

Guideline for FactCheck analysts

Guideline consists of the following chapters:

1. Structure of the material (article);
2. Style of the material (article);
3. Process/terms of the work on the article;
4. Main Obligation for FactCheck team members
5. Additional responsibilities for FactCheck team members;
6. Clarifications: control questions and procedures.

Structure of the material (article) (1)

Material (article) consists of six parts:

- **Title/subtitle** – the title of the article should include the citation of statement. If the citation is not short and clear, periphrasis is possible;
- **Resume**: Summarizing main findings of the article, including claim that was fact-checked, information used for fact-checking and the conclusion.
- **Introduction** – includes description of circumstances connected with the statement (who, what, when, where);
- **Background** – includes additional information on what circumstances preceded the given statement, what was the historical or other type of context (economic, political, social), important information connected with the fact-checked statement (statements broadcasted in media, previously confirmed and/or verified facts);
- **Main body, fact-checking** – this is consolidated information collected from various sources (public information, official web-pages, media, interviews received from primary sources etc.), which is analyzed and laconic;
- **Conclusion** – includes analysis concerning the veracity of the fact-checked statement, including gradation (true, mostly true, half true, mostly false, false, lie).

Style of the material (article) (2)

- Direct citation of the verified fact;
- The title consists of 150 symbols max;
- The title is highlighted on the web-page;
- Font size of the title is 12, whilst for the article itself it is 11, font type – Sylfaen;
- The title and conclusion (the word itself, at the end of the article) are bolded in the material (article);

- The material necessarily includes video (optimal length – 2-3 minutes) or a link to the written source of the statement;
- The title includes identity of the author of the statement. Regalia are not included;
- Name of the organization is written in full or with defined abbreviation;
- Usage of short sentences, wherever possible, is highly encouraged;
- Use Arabic numbers for: age, address, names of TV channels, resolutions of court, parliament or government, electoral numbers of politicians or parties, telephone numbers etc.
- Third part of the material (analysis) is likely to start with: “FactCheck took interest in the accuracy of the fact or facts given in the statement” or “FactCheck decided to verify the information given in the statement.” However, different formulations are allowed/considered;
- The article should include the status of the author of the statement at least once (i.e. MP, Head of the Committee, party allegiance etc.). Indicating regalia every time we mention the person is not necessary;
- If the article debunks user-generated misinformation from account that is not a repeat offender and there is a risk of online harassment after their claims have been debunked, avoid exposing and identifying such social media users by names or showing their profile. Instead use the following phrase: “Disinformation is spread in social media, claiming that...”. Indicating the source as a hyperlink is a MUST.
- Names of parties and organizations are written in full: Coalition – Georgian Dream, United National Movement, Parliament of Georgia, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia etc.
- Name and surname of the person is written in full (i.e. Irakli Gharibashvili, not I.Gharibashvili);
- In the conclusion, we repeat the verified statement, write short analytical summary concerning the author of the statement and only after this, write the gradation;
- Barbarisms, jargons and calques (except in direct citation). Text should have academic style, with respective punctuation marks and paragraphs;
- Indication or definition of the author of the article is written in the respective form – [...]
- All tables, statistics, term definitions given in the article should be easily searchable (i.e. short definition or hyperlink);
- Ideally, all links used in the article shall be archived.
- The end of each piece of material (article) should include name and surname of the author, category of the article and English links for translators;
- Norms of ethics are protected during the editing process;
- Corrections, including grammatical, can be made whilst citing the author of the statement;
- Use comma or space for separating thousands in numbers and use point whilst writing decimals (i.e. Write eighty thousand point seven this way – 80 000.7 or 80,000.7 / 4.5%);

- Avoid using long numbers. When writing something in millions, round it, no need to state the whole number. For example, instead of saying GEL 1 000 000.6 we write GEL 1 000 001. Instead of GEL 567.3 – GEL 567, if the number of millions is not close to one, i.e. do not round down GEL 1.2 million to GEL 1 million;
- Try presenting numbers as indicated by the author of the statement. For example, if he/she speaks in millions, do not write 62 000 thousand, write directly 62 million.

Process/terms of the work on the article (3)

1. Obligatory term for finishing the article is no more than two days counting from the second day of receiving the topic (if verifying the fact is possible via online-resources.);
2. If finishing the article requires recording an interview with the third-party, the maximum finishing time is no more than five days (note: while working on the article, interviews and informational meetings with experts are necessary nearly in each case);
3. If finishing the article requires retrieving public information, the author sends respective letter in the shortest time possible after receiving the article (two days). The author of the article periodically contacts the public institution where he/she submitted the letter and specifies the expected waiting time for the requested information. After receiving the public information, the finishing time of the article is two days;
4. After receiving the fact to verify, the author of the article should indicate on a daily basis, on which stage is the article (i.e. “today I analyzed these statistical data”, “looked into this study”, “expecting an answer from a public institution”, “waiting for an interview with an expert”, “attended this meeting”, “the article is finished, is located in the respective folder” etc.);
5. Fact-checker should be careful when it comes to mentioning or identifying minors and therefore, should make efforts to protect their privacy.
6. When dealing with topics related to natural disasters, wars, or any subject involving minors or victims, fact-checkers should implement a "do no harm" policy. This involves obscuring images or any identifiable information that could potentially harm the subjects involved.

Main Obligation for FactCheck team members (4)

1. FactCheck team members are obliged to leave their political preferences behind and maintain absolute nonpartisanship during fact-checking.
2. FactCheck Team members are obliged to honestly report if they have conflict of interest on a topic they were assigned to prepare an article.

Additional responsibilities for FactCheck team members (5)

1. FactCheck team members are obliged to be in the office at 10:30 in business days;

2. Authors, based on their competence, are required to attend press-conferences in the respective institutions (Prime Minister, President, ministers, other politicians) and NGOs and ask preliminarily prepared questions;
3. Authors are required to follow familiar issues after finishing the work on article. In addition, they have to preliminarily retrieve public information about the topics that are likely to become actual.

Clarifications: control questions and procedures (6)

1. The author places the article in the respective folder. After that, the editor reads the article, comments it and returns it to the author. In the end, the editor places the edited version in the folder named "Ready"
2. The edited articles are uploaded to the webpage by web-administrator, no later than in a day;
3. Retrieving public information from organizations is done via official letters which are checked by the managing editor. The letters are signed by the responsible person of the organization;
4. In the process of writing the article, the author waits for the letter from a public institution for one month max (during this period, phone calls are made to the public institution concerning the letter). Afterwards, the article is finished without the letter, indicating that the response to the letter has not been received.