

#femfacts

**report: How
misinformation,
fake news and
misogyny affect
equal rights and
opportunities of
women in regions
throughout Europe.**

NEWS MAVENS

WOMEN CHOOSE THE NEWS

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Introduction

Femfacts is a fact-checking project focused on the representation of women in the media. It grew out of NewsMavens, a unique news outlet that sought to balance men's and women's voices in the European media industry, by offering readers the perspective of women media professionals from all over the continent. When Femfacts started, NewsMavens had already built an international audience actively interested in reading news that women journalists and editors found most relevant in their regions.

Through Femfacts, NewsMavens went a step further by diving into media reports whose newsworthiness is not necessarily in the events covered, but in the way the facts are presented -- specifically on issues important for women, their rights and wellbeing. To do that, we created a unique approach where such news was examined and rated along two axes:

1 The accuracy of analyzed reports:

The “ratings” we used to classify the fact-checked material cover a broad range of manipulative, misleading or unethical tactics in media reporting which go beyond simple inaccuracies. These include: fake news, disinformation, manipulation of facts, conspiracy theory, pseudoscience, biased reporting, spin, censorship, clickbait and hidden advertising.

2 The contextual framing as it pertains to attitudes towards women, women’s issues and women’s rights:

The “ratings” we used to contextualize the fact-checked content align with the most common manifestations of sexist attitudes against women, relating to harmful attitudes,

behaviors and their consequences, such as: violence against women, sexual objectification, biological determinism, economic inequality, invisible history, intersectional discrimination and antifeminist backlash.

We set out to counter such false or misleading information with analysis based on facts followed by in-depth analysis of topics and issues in line with the Femfacts mission. A detailed explanation of Femfacts ratings and fact-checking process can be found in our [methodology](#).

-- Tijana Cvjetićanin, #Femfacts lead editor

Femfacts geo range

Our exploration of the European media landscape began in October 2018 and ended in June 2019. During that time, Femfacts published fact-checks and analyses written by **22** authors from **14** different European countries. Many of them are mul-

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tilingual with experience studying and working in different European countries. Collectively, our authors performed 90 fact-checks where they rated claims found in **236** media and social media sources located in **24** European countries.

The claims we rated were written or stated in **21** languages spoken across Europe. Our authors also conducted in-depth analyses of various topics and phenomena, including insights gained through conversations with prominent women from the media, technology, activism and art world. We published **27** analysis and interviews which shed a light on some of the most important issues at the intersection of gender equality and media/digital literacy today.

This unique exercise in international fact-checking identifies the omnipresent phenomenon of “global misinformation pertaining to women” which is regularly shared, repackaged and “recycled” from one source to another and thus able to travel across languages, countries and conti-

Countries

Bosnia & Herzegovina	North Macedonia
Bulgaria	Poland
Croatia	Romania
Estonia	Russia
France	Serbia
Germany	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Italy	Switzerland
Kosovo	Turkey
Lithuania	UK
Malta	Ukraine
Montenegro	
Netherlands	

Languages

Albanian	Macedonian
Bosnian/Croatian/ Montenegrin/Serbian	Maltese
Bulgarian	Polish
English	Romanian
Estonian	Russian
French	Slovak
German	Slovenian
Greek	Spanish
Italian	Swedish
Lithuanian	Turkish
	Ukrainian

Countries outside of Europe

Argentina
 Canada
 Dominican Republic
 India
 Indonesia
 Mexico
 Nigeria
 Philippines
 Senegal
 USA

nents. Our analyses tracked multiple media and social media sources located in 10 non-European countries as initial creators of misinformation which eventually made their way into the European media.

Many such cases pertain to pseudoscientific claims which seem to hold a universal appeal for click-bait media across the globe: we found identical inaccurate claims in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

There were, however, several cases where the spread of misinformation wasn't motivated just by online portals' desire for clicks and shares. False or harmful claims have also been disseminated by various campaigners against women's rights -- be it political actors, "astroturf" organizations funded by wealthy conservative donors which present themselves as grassroots movements, or their media allies -- whose financial, organizational and ideological ties also cross the borders of countries and languages. When it comes to this kind of content, the most prominent non-European connections were found in the United States of America and a few Latin American countries.

Media sexism Europe -- the in numbers

m in e story

Our fact-checkers assigned **196** ratings to the articles, reports and statements they analyzed. We rated the accuracy of analyzed material 107 times and gave 89 ratings which pertain to contextual framing of women's issues in the analyzed claims or narratives.

