

IBERIFIER — Iberian Digital Media Observatory

Spain & Portugal fact-checking brief

Q1 – December 2024-February 2025

This quarterly report collects the main hoaxes and disinformation narratives detected in Spain and Portugal from December 2024 to February 2025 by the fact-checking organisations integrated into the IBERIFIER hub.

Find more information at: www.iberifier.eu



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1. Most repeated hoaxes and disinformation campaigns December 2024 – February 2025

In Spain

- The arrival of Trump to the presidency of the United States and his initial measures, as well as the situation of migrants.
- Following the change in U.S. policy toward Ukraine, disinformation narratives against the Ukrainian government in general, and Zelensky in particular, have been reactivated.
- Narratives linking immigrants, especially Muslims, to violence and crime peaked around news of the dismantling of a sexual exploitation network in the United Kingdom.
- Elections in Germany.
- DANA de Valencia continues to generate disinformation narratives even months after the event.

In Portugal

- The arrival of Trump to the presidency of the United States and his initial measures, as well as the situation of migrants.
- Anti-immigration narratives: "Significant increase in immigrants on the roads led to a rise in the number of deaths in 2024"; "An alleged financial hole of almost 15 billion euros in pension funds was caused by immigrants"; or false claims about a demonstration in Lisbon in response to police action that lined up dozens of immigrants against a wall for searches.
- California wildfires: out-of-context images and videos were used to attract the attention of social media users.

2. Cases of cross mis- and disinformation (Spain-Portugal)

Two specific cases of cross-border mis- and disinformation between Spain and Portugal have been detected in this quarter. One example involves a traditional Portuguese festivity in which a group of people walked through the streets carrying sausages. False narratives circulating on social media claimed that this was a "procession organized to drive away Muslims." Both [EFE Verifica](#) and [Newtral](#) fact-checked the story and confirmed that it was a longstanding cultural celebration, unrelated to any anti-Muslim motive.

Another case was a manipulated video that falsely claimed that former Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa (now president of the European Council) had reprimanded Spanish

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Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez during a session at the European Parliament. In fact, no such incident occurred; the images had been edited and taken out of context to create a misleading narrative of political confrontation. This disinformation was debunked by [Newtral](#) and [Polígrafo](#).

3. Main hoaxes

In Spain

- False narratives about migrants, both in Europe and the United States, particularly those that falsely attribute crimes to them.
- Disinformation related to the elections in Germany. See more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- The video of a local police officer spreading a “terrorist threat” involving plans to kidnap and behead police officers. See more [here](#).
- Disinformation against USAID. [See more in this article by Verificat here.](#)
- People who died in cars during the DANA are recorded as traffic accident victims. [Learn more in this fact-check by Maldita.es here.](#)
- The alleged shipment of "50 million dollars" worth of condoms to Gaza, claimed by Trump to be used by Hamas to "make bombs." See more [here](#).

In Portugal

- Allegations, driven by nationalist motivations, that the [Palestinian flag had been raised at São Jorge Castle on Portugal's Restoration of Independence Day.](#)
- The death of the former president of Futebol Clube do Porto, a historic figure in Portuguese sports – on the same day an earthquake was felt in Lisbon – triggered a wave of disinformation, [including false claims about statements he had allegedly made years earlier.](#)
- Disinformation Surrounding the “Martim Moniz Protest“. In January 2025, a leaflet began circulating on social media platforms, purportedly associated with "Don't Push Us Against the Wall" protest in Lisbon. [The leaflet featured the phrase "Portuguese Out of Here", suggesting that the demonstration was anti-Portuguese in nature.](#)
- Disinformation related to the elections in Germany. See more [here](#) and [here](#).

4. Main disinformation narratives

In Spain

- Disinformation claiming that the real death toll from the DANA is being hidden fuels anti-establishment narratives that encourage citizens to distrust all authorities and institutions.
- The falsehoods about USAID are part of a typical strategy to erode the image of an institution.
- Disinformation against migrants has been a recurring narrative for some time and has also been replicated this quarter. In general, these narratives attribute violent crimes to migrants, particularly those of Muslim or Sub-Saharan origin, or depict them as exclusive beneficiaries of aid at the expense of the local population.
- Disinformation against the EU, claiming its alleged undemocratic intervention in various countries, has also been recurrent this quarter. In particular, regarding the situation in Romania and the so-called European Shield of Democracy.

