

Debunking of Fake Narratives: A step by step approach

The Debunking Handbook 2020¹ advises that debunking is more likely to be successful if you apply the following 4 components in your response: Fact → Warn About Myth → Explain Fallacy → Repeat Fact.

The following example teaches you how to debunk a fake narrative.

References:

The Debunking Handbook 2020
<https://skepticalscience.com/docs/DebunkingHandbook2020.pdf>



FACT

STUDIES SHOW THAT WOMEN ARE STILL NOT EQUAL TO MEN IN THE EU.

Latest Eurostat data shows that women remain economically disadvantaged, earning 13% on average less per hour than men. Women are also less represented in decision making, holding 33% of seats in national parliaments on average in the EU. In addition, 5 in every 10 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and at least 2 women are killed every day in the EU by an intimate partner or family member.

- Lead with a clear, concise, specific fact.
- Do not simply say "this is not true". State the facts and include the sources.



MYTH



A common myth is that women in the EU have the same rights as men, therefore efforts to achieve gender equality are unnecessary and a waste of resources.

- Warn that a myth is coming.
- Mention the disinformation only once, directly prior to the correction, as repetition makes information appear true.



FALLACY

This argument commits the hasty generalisation fallacy, falsely assuming that because women in the EU have equal rights with men on paper, then discrimination has been eradicated. This logic is the same as claiming that because various laws have been adopted, then crime no longer exists.

- Point out the logical or argumentative fallacies underlying the disinformation.
- It should be impossible to overlook the corrective element, even when skimming.
- Detailed corrections protect, against a return to previous, wrong assumptions.



FACT



Just as proof of committed illegal acts constantly emerges, substantial evidence continues to reveal that women are not treated equally in various spheres of life, regardless of their legal rights. **Gender equality has not yet been achieved in the EU.**

- Finish by restating the fact again, so the fact is the last thing people process. Provide an alternative causal explanation.
- Be prepared to debunk repeatedly.

