

Appendix A: Examples of fact-checked statements from Italian radical right-wing parties, leaders, national, supranational, and sub-national representatives during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Category	Statement	Explanation	Reference
People-centrism (yes)	“I believe that wanting to upset Christmas traditions is the umpteenth act by this government against the identity and history of the Italian People.” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini from 3/12/2020)	The statement mentions the people (capitalised) as the keepers of national identity, as opposed to the government acting against them. in this case, the government is depicted as the ‘elite’.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 8/12/2020, https://smask.online/dio-e-patria/quali-tradizioni-non-esiste-attualmente-alcuna-messa-di-mezzanotte/
Anti-elitism (yes)			
Conspiracy message (yes)	“Controlled, spied on, fined: welcome to Big Brother’s Italy.” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini, 22/06/2020)	The statement compares containment measures to an Orwellian scheme to control the population.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 13/07/2020, https://smask.online/abbasso-le-tasse-viva-le-spese/nuovo-limite-nelluso-del-contante-il-cosiddetto-capitano-si-indigna/
Tone of the statement: positive	“This is the good governance of the League, congratulations to the mayor Anna Cisint!” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini, 06/08/2020)	The statement contains praise and expresses favorable judgement.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 15/08/2020, https://smask.online/ossessione-immigrati/gli-stranieri-inquilini-nelle-case-popolari-sono-una-minoranza-in-italia-non-solo-a-monfalcone/
Tone of the statement: neutral	“[For Covid-19] the incubation period is no longer fifteen but twenty-four days.” (Tweet by Guido Crosetto, 11/02/2020)	The statement provides scientifically inaccurate information, but it does not express any judgement.	Fact-checking: <i>Pagella Politica</i> , 13/02/2020, https://pagellapolitica.it/dichiarazioni/8525/il-nuovo-coronavirus-ha-un-periodo-di-incubazione-fino-a-24-giorni

Tone of the statement: negative	“Following the prison riots (...) Minister Bonafede has ‘reacted harshly’ (...) by granting (...) a reward to those who have seriously damaged prisons and those who have attacked prison police officers. Was that enough? No! With Bonafede the worst never ceases (...)” (Press release by Andrea Delmastro Delle Vedove, 11/06/2020)	The statement contains criticism and expresses an adverse judgement.	Fact-checking: <i>Pagella Politica</i> , 15/06/2020, https://pagellapolitica.it/dichiarazioni/8647/no-bonafede-non-ha-premiato-i-detenu-ti-rivoltosi-e-punito-gli-agenti
Narrative: Covid-19	“[For Covid-19] the incubation period is no longer fifteen but twenty-four days.” (Tweet by Guido Crosetto, 11/02/2020)	The statement refers to SARS-Cov-2.	Fact-checking: <i>Pagella Politica</i> , 13/02/2020, https://pagellapolitica.it/dichiarazioni/8525/il-nuovo-coronavirus-ha-un-periodo-di-incubazione-fino-a-24-giorni
Narrative: economy	“[The Recovery Fund] is a loan, not a grant.” (Radio interview by Matteo Salvini, 20/05/2020)	The statement refers to an economic mechanism.	Fact-checking: <i>Pagella Politica</i> , 20/05/2020, https://pagellapolitica.it/dichiarazioni/8622/no-il-recovery-fund-proposto-da-francia-e-germania-non-e-un-prestito-ma-neppure-soldi-a-fondo-perduto
Narrative: migration	“While Italians are forced at home, right now in Lampedusa (...) another 300 [migrants] have landed.” (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 14/11/2020)	The statement refers to migrants.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 18/11/2020, https://smask.online/ossessione-immigrati/speculare-sui-soccorsi-in-mare-e-come-essere-complici-delle-morti/
Narrative: nationalism	“France wants to steal Mont Blanc from us: let’s stop it!” (Facebook post by Page “Noi con Salvini”, 20/10/2020)	The statement refers to a diplomatic controversy with France and affirms the importance of national borders.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 29/10/2020, https://smask.online/nemici-e-complotti/monte-bianco-la-cosiddetta-bastia-non-si-lascia-sfuggire-il-tweet/

Narrative: Attacks and mismanagement	“Following the prison riots (...) Minister Bonafede has ‘reacted harshly’ (...) by granting (...) a reward to those who have seriously damaged prisons and those who have attacked prison police officers. Was that enough? No! With Bonafede the worst never ceases (...)” (Press release by Andrea Delmastro Delle Vedove, 11/06/2020)	The statement attacks the former Minister of Justice for allegedly mismanaging the prison riots that occurred in March 2020.	Fact-checking: <i>Pagella Politica</i> , 15/06/2020, https://pagellapolitica.it/dichiarazioni/8647/no-bonafede-non-ha-premiato-i-detentori-rivoltosi-e-punito-gli-agenti
Narrative: endorsements	“Congratulations to Giorgia Meloni elected President of the European Conservatives and Reformists. The first woman to lead a European party.” (Facebook post by Marcello Gemmato, 29/09/2020)	The statement endorses the leader of Brothers of Italy.	Fact-checking: <i>Pagella Politica</i> , 29/09/2020, https://pagellapolitica.it/dichiarazioni/8719/no-meloni-non-e-la-prima-donna-alla-guida-di-un-partito-europeo
Target: government	“I believe that wanting to upset Christmas traditions is the umpteenth act of this government against the identity and history of the Italian People.” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini from 3/12/2020)	The statement targets the government as a whole.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 8/12/2020, https://smask.online/dio-e-patria-quali-tradizioni-non-esiste-attualmente-alcuna-messa-di-mezzanotte/
Target: government personalities	“While the Mayors and local administrators are shoveling mud and looking for missing persons, the Environment Minister justifies his delays by shooting random figures and blaming others.” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini, 05/10/2020)	The statement targets a government’s minister.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 12/10/2020, https://www.nextquotidiano.it/giorgia-meloni-contagi-covid-italiani-25-immigrati-fake-news/
Target: state institutions and administrations	“The President of INPS doubled his salary while many Italians are still waiting for unemployment benefits.” (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 26/09/2020)	The statement targets the President of the Italian public retirement system (INPS).	Fact-checking: <i>Next Quotidiano</i> , 27/09/2020, https://www.nextquotidiano.it/salvini-si-lamenta-dellaumento-di-tridico-che-e-stato-deciso-quando-al-governo-cera-lui/

