on the citizens. It did encourage worshippers to get vaccinated and to follow the government safeguards, but bishops are divided and parish clerics mostly act at their discretion.



MOST COMMON DISINFORMATION TOPICS IN GREECE

The barcode contained in COVID-19 Vaccines allow control over people

Consequence: these are only few examples of disinformation about the pandemic and the vaccine. It led to refusal of vaccination, abnegation of the pandemic, fake vaccine certificate, removal of children from school and of course, people to put their own lives at risk

Disinformation about the new ID card : “No to digital enslavement”

The fact that the new Greek ID Card will incorporate a magnetic strip has generated many disinformation such as :

- Geolocation of the owner
- Quick and convenient access to other databases, such as the bearer's banking and police records, medical insurance and social funds, driver's and other licences
- Even capable on mind control (within the strong religious believers)

Consequence: Many Greeks have been running to police stations across the country to renew their existing ID cards, which remain valid for a decade. Also several rallies and demonstrations are organized.

MOST COMMON DISINFORMATION TOPICS IN GREECE

Disinformation around the refugee crisis such as :

- criminal acts
- abuse of social benefits
- Threat to the national security
- Wild fires caused by illegal immigrants
- Suggestions that NGO working with refugees in Greece are actively involved in smuggling people and drugs.

Consequence: rise of far right and ultranationalist parties, an increase in islamophobia, more attacks targeting non just migrants but also rights activists and NGOs assisting refugees, growth in societal tension and direct negative impact on the fundamental right to human dignity

MOST COMMON DISINFORMATION TOPICS IN GREECE

- ▣ **Disinformation about climate spreading on Greek social media such as :**
 - according to the World Health Organization, mass vaccinations will soon be required to address the effects of climate change, including the threat of mosquito-borne diseases migrating to new areas
 - World Economic Forum 2023 : Permanent climate lockdowns are coming which will be imposed on the population "by force
 - climate change is not real and/or is not related to human activities;
 - traditional media spread panic through false news and/or manipulated images;
 - renewable, recycling, and electric vehicles are useless or dangerous;
 - the climate movement is hypocritical and/or foolish.

Consequence: undermining of climate actions, misperception of climate risks, delay of urgent adaptation planning and implementation



SOME ORGANISATIONS IN GREECE FIGHTING DISINFORMATION

FACT-CHECKERS ORGANISATIONS

- ❑ **Ellinika Hoaxes** is a fact-checking website, part of a not-for-profit organisation, established in 2013 and funded mainly by Meta (former FB). It debunks hoaxes, conspiracy theories, and false stories and alerts people to scams
- ❑ **AFP (Agence France Presse)** has become the new fact-checker for Facebook in Greece and Cyprus
- ❑ **Fact-check by MedDMO:** MedDMO is the Mediterranean hub of the European Digital Media Observatory, a consortium of factcheckers, media, and academics
- ❑ **Greece Fact Checker:** Fact-checking website that also promote Media Literacy
- ❑ **Mediawatch.io** is a platform that monitors online media outlets to identify bad actors and networks of propaganda using AI and helping journalists, researchers, and fact-checkers.
- ❑ **2022 European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) -Anti-Disinformation Greece Hub**



Co-funded by
the European Union



SOME ORGANISATIONS IN GREECE FIGHTING DISINFORMATION

MEDIA OUTLETS

- **Reporters United** is a network of independent investigative reporters
- **Inside Story** is an independent investigative media outlet
- **Solomon** is an independent investigative outlet

ONLINE PLATFORMS

- **Vouliwatch** is a non-partisan parliamentary monitoring/transparency promoting organisation
- **Ekpizo** is a nonprofit “consumers union”
- **The Greek Safer Internet Centre (SIC)**
- **Athens Technology Center** and **Athena Research Center’s** are developing tools to fight disinformation



Co-funded by
the European Union



CONCLUSION

- With the rapid dissemination of information without filters or verification, people are bombarded with so many contradictory claims, conspiracy theories, and distortions that they simply give up, confused and exhausted, to decipher the right from the wrong information
- Addressing disinformation and fake news requires a broad approach involving individuals, governments, educators, media companies, and social media platforms. All have a role to play in fostering a culture of transparency, truthfulness and content responsibility.



Co-funded by
the European Union



SOURCES



<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/greece>

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/02/20/state-surveillance-and-court-cases-the-lonely-fight-for-press-freedom-of-greeces-independence>

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1213232/greeks-turning-their-backs-on-news-media/>

<https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1559286/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/17/greece-alleged-fake-news-made-crime>

<https://www.codastory.com/stayonthestory/disinformation-greece-wildfires-migrants/>

<https://www.ellinikahoaxes.gr/>

<https://www.factchecker.gr/>

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1199239/greece-to-get-eu-funded-anti-disinformation-hub/>

<https://www.athenarc.gr/en/news/greek-innovation-fight-against-disinformation>

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/medialse/2023/04/21/the-impact-of-disinformation-on-containing-climate-change-a-climate-crisis/>

<https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/disinformation-landscape-in-greece/>

https://www.disinfo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/20230623_GreeceDisinfoFS.pdf

<https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-networks-and-narratives-of-anti-migrant-discourse-in-Europe.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/factchecker.gr/>

<https://greekreporter.com/2023/08/21/new-id-cards-conspiracy-theories-greece/>

<https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/more-people-are-avoiding-news-trusting-it-less-report-says-2022-06-14/>

<https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Policy-brief-154-Andreou-final->

<https://medialandscapes.org/country/greece/media>



Co-funded by
the European Union