

Q&A – WindEurope's dis- and misinformation report

The WindEurope and CASM Technology report on wind energy dis- and misinformation has sparked a lot of media attention. With this report, WindEurope aimed to provide data and analysis on the underreported and dangerous phenomenon of dis- and misinformation – and on how it affects wind energy development in Europe.

WindEurope promotes constructive, evidence-based dialogue on energy policy. In this light, it's important to be transparent on how the report's findings came about. Adding to the information provided in the accompanying methodology note (see downloads section [here](#)), the following Q&A document aims to answer frequently asked questions about the report's research methodology.

1. Methodology and cross-country comparability

What data is the social media investigation of the report based on? Is it representative of all anti-wind activity happening across Europe?

The social media investigation summarised in chapter 2 (Research findings: Europe's anti-wind ecosystem on social media) is based on a list of seed accounts generated and verified through an iterative four-step process.

First, we asked dozens of communications professionals across Europe to provide lists of social media accounts that have spread misleading or false narratives in the past, especially relating to wind energy and the broader energy transition. Most accounts included in the dataset were identified through this step. Second, this initial seed list was expanded by CASM Technology using programmatic discovery to identify accounts spreading similar narratives. Third, CASM carried out targeted keyword searches on X and TikTok to identify additional relevant content beyond the actors identified in step 1 and 2. Together, these three steps produced a seed list of 990 accounts. Social media posts were collected and filtered for relevance to wind energy using multi-lingual keyword lists. In the final step, a large language model (LLM) analysed whether these accounts had spread anti-wind energy content over the research period and whether this content was related to dis- and misinformation narratives around wind energy. We verified this automated categorisation by manually analysing sample posts from each narrative category. This resulted in a final dataset of 573 accounts on which the social media investigation is based.

We deliberately chose this approach over a purely keyword-based analysis, which would have captured all social media content, in order to ensure high-quality data and to avoid including accounts voicing fact-based criticism of wind energy. As a result, the figures presented in this investigation should be understood as minimum estimates. The results describe patterns of activity within the publicly visible anti-wind ecosystem. Crucially, we don't claim to capture every instance of wind-related discussion on social media in each country.

Regarding the representativeness of the dataset, the accompanying methodology note explains: "Direct cross-market comparisons are less reliable, while specific country and platform contexts offer better

comparability. While it is not possible to know the full scale of all social media activity online, based on the breadth of countries covered and the consistency of observed patterns, this network likely captures the core nodes of the publicly visible online anti-wind ecosystem across Europe.”

This means: cross-country differences should not be interpreted as proof that more wind dis- and misinformation exists in one country than in another, but rather as an indication of higher levels of observable activity within the analysed dataset. In general, countries that appear among the top producers of anti-wind content - both in terms of posting volume and engagement - can be considered European hotspots of wind energy dis- and misinformation activity.

Out of the 42,947 posts identified in the study, 13,611 posts (32%) were classified as non-disinformation oppositional content. What qualifies as content for this category? And how are disinformation, misinformation, exaggerated claims and general opposition distinguished in the dataset?

The distinction between dis- and misinformation-related anti-wind narratives and non-disinformation oppositional content adds yet another layer of data reliability, making sure that only those posts that feed into widely established false and misleading narratives are presented as such.

As outlined in the methodology note, the investigation relies on the European Council's definitions of dis- and misinformation. “Disinformation is false or misleading content that is disseminated with the intention of deceiving or seeking economic or political gains. It differs from misinformation, which is false or misleading information that is spread without harmful intentions.”

As further outlined in the accompanying methodology note, since attributing intent from social media data alone is not feasible, the analysis focuses on the false or misleading nature of content and its potential impact, rather than on demonstrated intent - an approach consistent with comparable studies of dis- and misinformation in mainstream media. In other words: we don't distinguish between dis- and misinformation – we speak of “dis- and misinformation-related narratives”: messages that consistently align with and reinforce common dis- and misinformation narratives about wind energy.

The social media posts included in the social media investigation data set were categorised through a human-in-the-loop, LLM-assisted classification process, with samples subsequently verified by human experts, to assess whether they feed into dis- and misinformation-related anti-wind narratives. Where a post advanced a false or misleading claim, it was mapped to the relevant narrative category. For example, a post making unfounded health-related claims about wind energy causing cancer would be classified under the “Health risks & safety hazards” dis- and misinformation-related narrative.