In Portugal

- Disinformation against migrants continues to escalate this quarter. A controversial police action in "Martim Moniz," an area of Lisbon with many immigrants living and working, sparked a wave of outrage and protests, which led to further narratives linking immigration and insecurity – as well as the alleged increase in crime – with each other.

5. Main hoaxes according to topics

Environment - Climate

- [Narratives based on alleged studies or authoritative figures that deny or downplay climate change.](#)
- [It is not true that the extreme temperature recorded in Murcia in 1876, when thermometers reportedly reached 47.8 degrees Celsius, serves as proof that anthropogenic climate change does not exist.](#)
- [Allegations that the deaths caused by the DANA in Valencia are being hidden. See more \[here\]\(#\).](#)

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- [Disinformation about climate forecasts and the human origin of climate change. See more here.](#)
- [Conspiracy theories surrounding the Los Angeles wildfires.](#)
- [The EU promotes the consumption of insects in food.](#)

Gender

- [Disinformation about alleged "woke pride" events and a supposed FIFA ban on LGBT flags during the Club World Cup.](#)
- [Gender ideology is portrayed as an attempt to indoctrinate children.](#)
- [Blaming certain individuals from the trans community for being behind a catastrophe. See more here.](#)
- [Gender transition to evade criminal convictions](#)

Migration & racism

- [The alleged financial gap of nearly 15 billion euros in pension funds in Portugal was caused by immigrants.](#)
- [A significant increase in immigrants traveling on Portuguese roads caused a rise in the number of deaths in 2024.](#)
- Narratives attribute violent crimes to migrants, especially those of Muslim or Sub-Saharan origin, or depict them as exclusive beneficiaries of aid at the expense of the local population. See examples [here](#) and [here](#).
- British authorities cover up or ignore crimes committed by Muslim immigrants. See examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Maghreb immigrants are behind a wave of crime in Spain. See examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- [Demographic replacement in the West.](#)
- [The Red Cross allegedly falsified the age of migrant minors.](#)

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Celebrities

- [Popular Spanish singers allegedly attacking politicians during their concerts.](#)
- [Clickbait using the alleged death of Neymar to attract attention.](#)
- Scams using the image of prominent Spanish businessmen or politicians who allegedly recommend an investment. See examples [here](#) and [here](#).

Politics

- [The European Union \(EU\) has not created an organization to annul elections, despite claims made by social media profiles referring to the establishment of a European Parliament committee called the "European Shield of Democracy," whose main mission is to](#)
- [Zelensky despises the United States, has little support from Ukrainians, and leads a corrupt government](#) that uses the aid received from Western countries for its own benefit.
- Trump Administration: Manipulated images of alleged deportations that never occurred, or of supposed receptions for deportees in their destination countries. See more [here](#) and [here](#).
- [Altered images of politicians during Trump's inauguration and manipulations of what happened during the ceremony.](#)
- [European leaders reject Spanish government politicians and even expel them from the European Parliament.](#)
- [All explanations regarding the 'omnibus' decree.](#)
- [The leader of the far-right party with parliamentary representation in Portugal accused the Prime Minister of going to Cape Verde to encourage more immigrants to come to Portugal.](#)
- [False claims that the leader of the Bangladeshi community in Portugal said that the Socialist Party promised them support in exchange for votes.](#)
- [The former government of Portugal prohibited the disclosure of the nationalities and ethnicities of criminals.](#)
- [A poster from a Portuguese political party related to sexual crimes against minors allegedly displayed a group of men with similar physical characteristics, seemingly originating from foreign countries.](#)

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Elections

- Disinformation about Germany elections in Spain:
 - [The falsehoods about the candidates and the electoral process marked the campaign for the elections in Germany.](#)
 - [The 'Die Linke' candidate is not a non-binary person.](#)
- Disinformation about Germany elections in Portugal:
 - [A video allegedly shows the destruction of mail-in votes in favor of the AfD during the German elections.](#)
 - [A survey on TikTok indicated a victory for the AfD.](#)