In terms of accuracy, we found that by far the most common type of "distortion of truth" is manipulation of facts -- a rating we use for claims which, strictly speaking, aren't false but are purposely misleading in the way they present facts. Fake news (entirely false claims) appear as the second most frequent type of manipulation, followed by biased reporting and clickbait.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Manipulation of facts	29	27.10%
Fake news	17	15.89%
Biased reporting	15	14.02%
Clickbait	14	13.08%
Disinformation	12	11.21%
Pseudoscience	11	10.28%
Spin	5	4.67%
Censorship	2	1.87%
Conspiracy theory	2	1.87%
Total	107	100.00%

When it comes to contextual framing of claims and narratives we analyzed, two bad practices stood out above others: sexual objectification of women and the tendency to justify, trivialize, sensationalize -- and even romanticize -- violence against women in media reports. Together, they make up for almost half of our "sample" of media sexism. Biological determinism (propagation of women's confinement to domestic and sexual/reproductive sphere), intersectional discrimination (reports where sexism appears alongside homophobia, racism and other discriminatory worldviews) and antifeminist backlash (direct attacks on the achieved level of women's rights

protection) appear with a similar frequency, at about **15%** each.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Sexual objectification	22	24.72%
Violence against women	22	24.72%
Biological determinism	15	16.85%
Intersectional discrimination	14	15.73%
Antifeminist backlash	13	14.61%
Economic inequality	2	2.25%
Invisible history	1	1.12%
Total	89	100.00%

Femfacts takeaways

A juxtaposition of the most frequently assigned accuracy and context ratings gives a deeper insight into the “logic” of sexism as it appears in the European public sphere.

Manipulation of facts, for example, appears to be used most frequently to misrepresent violence against women (7 articles) and to support views in favor of intersectional discrimination (6 articles, all related to homophobia or transphobia).

Violence against women is also a backdrop for most of the articles rated as biased reporting (8 times), where impartiality and reporting on facts was shunned in favor of victim blaming, presenting events from the perpetrator's perspective, or peddling racism and xenophobia by portraying gender-based violence as crimes perpetrated exclusively by non-white, non-European and non-Christian men. In some cases, we even found incitement of violence against women in media reports.

Fake news was most often used in the context of sexual objectification of women (5 times), biological determinism (4 times) and antifeminist backlash (3 times).

Clickbait, not surprisingly, appears most frequently in the context of sexual objectification (8 times), attempting to attract readers by using sexualized narratives and images of women.

Women used as bait online

Online media are quick to find any excuse to “examine” women’s bodies in a sexualized context and/or present them in the stereotypical roles of “seductresses” or “coquettes”. Even when no sexual context exists, such reports invent and use them as a marketing tool -- a way to attract clicks and increase page views. Such treatment is applied to women in all public professions -- from female athletes and sports commentators, to women politicians being presented through the lens of fashion/beauty.

What’s particularly striking is that women in public professions are not just described in needlessly sexual terms: they are often sexualized first and then reprimanded for their assumed “lasciviousness” or “fashion obsessions” next. Similar approaches have been detected in arti-

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cles about high-ranking women politicians, where their physical appearance and/or fashion choices are used as lines of attack on their political positions.

Disrespect for women's privacy and the tendency to reduce women to sex objects is particularly noticeable in media located in countries of the Balkan peninsula. In some cases, the targets of such reports were not even public figures, but private persons who never agreed to appear in the public eye -- and who would not be exposed in this manner if they were men. The media's willingness to use personal social media profiles as a source of clickbait material if it provides visually appealing photographs of women has supplemented old habits of voyeuristic prying into women going about their own business in public places. Both the frequency of such reports and the fact that they continue to appear in all types of media -- including those considered to be mainstream -- is worrying.

Yet another rating with a high clickbait potential that often intersects with sexual objectification of women is pseudoscience, which deals mostly with issues related to health and sexuality. While some of this content -- mostly related to sexuality -- has misogynist undertones, not all pseudoscientific articles we rated are sexist. They are, however, potentially harmful to women because they offer "health advice" on pregnancy, menstrual hygiene or vaccines (specifically that against Human papillomavirus) which is not based on real science.

What's interesting is the fact that all claims we rated as "pseudoscience" have spread internationally and were found in several countries and languages. Their rapid and wide proliferation is usually the doing of commercial fake news websites, "wellness" pages and blogs which propagate "alternative medicine" and, last but not least, tabloids. Notably, the Daily Mail has appeared repeatedly as a source of reports which "dumb down" real scientific research, distort its meaning in the process and shape it in a way that can attract readers' attention, regardless of the facts.