32% of the posts were classified as non-disinformation anti-wind oppositional content. This content expresses opposition to wind energy without necessarily advancing one of the identified dis- and misinformation-related categories. This includes, for example, mobilisation around anti-wind protests or specific projects, procedural or legal contestation, and other forms of criticism against wind energy that do not necessarily contain dis- and misinformation-related narratives. However, inclusion in this category does not imply that all such posts are fact-based or legitimate forms of criticism, as posts may still reinforce misleading narratives or advocate problematic forms of protest - especially given that the data set is based on actors who have been repeatedly sharing wrong or misleading narratives.

2. WindEurope Member input

What was the role of WindEurope members in contributing to the report?

WindEurope members contributed by identifying hundreds of social media accounts that formed part of the initial dataset for the investigation presented in Chapter 2 (Research findings: Europe's anti-wind ecosystem on social media). Country experts supported the process by providing market- and language-specific keywords related to wind energy, which helped identify additional accounts.

The report itself and the underlying analysis were conducted by WindEurope. CASM Technology supported the investigation as well as the presentation of its findings in Chapter 2 and the accompanying methodology note.

3. Russian interference and references to NATO

Does the social media investigation find that activity directed against Europe's wind energy industry was directed by Russia or other foreign powers?

No, the investigation presented in Chapter 2 (Research findings: Europe's anti-wind ecosystem on social media) does not link the identified social media ecosystem to Russia or other foreign powers. The qualitative part of the report – including Chapter 3 (Economic damage of wind dis- and misinformation) - does mention that Russia has been linked to dis- and misinformation operations around Europe's energy transition.

These are not WindEurope claims. The report cites respected external sources, including NATO and Poland's military counterintelligence service, which describe how the Kremlin is targeting green energy policies at the European level and contributing to the amplification of harmful wind-related narratives across Europe. Next to this, the report cites additional external sources, connecting individual accounts/actors with pro-Russian information environments.

This does not imply that every account identified in the report is linked to or sponsored by the Kremlin.

4. Disinformation vs. legitimate energy policy debate

Does the report risk conflating legitimate conflicts and disagreement within energy policy with disinformation? How does WindEurope ensure that this distinction is maintained?

WindEurope promotes constructive, evidence-based dialogue on energy policy. We provide data, analysis and source material to journalists, policymakers and local decision-makers, seeking to understand and communicate both the benefits and the challenges of wind energy. The report reflects this approach: defending the space for legitimate critique while clearly documenting the risks posed by systematic dis- and misinformation.

Europe's public discourse is faced with unprecedented challenges. Social media technologies allow malign actors to reach mass audiences with just a few clicks - without sufficient oversight as to whether the content is fact-based or harmful. At the same time, systemic rivals, adversaries and other actors with potentially malign interests can exploit these technologies for their own political or economic gains. As demonstrated by this report and a growing body of academic and expert research, this context represents a significant threat to Europe's security and competitiveness, with tangible impacts on public trust, policy implementation and investment decisions.

Against this backdrop, the report builds on methodological safeguards to avoid conflating legitimate critique or disagreement with disinformation. The report explicitly supports a fact-based and constructive energy debate, calling on policymakers to hold social media platforms accountable for the amplification of misleading content, and advocating for stronger media and energy literacy, including in schools. We strongly support an open, evidence-based discussion about Europe's energy future.

Criticism of wind energy projects is not only legitimate but essential. The exchange of different, fact-based viewpoints can help improve project design and implementation. It can lead to better siting decisions, more effective environmental compensation measures, and stronger local participation and benefit-sharing models. Disagreement and debate are a normal and healthy part of energy policy-making and should be safeguarded.

For this reason, the report focuses narrowly on actors and narratives that systematically misrepresent facts, exaggerate risks, or recycle disproven claims, thereby undermining an informed democratic debate. As explained in the first question of this Q&A, multiple safeguards were built into the social media investigation to precisely avoid conflating organised misinformation activity with genuine concerns or policy disagreements.