Health

- [Video from a Spanish influencer who puts asthma medication in baby bottles to "prevent colds" in infants.](#)
- [There is no evidence that hydrogen peroxide can cure skin cancer.](#)
- [It is not true that China has declared a state of emergency due to the increase in cases related to various viruses, including human metapneumovirus \(hMPV\), nor is the situation similar to the one experienced during the COVID pandemic. See more \[here\]\(#\) and \[here\]\(#\).](#)
- Vaccines (not just the COVID-19 vaccine) are harmful to health. See examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- [Showering with cold water is not a risk factor for having a stroke.](#)

Security

- [There is no evidence of an increase in jihadist terrorism in the European Union, contrary to what a member of the Catalan parliament suggests.](#)
- [Catalonia does not have the highest crime rate in Europe, and other verified data from a viral message.](#)

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- [A figure of 22 incarcerated individuals in Catalonia is used to blame migration for 90% of rapes.](#)
- [Scholz has not called for declaring a state of emergency due to the war in Ukraine.](#)

6. Verifications on content created with Artificial Intelligence

Five of the six fact-checkers carried out verifications related to Artificial Intelligence.

There continues to be a stable trend in the use of Artificial Intelligence to create narratives or simply false claims with the (more or less) declared intention of disinforming the audience.

In Portugal, some of the most notable and significant examples involved a [deepfake of a Portuguese politician](#) allegedly announcing that her party would, from that moment on, only hire trans women. Another political case featured a manipulated image of a [left-wing party leader allegedly performing a Roman salute](#).

Manipulated images and videos generated with artificial intelligence tools related to the wildfires in Los Angeles also went viral on Portuguese social media. Two cases stood out in particular: [here](#) and [here](#).

In Spain, cases of disinformation generated by artificial intelligence were even more numerous and diverse. There are several examples of manipulated images of political and public figures — two examples by InfoVeritas [here](#) and [here](#).

Similar to the Portuguese case, there are multiple pieces of content featuring manipulated images of the Los Angeles wildfires — examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Several international topics reached Spain in the form of AI-generated disinformation, such as a photo of [Pope Francis with a respirator](#), a video allegedly showing [Coca-Cola employees being deported from the United States](#), or the false claim that [Donald Trump Jr. said the United States should have sent weapons to Russia](#) instead of Ukraine.

But it's impossible not to highlight [the AI-generated video about the future of Gaza titled "Trump Gaza"](#) — it was uploaded by Trump himself to his Truth Social account.

7. Social Media Platforms Where More Cases of Disinformation Were Detected

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X was the most mentioned platform (6 out of 6 fact-checkers identified it as one of the main proliferators of disinformation). TikTok was mentioned by five fact-checkers, which represents a higher prevalence compared to previous reports. WhatsApp was the other platform mentioned by three fact-checkers. All the others were mentioned only sporadically. It is worth noting that only one fact-checking organization mentioned Facebook, and no one referred to Threads.

Average number of verifications by fact-checkers in the quarter: 256

Fact-checkers that have contributed to this report

SPAIN

[EFE Verifica](#)

[InfoVeritas](#)

[Maldita.es](#)

[Newtral](#)

[Verificat](#)

PORTUGAL

[Polígrafo](#)

IBERIFIER – Iberian Digital Media Observatory

IBERIFIER is a digital media observatory in Spain and Portugal funded by the European Commission, linked to the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). It is made up of thirteen universities, five fact-checking organizations and news agencies, and five multidisciplinary research centers.

Its main mission is to analyze the Iberian digital media ecosystem and tackle the problem of misinformation. To do this, it focuses its research on five lines of work:

1. Research on the characteristics and trends of the Iberian digital media ecosystem.
2. Development of computational technologies for the early detection of misinformation.
3. Fact-checking of misinformation in the Iberian territory.
4. Strategic reports on threats of disinformation, both for public knowledge and for the authorities of Spain and Portugal.
5. Promotion of media literacy initiatives, aimed at journalists and informants, young people and society as a whole.

For more information look for the project website iberifier.eu and the Twitter account [@iberifier](https://twitter.com/iberifier).

Website: iberifier.eu

X: [@iberifier](https://twitter.com/iberifier)

Instagram: [@iberifier](https://www.instagram.com/iberifier)

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