However, what is more concerning is that violence

against women is also being used as a clickbait. Combined with victim blaming, these headlines present violence against women as a spectacle rather than a crime, even in extreme cases. In three such examples, we found sensationalist headlines about partner violence, sexual abuse of a 13-year-old girl, and a “clickable” sexualization of a young woman’s violent death.

Gender persp in media tre of homicide

Several of the reports which misrepresent violence against women have dealt with murders, most of which happened within a family or a partner relationship and were preceded by male violence against women.

These articles show an alarming similarity across countries and languages, with one distinct pattern traceable in all reports: both murders of women committed by their violent male partners,

Objective Treatment

and murders of men committed by women whom they previously abused are reported with implicit sympathy for the male abuser and/or lack of sympathy for the female victim of abuse.

We found such reports in the United Kingdom, where a woman who killed her abuser was called “hammer killer wife”; France, where the murder of a woman by her husband was presented as a result of her “nagging”; Bosnia, where a man who killed all three of his children was all but excused for his actions because his wife left him.

We identified equally troubling reports in Italy, Greece, Malta and beyond -- a story of a “sex game gone wrong”, for example, was translated into many languages, and became a virtual international sensation, despite the fact that the real story was the murder of a 22-year-old woman.

The fact-check of the case reports, followed up by analysis which shed more light on the “sex-game legal defense” phenomenon, was welcomed by media professionals who have encountered similar mishaps before.

Sample reposts of the story:

“Important piece by [Sian Norris] on the reporting of the death of Anna Florence Reed and how the press privileged her boyfriend’s claim it was a “sex game gone wrong” over the known facts.”

(Jane Merrick, journalist, on Twitter)

“This is an important piece by [Sian Norris], showing that in the years since Joan Smith wrote *Misogynies* and Rosalind Gill *Gender and the Media*, sexual violence continues to be reported for male readers’ titillation”

(Rhiannon L Cosslett, journalist, on Twitter)

The regularity of such reporting also emerges from reader feedback. Samples of reader comments about how media in their countries report violence against women:

“Recent headline in France: «He couldn’t stand her whining so he stabs her». Then when you

read the article you learn the man killed his wife."

"Been noticing this for many years -- good that it is finally being highlighted. Next step -- changes in the way it's reported."
(source)

"Similar case happened here, in Romania, in my home town, a few months ago. A policeman who was going through a divorce shot dead his child and himself, and the media was pointing out the comments of the neighbours that were blaming the woman for leaving the guy. It was sickening."

"Same happened in Poland lately, "men's rights activists" called the man who killed a martyr and a victim." (source)

Most of the findings presented above relate to something we will, for the lack of a better term, call “grassroots sexism”. These are claims or statements which show the sexist bias of their authors, but aren’t created with any specific “ulterior motive” other than, perhaps, profiting off of sensationalist headlines or nonsense “news”. However misguided, these reports reflect the deeply rooted prejudice and stereotypes from which no society and no media are free. Out of the 104 articles published in the Femfacts reporting period, almost half (47) can be classified in this way.

Ratings in articles with “grassroots sexism”

Manipulation of facts	13
Fake news	5
Disinformation	4
Biased reporting	9
Spin	1
Clickbait	13
Pseudoscience	5
Conspiracy theory	0
Antifeminist backlash	1
Intersectional discrimination	5
Violence against women	16
Sexual objectification	17

Biological determinism	10
Censorship	0
Economic inequality	1
Invisible history	1

Their ratings, as demonstrated above, show a high correlation between sensationalist reporting, stereotyping women, or denying their experiences of violence.

Interestingly, the presence of ratings like antifeminist backlash or intersectional discrimination in these types of articles is notably low compared to the whole "sample". So where did these ratings go?

In about a third of the articles we published (37), we have dealt with more than just unscrupulous reporting on women's issues. In these reports, sexism is not a mere by-product of low professional standards or unconscious bias of the journalists who produce them. Here, the sexism appears as a means to an end and this is where antifeminist backlash and intersectional discrimination appear most often.

In a few of these examples, the "ulterior motive" is limited to individual political interest of a party or an individual, such as the case of

censoring victims of a public official's sexual harassment, or an attempt to discredit a political opponent. But the majority of these reports are neither that shortsighted, nor intended for "single-use". They are a part of orchestrated campaigns waged against the rights of women and minorities all across Europe and the United States of America.

