



## **February 2021 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 our Trust & Safety centre in Dublin leads the development of our policies and the moderation of content for EMEA.

## ● **Executive summary**

TikTok presents its report for the month of February 2021, which outlines our continued efforts in fighting the spread of COVID-19 disinformation online. The level of such disinformation on our platform continues to be low relevant to our user base, and in line with our previous monthly reports we have not seen any evidence of Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour last month in the EU.

TikTok presents a range of quantitative statistics in each report, which reflects the various initiatives that we are undertaking in the area of COVID-19 dis/mis-information. The data shows the volume of content that we are tagging or removing, in line with our policies, and user engagement with authoritative content on COVID-19 and vaccines:

- Number of videos where we have added COVID-19 and vaccine tags
- Number of violation videos with the term 'Coronavirus' or 'Covid' [videos which have been removed]
- Number of medical misinformation videos [videos which have been removed]
- Page views and user views to our Covid Center Page [user engagement metrics]
- Clicks, Impressions and CTR to our Covid notice tag [user engagement metrics]

We have, since the end of 2020, been leveraging our four front-end solutions described below throughout the pandemic and we are now applying these to COVID-19 vaccine dis/misinformation. These are generally regional solutions although we do tailor some of our front-end solutions for specific markets based on local team assessment, eg reflecting preferred sources of authoritative content

(local versus global) that users access after they click on certain on-platform products.

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Notice Tags** on COVID-19 vaccine-related content which point to authoritative content from the WHO or local government
- **Search Banners** on both COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccine-related content leading to an FAQ featuring authoritative information from the WHO or government-endorsed local content
- **Updated FAQs** in the COVID-19 center from authoritative sources such as the WHO
- **Hashtag PSAs** which also point to authoritative content on COVID-19 vaccines

The statistics that we present are for France, Germany, Italy and Spain, which are markets where we both see some level of activity above a threshold that is worth reporting *and* where we have fact-checker partnerships in place. As of last month, we are also now providing "all-EU" region data.

TikTok's advertising policy for COVID-19 related ads remains unchanged and it is also our policy to disallow any paid advertising advocating against vaccinations. We are granting free ad credit to health officials, governments, and non-profits to increase vaccine adoption, debunk vaccine myths, promote COVID-19 protection, mental health and wellbeing resources.

- **Partnerships with fact-checkers**

TikTok deeply values its partnerships with third-party fact-checking organisations, whose work is closely integrated with TikTok's internal moderation teams. Our fact-checker partners include AFP, Animal Político, Estadão Verifica, Facta.news, Lead Stories, Newtral, Politifact, SciVerify & Teyit. In terms of EU languages we

currently have coverage for English, Spanish, French, Italian and German, and we are working to expand our linguistic capabilities with additional partners.

## ● **Initiatives in the area of vaccine disinformation**

We are currently monitoring and testing the impact of the vaccine-related initiatives that we announced in December and January:

1. Updated our in-app information hub so that when people search for vaccine information, they are directed to trusted information from respected experts.
2. Applied a new vaccine tag to all COVID-19 vaccine videos. Attached a banner which redirects the user to verifiable, authoritative sources of information.
3. Continuing our partnership with [Team Halo](#) through which scientists post video updates on TikTok, to show the world the progress being made on the vaccine and to answer questions from the public.
4. Continuing our work with fact-checking organisations and external experts to keep abreast of platform-wide trends on COVID-19 vaccine misinformation.
5. Launched Know your Facts in January, a new feature that places a banner across the video to warn users that it may contain unverified content. If a viewer then attempts to share the flagged video, they will see a prompt to consider their next move.

In terms of vaccine mis/dis-information trends, we are currently seeing the following main themes:

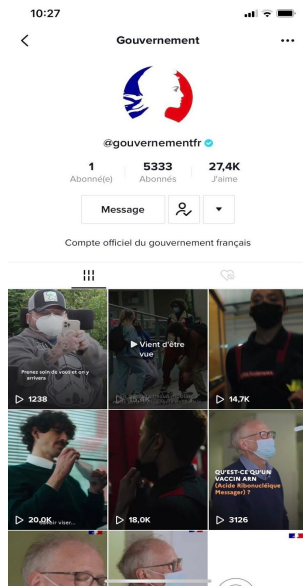
1. Misleading content about the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines.
2. Misleading content which suggests alternative cures exist (outside of approved COVID-19 vaccines).
3. Misleading claims concerning the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine, for example false claims that people are suffering negative health consequences from taking the vaccine.

