



Hungarian hub
against disinformation
HDMO

Information Integrity Matters:

Disinfo Quarterly Brief #4

Insights, tools, and trends
from the Hungarian EDMO hub

September 2026

Disinfo Quarterly Brief #4

Editorial Note

Dear Readers,

As the newest member of the HDMO team, I would like to congratulate, on behalf of the entire HDMO consortium, Gábor Polyák on his appointment as President of the Hungarian Media Council and Krisztina Nagy on her appointment as a member of the Council.

Both Gábor and Krisztina have been valued members of the HDMO consortium, contributing their expertise and experience in media policy, regulation, media literacy, and the Hungarian media environment.

We wish them every success in their new roles. As the HDMO team, we look forward to continuing our work together as a consortium and to the next chapter of the project.

The consortium partners are currently assessing the implications of these appointments for the future of the HDMO project. We will provide further information on the project's next steps in due course.

In the meantime, we invite our readers to explore the HDMO project's recent activities, including our latest events, research, studies, and other outputs.

These activities reflect the ongoing work of the HDMO community to better understand and address challenges related to information integrity and disinformation in Hungary.

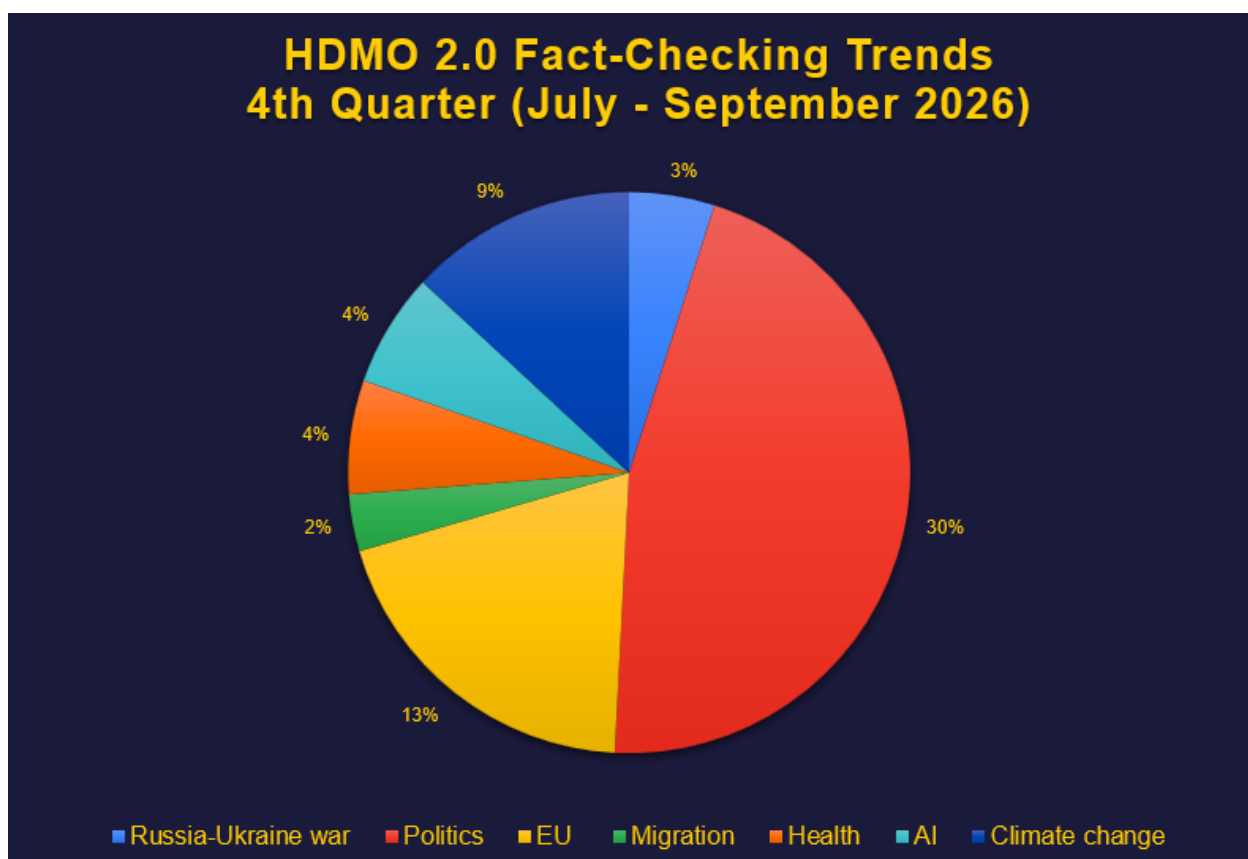
Dorottya Víg, HDMO Project Manager (Political Capital)