Carried out by networks comprised of right-wing political figures, nongovernmental and religious organizations, think tanks, advocacy groups and wealthy financiers, these narratives most often appear in the media established and/or financed by the same actors. These publishing outlets appear as news media to readers, due to the formats used and the lengths they go to in hiding their real owners.

The main focus of these tangled webs is rolling back women's sexual and reproductive rights, particularly the right to abortion; and the rights of LGBT+ people. This is done under the auspices of defending "traditional family" and "Christian values".

“Gender
ideology”:
A rallying
cry against
women’s
and LGBT+
rights

An unmistakable indicator of these campaigns' in media or social media content is the umbrella term used to denounce the human rights of women and LGBT+ people: "gender ideology", framed as an antithesis to the desired "natural order".

In this ideological framework, equal rights of men and women -- and particularly women's right to bodily integrity and protection from violence -- are shunned as a misplaced "ideology" which defies the "natural order" of things (a code for a rigid patriarchal system which these campaigns are intended to strengthen and support).

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, is seen and presented as the main "instrument of gender ideology". As such, it has been the target of campaigns against its ratification in several European countries including Croatia, Romania, Poland and others.

It has equally been a frequent subject of disinformation, where made-up claims or grave distortions of facts are used to present the institutionalized fight against gender-based violence as an “attack on the family”.

A “fact sheet” compiled by such campaigners in Croatia gives a good overview of the type of content used -- across borders -- to gather support for these retrograde agendas by instigating fear. It is telling that almost all the claims used to this end were taken from somewhere else -- usually from US-based right-wing media and groups.

It is a reflection of a well-documented fact that such campaigns are neither as “organic” nor “nation-oriented”, as they tend to present themselves. In fact they are manifestations of global political agendas, where money and know-how is systematically exchanged between groups in US and countries all over Europe and Latin America.

Readers comments show that this agenda has, at least partially, been unmasked:

“We have such NGOs in Croatia and they cooperate with Ordo Iuris from Poland and similar NGOs from Brazil. They are spreading like cancer

apparently..." (source)

"This is an essential read. If you think women in the West now have rights that can't be reversed, these are the people working to do just that."
(source)

Other discriminatory agendas also find a place in these narratives, as they frequently target racial, religious and ethnic minorities, particularly migrants and refugees in Europe. They also go hand in hand with anti-EU agendas of nationalist political parties, which see and present European Union as a threat to their value systems, sovereignty of their nations, their "religious rights" or even the "survival of white race".

Racism and Women's bodies national ter

Ironically enough, the same sources which are likely to propel disinformation about the Istanbul convention and everything it stands for are also likely to present themselves as outraged by violence against women -- but only in very specific cases.

As repeatedly confirmed in our analysis, violence against women and girls, and especially sexual violence, is downplayed if it is perpetrated by men of European and/or Christian descent. As long as sexual violence is discussed within the constraints of the same nation, it is treated as something that women exaggerate, lie about,

Rape: Wives as Territories

or even incite themselves. In such cases media offer interpretations rather than facts, resort to victim blaming, report from the perpetrator's perspective (often in a manner which encourages readers to empathize with him), or even accuse women who speak of sexual harassment of attacking men's "freedoms". Moreover, the very idea of improving the legal definition of sexual violence is met with hostility and ridicule from the right-wing press and pundits.

However, when rapists or abusers are foreigners, attitudes change drastically. As examples from across Europe (including Malta, Italy, Poland

and Switzerland) show, it's only when male perpetrators are migrants, Muslims, men of color, or all of the above, that right-wing press is likely to treat rape or abuse as crimes where women are victimized. In these cases, the victims' testimonies are not questioned and there are no attempts to discredit them, while the perpetrators are often described in racist terms, as "animals", "beasts" or "packs". Examples from Poland and Switzerland also reveal a special kind of self-censorship, where only violence perpetrated by non-European and/or Muslim men is reported, while violent acts committed by local men get no coverage at all.

The effect of this is twofold as it hits both the men from racial/ethnic minorities and women from all national backgrounds. On one hand, this kind of reporting incites racism and xenophobia; on another, it shifts the conversation into the wrong direction, creating the impression that violence is something women only experience at the hands of foreigners. Ultimately, what this discourse does is that it re-frames sexual assault as an infringement of women's bodies as men's or a nation's property by outside usurpers, rather than treating it as psychologically

harmful violation of women's bodily integrity.

Comments from our readers, once again, testify to similar tactics employed across the spectrum and recognized as a problem in various European countries -- both for the racism and xenophobia they incite, and for how they distort the much needed conversation on real issues related to violence against women.

