

Toxic Tips: Misogynistic Narratives on TikTok in Hungary

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Overview

TikTok is an integral part of daily life for many young people, offering a broad range of content including life advice. However, ISD has identified misogynistic rhetoric in Hungarian-language love and relationship advice, a phenomenon previously observed in other languages. Content creators were found to normalise behaviours such as stalking and violence in relationships. They also often employed misogynistic tactics including slut-shaming, demonising women and perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes. Such content risks endangering the physical safety and mental health of women exposed to it. Harmful content can be hard to identify as some anti-feminist creators use humour or personal stories to present misogynistic advice. Our analysis is among the first to examine online gender-based violence (OGBV) in Hungarian, highlighting the critical need to study and address hate and gender-based discrimination in less widely spoken languages.

This briefing is part of a series examining online gender-based violence (OGBV) on TikTok in English, German, French and Hungarian. It is part of the project Monitoring Online Gender-Based Violence Around the European Parliament Election 2024, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Key Findings

- ISD carried out the first study on misogynistic rhetorics and tactics of selected anti-feminist actors on TikTok in Hungarian. It found that harmful relationship advice and violent relationship narratives are widespread on TikTok. Videos and images promote behaviours such as stalking ex-partners, normalising violence in relationships as a legitimate response to disagreement or disappointment, and perpetuating gendered stereotypes, slut-shaming, and the demonisation of female partners.
 - ISD analysts identified 46 relevant TikTok accounts sharing toxic relationship advice, predominantly made by male content creators. They appear to reach a significant portion of the estimated 3.1m Hungarian TikTok users, with some accounts receiving more than 10m likes across their videos.
 - ISD found that Hungarian TikTok accounts which promote misogynistic content strategically blend self-improvement content with toxic narratives, a finding that resonates with research on other countries and in other languages. These accounts monetise using subscriptions, business ventures and cross-platform content strategies.
 - Content moderation allocation neglects less widely spoken languages, such as Hungarian. This leads to harmful content remaining unchecked within these communities.
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Definitions

Anti-feminism

Anti-feminism describes the countermovement opposing emancipatory or feminist ideals, that uses misogynist strategies and tactics. Anti-feminists oppose gender equality efforts and the democratic negotiation of gender relations.

Gender

Gender refers to a “system of symbolic meaning that creates social hierarchies based on perceived associations with masculine and feminine characteristics.” A person’s gender identity refers to “an individual’s internal, innate sense of their own gender.”

Gender-based violence (GBV)

This term refers to “violence directed against a person because of that person’s gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.” Women and the LGBTQ+ community, including transgender and gender-diverse persons, experience disproportionate rates of GBV.

Misogyny

Misogyny is considered as a “system that operates within a patriarchal social order to police and enforce women’s subordination and to uphold male dominance.” It affects not just cisgender heterosexual women but also transgender, non-binary, genderqueer people, and men. Misogynistic acts are often motivated by underlying sexist ideologies and can neither be defined as purely structural nor as purely individual actions.

Online gender-based violence (OGBV)

OGBV is defined here as a subset of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). This refers to any “act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms.” For a more detailed review and discussions of terms and definitions please refer to ISD’s report “Misogynistic Pathways to Radicalisation.”

Slut-shaming

Slut-shaming involves criticising, humiliating or stigmatising someone for their perceived sexual behaviour, stigmatising someone for their perceived sexual behaviour assumed sexual availability or appearance. It has been reported to cause anxiety, depression and PTSD among victims.

Toxic speech

Toxic speech refers to “discursive practices [that] can inflict harm.” This toxicity is considered to be a threat to people’s well-being, similar to a poisonous substance. Toxic speech has a broader scope than hate speech, which directly harms through dehumanising, demonising, harassing or discriminatory language. This reflects that harm can arise through expressions of power, dominance, exclusion or other more subtle forms of manipulation.