Target: parties and partisan personalities	“The Democratic Party, Renzi’s supporters, and the Five Star Movement have just voted against (...) the League’s amendment to provide doctors, nurses, and health personnel with an economic reward.” (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 16/06/2020)	The statement targets political parties and party leaders.	Fact-checking: <i>Next Quotidiano</i> , 17/06/2020, https://www.nextquotidiano.it/salvini-bonus-sanitari-bocciato-dal-governo/
Target: EU and EU countries	“I see that a French minister, Le Maire, says that Italy must use the ESM. If we have to use it and then have debts with the French, we gladly do without it. I believe that everyone should take care of their own country.” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini, 26/11/2020)	The statement targets another EU country.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 02/12/2020, https://smask.online/nemici-e-complotti/le-maire-si-esprime-in-un-clima-di-confronto-ma-la-cosiddetta-bestia-attacca-anche-se-il-mes-non-e-un-debito-con-i-francesi/
Target: China	“China should pay damages to the families and businesses affected by Covid-19.” (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 14/11/2020)	The statements target China, deeming it responsible for the spread of the virus.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 20/11/2020, https://smask.online/nemici-e-complotti/per-altre-malattie-mortali-a-chi-dovremmo-chiedere-i-danni-le-assurde-richieste-del-partito-del-signor-s/
Target: media	“In reality, numbers [of Covid-19 contagions] are luckily better and different from the terrorism, fear, and lies fed by television, radio, and newspapers. Let the truth be known!” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini, 23/08/2020)	The statement targets traditional media for allegedly overstating the danger of the pandemic.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 2/09/2020, https://smask.online/famiglia-e-ordine/anche-se-i-dati-migliorano-in-alcune-regioni-non-significa-che-il-coronavirus-sia-scomparso/
Target: big corporations	“The ‘Relaunch Decree’ (...) contains money from the Bill Gates Foundation.” (Tweet by Claudio Borghi, 9/06/2020)	The statement suggests that philanthropist and Big Tech tycoon Bill Gates is involved in Italy’s pandemic recovery measures.	Fact-checking: <i>Butac</i> , 10/06/2020, https://www.butac.it/la-corretta-informazione-e-la-politica/

Typology: fabricated content	“Italy is the only country in a state of emergency: why us, and not Spain, France, and Germany?” (Tweet by Matteo Salvini, 18/08/2020)	The statement is entirely false as when it was made (August 2020), the other countries listed had containment measures put in place.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 20/08/2020, https://smask.online/famiglia-e-ordine/lunico-paese-in-stato-di-emergenza-e-litalia-il-signor-s-rilancia-sgarbi-cosa-ci-dicono-i-dati/
Typology: misleading content	“While Italians are forced at home, right now in Lampedusa (...) another 300 [migrants] have landed.” (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 14/11/2020)	The statement deliberately compares two unrelated issues by putting them on the same level: state-defined public health security measures and international obligations to saving people at sea.	Fact-checking: <i>Smask</i> , 18/11/2020, https://smask.online/ossessione-immigrati/speculare-sui-soccorsi-in-mare-e-come-essere-complici-delle-morti/
Typology: false context	“The President of INPS doubled his salary while many Italians are still waiting for unemployment benefits.” (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 26/09/2020)	The statement is true <i>per se</i> . However, Salvini omits crucial contextual information that the decision was approved when he was in government.	Fact-checking: <i>Next Quotidiano</i> , 27/09/2020, https://www.nextquotidiano.it/salvini-si-lamenta-dellaumento-di-tridico-che-e-stato-deciso-quando-al-governo-cera-lui/
Typology: false connection	A photo of students playing with wheeled chairs was used to attack the Minister of Education for investing in single-seat school chairs and desks. (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 14/09/2020)	The photo was shot in 2017, thus making it unrelated to the current situation. Still, it was presented as if it was actual.	Fact-checking: <i>Facta</i> , 15/09/2020, https://facta.news/notizia-vecchia/2020/09/15/il-video-pubblicato-da-salvini-che-mostra-degli-studenti-mentre-giocano-allautoscontro-con-i-banchi-a-rotelle-e-del-2017-2/
Typology: manipulated content	Video of migrants landing in Sicily (Facebook post by Matteo Salvini, 29/07/2020)	The video has been manipulated to include tribal-sounding music in the background.	Fact-checking: <i>Bufale.net</i> , 29/07/2020, https://www.giornalettismo.com/video-bufala-sul-coronavirus/