"Not only in Italy. The same often happens in Germany"

"And Czech."

"I 'm wondering where I saw a similar thing besides Italy ... Hm?" (source)

"It's a real shame the factors mentioned in this story continue to not only incite (more) racism but also perpetuate the sexist/xenophobic attitudes to young women." (source)

The presence of an underlying agenda is outlined in the ratings these reports have received. The most frequent ratings like sexual objectification and violence against women all but disappear in these types of reports, but this is where we find almost all of the articles rated as antifeminist backlash and intersectional discrimination. In other words, this is where the ideology-driven sexism lies.

Ratings in articles appearing in political campaigns

Manipulation of facts	15
Fake news	11
Disinformation	6
Biased reporting	6
Spin	3
Clickbait	2
Pseudoscience	2
Conspiracy theory	2
Antifeminist backlash	12
Intersectional discrimination	9
Violence against women	6
Sexual objectification	5
Biological determinism	5
Censorship	2
Economic inequality	1

Femfacts media impact

By June 1st 2019, Femfacts' articles were read **184,168** times out of which our fact checks had 136,018 page views, while our analyses and interviews were read **48,150** times. During that time, our articles generated **27,569** social media interactions (likes, shares, comments and reposts), predominantly on Facebook.

On this social network, Femfacts content was shared with the **60,000** followers of the NewsMavens page, which has reached around **1,120,000** people in **45** countries -- all **44** European coun-

tries and one outside (United States of America) -- since it was created in late 2017.

NewsMavens' Facebook fans are almost exclusively women. Facebook Insights estimates that **98%** of our audience are women, mostly those between 25 and 44 years of age (**62%**). Men make up **2%** of fans, and account for about **6%** of all the engagements on the NewsMavens Facebook page.

What were our fans and readers most interested in?

When it comes specifically to content published in the Femfacts section, our social media "champions" have had a total of **11,517** interactions on NewsMavens' social media profiles. Most of them dealt with violence against women (4) and in terms of accuracy, biased reporting appears as the most represented rating (4 times).

The most shared Femfacts article dealt with biological determinism and antifeminist backlash displayed in the work and statements of a Bosnian self-help author, who portrayed women without children or with just one child as failures and destined to isolated life and undignified death.

Social media champions (top ten)

Title	Type	Social media interactions
Women without kids deserve no respect	Fact check	3100
Why are so many women dying in "sex games gone wrong"?	Analysis	1200
All rapists are awful, but some are more awful than others	Analysis	977
BBC calls abused woman "hammer killer wife" -- twice	Fact check	972
Menopause -- don't worry if your superpowers are fading, you're only becoming a human	Analysis	969
According to some of the press, the only thing scarier than climate change is a young woman talking about it	Fact check	953
Nobody here knows who Picasso is, but everyone knows Selma Selman	Interview	912
Sit down, dude -- who are the men who get angry at fictional women and the actresses who play them?	Analysis	826
Rape will never be love -- no matter the spin	Fact check	809
A man kills his children, yet his wife is blamed	Fact check	799

The same article has also attracted the highest number of readers on our website.

The readership champions are somewhat different from those which have gotten our audience most engaged on social networks. Their structure is also slightly different from that of the top-ten social media champions. In the ten most read articles, biased reporting (3 articles) and violence against women (3) remain highly represented, but ratings like clickbait (2) and biological determinism (2) also appear more than once among the ten most read Femfacts articles.

Readership champions (top ten)

Title	Type	Unique page views
Women without kids deserve no respect	Fact check	12800
Rape will never be love -- no matter the spin	Fact check	11600
How dare you get slapped at your daughter's wedding?	Fact check	7900
Menopause -- don't worry if your superpowers are fading, you're only becoming a human	Analysis	7200
According to some of the press, the only thing scarier than climate change is a young woman talking about it	Fact check	7100

All rapists are awful, but some are more awful than others	Analysis	6500
Sit down, dude -- who are the men who get angry at fictional women and the actresses who play them?	Analysis	6300
When a selfie is a crime	Fact check	6300
Scientists have discovered that men are smarter than women? Spoiler: no	Fact check	5700
Why are so many women dying in "sex games gone wrong"?	Analysis	5400w

When these two top lists are compared, we can see that our readers were equally engaged in sharing/commenting on fact checks and analyses; however, when it comes to page views, they were more likely to read fact checks than in-depth analyses, which are typically longer.