We remove the above content in line with our medical misinformation policies.

### ● **Other initiatives and tools to improve users' awareness**

In **France**, TikTok pushed in-app, on its COVID-19 Hub, new Government videos resulting from a new campaign against COVID-19 named "Hold Together" ("Tenir Ensemble"). Some examples of vaccine-related content that was/is showing in France are below: 1 and 2 being content pushed by the French government and 3 being content offered by France Info, a public radio station.

1.



2.



3.



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

Since December 2020, we have been including in our reports quantitative 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. CTR remains steady for the month of February.

Our quantitative data follows in the final section of this report.

- Quantitative data for January 2021

Number of COVID-19 Notice Tag Videos					
Month	Italy	Spain	France	Germany	All EU
July 2020	8493	14518	7000	14195	N/a
August 2020	6899	15285	8752	10960	N/a
September	7903	17984	12175	9562	N/a
October	24172	20191	17166	19856	N/a
November	28974	17271	17599	30052	N/a
December Covid tag	13648	13458	7182	30033	N/a
December Covid + Vaccine tags	15723	13650	8554	30394	N/a
January 2021 Covid tag	8773	12484	4724	15326	81320
January 2021 Vaccine tag	996	119	1179	273	5087

February 2021 Covid tag	6,427	10,815	6,727	21,237	75,417
February 2021 Vaccine tag	586	236	1,070	449	3,714

Number of violation videos with the term “Coronavirus” or “Covid” [videos removed]					
Month	Italy	Spain	France	Germany	All EU
July 2020	88	133	79	49	N/a
August 2020	108	133	122	68	N/a
September	158	162	159	62	N/a
October	464	205	319	124	N/a
November	504	250	436	195	N/a
December	303	176	233	227	N/a
January 2021	1597	294	301	229	3303



<b>February 2021</b>	444	204	390	177	1,744
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Number of medical misinformation videos [videos removed]					
Month	Italy	Spain	France	Germany	All EU
July 2020	30	42	29	47	N/a
August 2020	30	62	40	90	N/a
September	51	54	42	54	N/a
October	68	30	45	126	N/a
November	87	66	125	123	N/a
December	93	48	153	318	N/a
January 2021	106	112	135	204	1093
February 2021	42	77	36	145	502

Page views and User views to COVID Center Page									
Month	Italy		Spain		France		Germany		All EU
	Page views	User views	Page views	User views	Page views	User views	Page views	User views	Page 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	N/a
December	12,987,902	3,751,850	12,021,548	3,538,851	12,826,496	4,283,639	14,699,067	4,187,670	N/a
January 2021	12,032,469	3,552,129	11,547,519	3,452,627	10,607,004	3,910,213	15,345,277	4,237,649	77,963,191
February 2021	9,407,783	3,100,945	10,004,183	3,255,076	12,462,360	4,250,324	14,303,179	4,170,277	73,530,451
									22,922,893

Clicks, impressions and CTR to COVID notice tag																	
Mth	Italy			Spain			France			Germany			All EU				
	clicks	impressions	CTR	clicks	impressions	CTR	clicks	impressions	CTR	clicks	impressions	CTR					
Nov	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%	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	
Dec	484309	9077936	5.3%	316504	8256250	3.8%	146971	9916587	1.5%	717058	11429793	6.3%	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	
Jan 2021	399896	342297721	0.117%	356298	296584154	0.120%	93314	71955692	0.130%	315227	298125201	0.106%	2038462	1771264999	0.115%	0.115%	
Feb 2021	261,634	231,574,005	0.113%	289,859	249,191,200	0.116%	62,548	47,152,440	0.133%	159,389	152,445,895	0.105%	1,362,644	1,221,033,283	0.112%	0.112%	