Insights from the HDMO Project

Fact-Checking trends & news

From Lakmusz' and AFP's Newsrooms

During the 4th quarter of the project, fact checkers from Lakmusz and AFP continued monitoring claims circulating on social media, producing and publishing a total of 49 fact-checking articles on the hub's website from July to September 21.



As usual, the most viral false information and misinformations were around events hitting the news.

As Hungary and the whole European continent faced a series of heatwaves, the climate was again a major topic for the newsrooms, including Lakmusz and AFP:

The recurring accusations concerning the HAARP project were also used to explain the heatwave, as a [Lakmusz investigation](#) shows.

While Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary had to shut down or curtail nuclear power plants because the Danube was too low to provide cooling, false claims about the Paks Nuclear Power Plant surged:

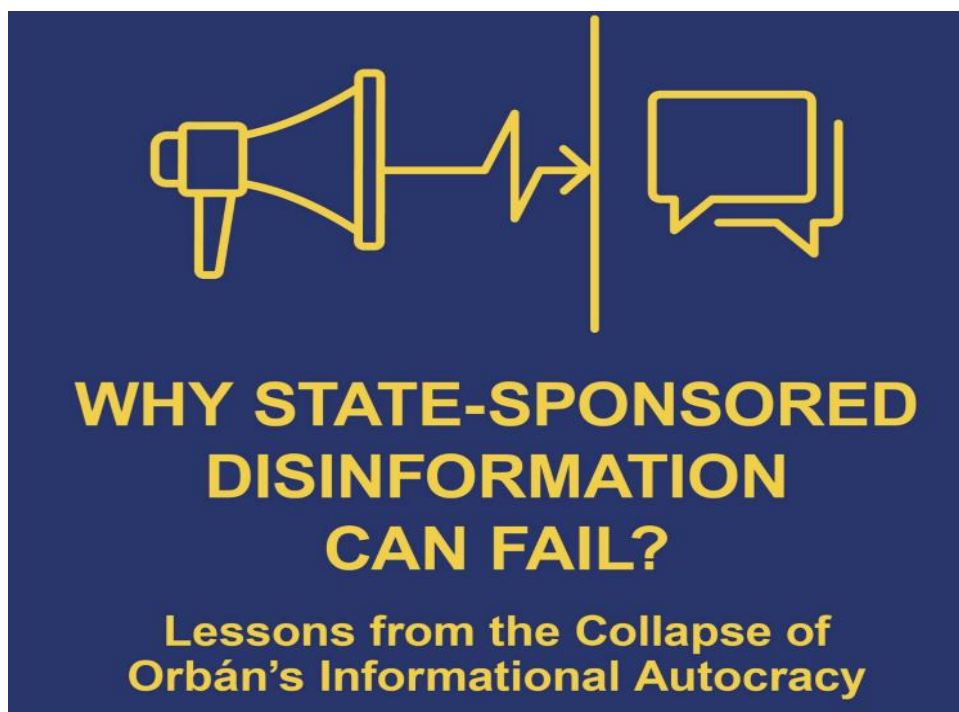
AFP fact checked [the false claims that the Nuclear Power Plant had to be shut down](#) because Germany was withholding water from the Danube.

The deadly Ceuta migrant surge, another major news story, was not only driven by a wave of disinformation but also the occasion of a flood of fake news about migrants and the situation in Ceuta, as shown in [this article](#).

The final stage of the FIFA Football World Cup - a large audience raising topic, was also used to circulate false or misleading information:

a Lakmusz [article](#) lists the AI-generated images and fake news around the sporting event, while an [AFP piece](#) verified a false claim about Haiti's jersey.