Very Large Online Platform (VLOP) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs)

Online platforms and search engines used by an average of 45 million monthly users or higher (equal to 10 percent of the population in the EU). As VLOPs and VLOSEs pose particular risks regarding the dissemination of illegal content and societal harms, they are subject to the most stringent requirements under the European Union’s Digital Services Act (DSA). A complete and updated list of designated VLOPs and VLOSEs can be found here.

Introduction

TikTok's influence as an important news source is growing among young users worldwide. Initially known for humorous content and dance videos, TikTok has evolved into a go-to search platform for Gen Z: 58 percent of users said that they discovered new brands and products through the app. Content producers on the platform offer advice on all aspects of life including relationships; this content comes from both qualified therapists, psychiatrists and counsellors, and uncredentialed creators. Among the latter are pick-up artists (PUAs), dating coaches and other actors within the so-called 'Manosphere' – an umbrella term for a misogynist information ecosystem whose content has triggered strong concerns among human rights advocates and users.

TikTok has stated that it is working to address issues including sex trafficking, rape culture and other criminal activities. However, subtler forms of harmful content continue to foster an environment for misogynist radicalisation. Such online content can express itself in radicalisation and offline violence. Police have reported that misogynist influencer Andrew Tate has contributed to the radicalisation of men and boys, leading to harmful actions online and offline.

To date, research on online misogyny and antifeminism has mainly been conducted in English, focusing on English-speaking users and content. A better understanding of the specific narratives, strategies, user types and platforms involved in other languages and cultural contexts is necessary to develop effective countermeasures against misogynistic violence.

This study focused on toxic and violent relationship advice on TikTok in Hungarian. Hungary has not ratified the Istanbul Convention (a Council of Europe Convention aiming at preventing violence against women and domestic violence). LGBTQIA+ rights are also strictly limited and academic freedom has been under pressure from the far-right government since 2010. Most notably, the government prohibited Gender Studies Master and PhD programs at universities in 2018, contributing to an environment where the study and criticism of gender-related issues is restricted.

Methodology

This briefing is based on a qualitative analysis using deductive coding. Analysts created a list of Hungarian keywords on the topics of dating, flirting, relationships, jealousy, break-up and other partnership-related content. They then collected data manually based on content suggested by the TikTok algorithm. Over the course of approximately 15 hours of searching for relationship-related content in October 2024, ISD researchers compiled 70 videos and images from 46 accounts. Researchers found that all accounts had published content featuring misogynistic rhetoric and anti-feminist ideologies over the last three years (October 2021 – October 2024). Based on this evidence, all selected accounts were considered anti-feminist.

Findings

A total of 70 Hungarian language videos and images were collected, revealing 4 main themes (14 videos contained multiple themes):

Theme	Number of videos and images identified
Reinforcing gender stereotypes, demonising women and slut-shaming	36
Control, manipulation (vengeance, jealousy, possessiveness)	21
Trivialising domestic violence, implying the use of physical or psychological violence	19
Stalking	8

Table 1: Number of topics identified in 70 relationship-advice-related videos on TikTok.

Reinforcing gender stereotypes, demonising women and slut-shaming

The first major theme identified by analysts were narratives that victim-blame women for the negative things men might experience or perpetrate – for example, blaming a female partner for a man’s own unfaithfulness (see figure 1).

Harmful gender stereotypes, the demonisation of women and slut-shaming were often found alongside each other in narratives which promoted desired gendered behavioural traits.

