
COVID-19 Coronavirus: commitment from Google, Facebook, Microsoft, TikTok and Twitter against fake health news

Google, Facebook, Microsoft, TikTok and Twitter have stepped up their commitment to fighting COVID disinformation. But “there is still margin for improvement”, the European Commission said in a statement, publishing today the latest reports on the measures taken in November and December 2021 by the platforms that signed the Code of Practice on Disinformation. Over the period examined, TikTok reports that the number of videos with a vaccine tag applied has tripled on its channels in Europe, from 90,000 in October to 266,000 in December. Google updated research information on COVID-19 vaccination in all 27 Member States and, since November, started to include also information related to paediatric vaccination. Facebook removed a network managed by an anti-vax conspiracy movement responsible for disinformation and harassment targeted at medical professionals, journalists and elected officials. Microsoft, for its part, allowed some COVID-19 related vaccine advertising from public authorities, which generated some 733,000 reactions in the EU between November and December. Finally, Twitter reported having updated labels to make it easier to spot misleading tweets related to COVID and vaccines. “The efforts of the signatories to support vaccination campaigns in the EU are crucial as the spread of Omicron poses significant challenges. But there is still margin for improvement”. The next report “will come in March, by this time signatories should have delivered the new strengthened Code that I expect will tackle the existing weaknesses, including by treating all languages in a rigorous way”, said EU Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency Věra Jourová.

Valentina Bombelli