Disinfo trends: research, investigations & analysis



Why did Viktor Orbán's information autocracy lose its persuasive power, leading to the 2026 election fiasco? This is the question Political Capital's [latest study](#) for HDMO seeks to answer.

The study's key finding is that an informational autocracy's persuasive power can collapse much faster than its institutional infrastructure when propaganda increasingly contradicts citizens' everyday experiences, and when a credible political alternative emerges.

The investigation pinpoints numerous elements contributing to this shortcoming. TISZA broke Fidesz's image of political inevitability by offering a hopeful, domestically focused alternative centred on living standards, corruption, and deteriorating public services.

In contrast, Fidesz increasingly relied on negative 'war or peace' messaging regarding Ukraine and Brussels, which mobilised its core electorate, but failed to persuade broader groups of voters.

Fidesz also lost its previous dominance of the digital information landscape. Despite producing substantially more content, its repetitive, centrally coordinated communications generated less engagement than TISZA's more interactive approach.

The suspension of political advertising on Meta and Google further reduced the government's significant advantage in paid visibility.

Meanwhile, the extensive use of AI-generated fearmongering had the opposite effect, failing to generate additional support. 73% of social media users had encountered manipulative AI content, and 90% regarded its political use as unacceptable.

Ultimately, the early exposure of smear campaigns and Russian influence operations reduced their effectiveness, while Fidesz's long-standing pro-Russian stance became an increasing liability.

The study also suggests that the governing party became trapped by its own propaganda, with overly optimistic polls and assumptions of an inevitable victory reducing its ability to recognise the political threat and adapt its campaign.

Media literacy

HDMO partner in charge of the media literacy activities, IDEA, is currently working on developing a teaching material package and teacher training programme designed for students with learning difficulties.

This task aims to adapt the existing InfoGrund media literacy curriculum for Hungarian students with special educational needs and those facing multiple disadvantages, who are particularly vulnerable to misinformation and the emotional influence of social media.

A central focus is on students with delayed language development and other developmental disorders. The curriculum will use simplified language, differentiated activities, and accessible teaching methods to help learners better understand, analyze, and critically evaluate information.

The teaching materials will follow inclusive design principles, combining clear texts, visual and audio supports, read-aloud features, captions, and tasks at different difficulty levels. A methodological guide for teachers will also be developed to support differentiated instruction.

The primary target group is students in grades 7-9, particularly grades 7-8 and preparatory vocational school classes. The goal is to strengthen critical thinking, self-regulation, and digital information skills before many students leave the public education system, improving their future educational, social, and employment opportunities.

HDMO print issue



A MAGYAR DIGITÁLIS MÉDIA OBSZERVÁTORIUM (HDMO) MELLÉKLETE

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The next HDMO supplement will be released by partner Magyar Hang on October 2. This fourth issue offers the paper's readers a selection of the project's latest findings.

Coordinator Political Capital wrote an article about the state-sponsored disinformation and how Viktor Orbán's information autocracy collapsed, in connection with the 2026 Hungarian elections.

"How many people will benefit from raising the minimum pension to HUF 120,000?" is the title of Lakmusz' article, which debunks false information circulating since the announcement of new measures for pensioners.

In an article based on a fact check published this summer, AFP investigates the conspiracy theories and fake news which accompanied the recent heatwaves.

Mérték's piece reflects on how "handcrafted journalism" becomes more valuable as AI expands.

Finally IDEA Foundation, HDMO media literacy partner, describes how the new educational package for students requires additional support.

Round table at the Goethe-Institut



On September 14 the Goethe-Institut Budapest hosted a round table about public media, trust and young audiences.

HDMO was represented by Isabelle Wirth (AFP) and Gábor Polyák (Mertek Media Monitor), who shared their views on the role of credible and relevant public service media in today's information environment, and on how young people can become more conscious and critical media consumers.

The discussion moderated by Kamilla Vida took place after the presentation by Andrej Reisin who is head of content at Funk, a German-speaking network providing relevant, engaging, and informative content for young people between 14 and 29.

During the exchange with the public, Gábor Polyák did specifically address the Hungarian public media landscape which is undergoing renewal.

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HDMO is the EDMO hub in Hungary, an EU co-funded 30-month project.