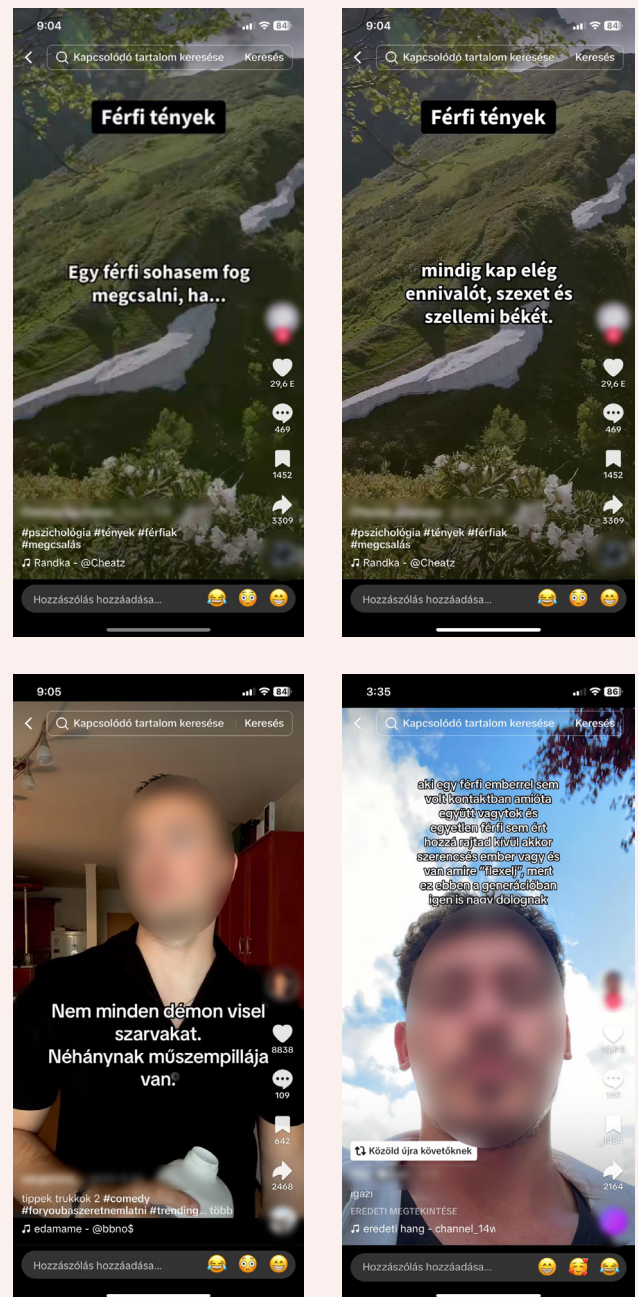
Promotion of controlling and manipulative behaviours

A total of 21 videos and images featured controlling behaviours and emotional manipulation, rooted in themes of vengeance, jealousy and possessiveness. These narratives portray abusive dominance as justified and desirable in a relationship (see figure 2).

Content creators normalise rigid and gendered ‘traditional’ behavioural expectations, implicitly dictating specific rules for female partners. Examples include:

- Isolating one’s partner,
- Tracking their activities and movement,
- Limiting their interactions with other men,

Figure 1: Screenshots of TikTok Videos that blame, shame and demonise women. The texts translate to: “Men facts: No man will ever cheat, if he gets enough food, sex and peace of mind.” (top row in two parts); “Not every demon wears wings, some wear eyelashes.” (bottom left); “[if you have a girlfriend] who wasn’t in contact with any men since you are together and no other men ever touched her, then you are a lucky man and you can ‘flex’ on this, because in this generation this is a big thing” (bottom right).



- Policing their appearance,
- Demanding constant availability,
- Condemning behaviours the creators perceive as harmful, such as smoking, drinking, or attending parties.

These tactics observed for this briefing are framed as an expression of love and protection while the female partner's disobedience is portrayed as proof of disrespect and disloyalty. This content reinforces harmful power dynamics between genders, undermining women's autonomy and self-determination.

Analysts observed that these content creators also often use a discursive strategy described by academics as 'evidence-based misogyny' to make content appear grounded in objective scientific, theoretical or philosophical truths, rather than personal beliefs or social opinions. Toxic masculinity influencers frequently justify misogynistic ideas by referencing selective studies, taking research out of context or oversimplifying research results. In some cases, these influencers incorporate pseudo-scientific language to support their views on gender dynamics. One content creator selected for this study, who frequently shares toxic relationship advice reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes, refers to himself as an expert on the female psyche. While this title implies professional expertise, ISD could not verify any formal qualifications beyond his attendance at a mediation course.