If we look into the fact checks alone, those which attracted the most attention from our readers have predominantly dealt with biased reporting (5). Clickbait, fake news and pseudoscience each appear 3 times in the top-ten most read fact checks. In terms of contextual ratings, violence against women (4) and biological determinism (4) are the most frequent ratings, followed by sexual objectification of women, which appears 3 times.

Readership champions (top ten fact checks)

Title	Unique page views
Women without kids deserve no respect	12800
Rape will never be love -- no matter the spin	11600
How dare you get slapped at your daughter's wedding?	7900
According to some of the press, the only thing scarier than climate change is a young woman talking about it	7100
When a selfie is a crime	6300
Scientists have discovered that men are smarter than women? Spoiler: no	5700
Attack of the mail DNA	5200
Are we still talking about this? Myths and nonsense about virginity worldwide	5000
It's not a sex game when a woman dies	4300
Can you learn to beat a woman? According to Men's Health Russia, yes you can.	4100

The media and fact-checking community also followed the work of NewsMavens in general and Femfacts in particular. The idea of Femfacts has received international attention from the very beginning, notably from the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), a unit of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, which gath-

ers fact-checking organizations and initiatives from all over the world. A report on the launch of Femfacts was published on Poynter's website in October 2018 and has since been republished and referenced by many other sources. Femfacts' authors and editors have been interviewed and our work referenced by other local and international media as well, including Finnish fact-checking website Fakta Baari, Nieman Lab (website of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard), the Hungarian fact-checking website Urban Legends, the Ukrainian fact-checking website Stop Fake, Radio Free Europe, Dutch Journalism Fund, Media Sapiens and others. Overall, Femfacts has received mentions in 17 media reports written mostly in English, but also in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Besides media organizations, fact-checkers and media literacy initiatives, Femfacts' work was also noticed by many feminist and civil society initiatives across Europe. Among those who wrote about Femfacts are the Spanish feminist magazine El Diario Feminista, the Ukrainian campaign against sexism in politics and the media POVAGA, the feminist blog Nadja, Ukrainian association

of women's organizations Жіночий консорціум України, Nonprofit Quarterly and others. Many formal and informal women's rights groups and initiatives have also shared our work on their social media pages, including Human Rights in Childbirth, WAVE Network, Sisters Uncut, Global Rights for Women, Lallab, Coordinamento Italiano della Lobby Europea delle Donne -- LEF-Italia, Abbatto i Muri, Nem tehetsz róla, tehetsz ellene and Επιτροπή Φύλου και Ισότητας του ΑΠΘ (The Committee on Gender and Equality in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki).

Femfacts has also been listed as one of anti-disinformation initiatives in Mozilla Foundation's "Fighting back against misinformation" resource list which compiles tools and reading/campaigning resources for activists working against misinformation. The list is also available in Spanish and German. Finally, the European Commission's campaign #DigitalRespect4Her, which aims to raise awareness about online violence against women, has listed Femfacts as one of the initiatives in the field of media literacy and fighting disinformation, making it available in Bulgarian, Czech, German, Danish, Greek, English, Spanish, Estonian, Finnish, French, Irish, Cro-

atian, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Maltese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Swedish language.

Final words and thanks

The range, scope and content of the material that was analyzed and fact-checked by Femfacts' team reveal many red flags when it comes to the portrayal of women and ideas about gender equality in media and public discourse. Some are remnants of "old ways" which take time to change and improve; others are related to emerging threats to the rights of women and minorities in Europe and beyond.

But this is all the more reason to end this report on a positive note. The response we got from our readers, media professionals and human rights activists shows that the above mentioned threats are well recognized and that feminist and minority communities are increasingly on the offensive, and mobilized to tackle them. In that light, Femfacts has accomplished its goal, but should not be seen as finished. Femfacts has produced a body of material which can be of great use for researchers, journalists, policy makers and activists. It is our hope that it will also serve as an inspiration for similar initiatives which can cross country borders and languages and contribute to creating a better and healthier public arena, where more constructive discussions about both women's rights and media practices can be fostered in today's hyperconnected world.

With that, we want to extend our gratitude to the European Commission for recognizing the impor-

tance of an intersectional approach to women's rights and fight against disinformation, embodied in Femfacts' work. We are thankful to Agora for being a home to NewsMavens -- and with providing NewsMavens --and Femfacts --with a home and to members of our advisory board who stood behind the project when it was in its infancy.

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throughout Europe.
women in regions
opportunities of
equal rights and
misogyny affect
take news and
misinformation,
report: How
#MeToo