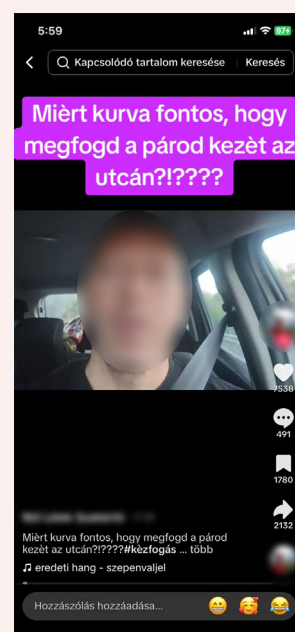
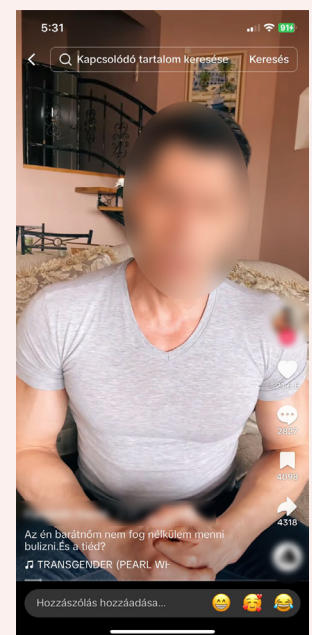
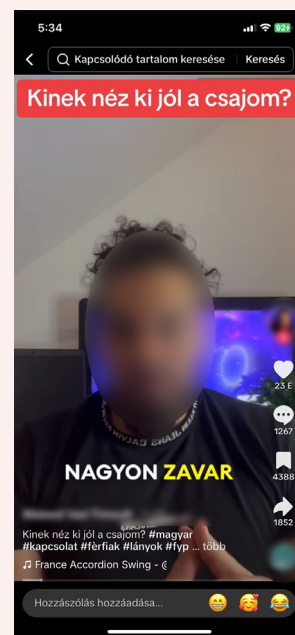
Trivialising Violence

The third most common narrative, found across 19 videos, referenced violence directly or indirectly. These videos often incorporated themes of domestic, physical, sexual and psychological abuse (see figure 3). Violence or the potential for aggression was repeatedly portrayed as a legitimate, acceptable or even normal reaction to perceived negative behaviours in relationships such as rejection or jealousy, downplaying the importance of consent and boundaries.

These videos depict or mention violence in a humorous or seemingly satirical way, portraying harmful behaviours as 'normal' relationship dynamics. This has the potential to desensitise audiences to violence in romantic contexts.

Content creators sometimes used the term 'POV' – short for 'point of view.' The use of POV, which invites viewers to engage with the scene and relate to the content through a presumed shared experience, is not inherently

Figure 2: Screenshots of TikTok Videos that promote controlling behaviours towards female partners. The videos translate to: "[...] Many men do not dare to say this, but I tell you this: It really bothers us men when she goes out alone or with her girlfriends, and she puts a lot of effort into preparing herself, with one litre of perfume, sexy clothing, a bunch of make-up, etc. But when she's with us, she doesn't even put on sexy clothes once in a while. [...] I don't mean you need to drop her, but you should question her on this behaviour. [...]" (top row, left); "[...] when they want to go partying without me, they'll become single [...]" (top row, right), and "Why is it fucking important to hold your partner's hand when walking on the street!?????" (bottom left).



harmful. However, the POV framing implies that the scene is a normal or common experience. In this context, it further reinforces and normalises the idea that violence is an acceptable or even typical response.

Promoting Stalking Behaviour Post-Breakup

The fourth theme, which was found across eight videos, involved messages directed at a (potentially hypothetical) ex-partner who has supposedly blocked them (see figure 4). The creators then imply that they know their ex-partner's location and that they might attempt to find them.

Some videos featuring stalking include hashtags such as #comedy, #joke, or #jk (for 'just kidding'), suggesting that the content is intended to be ironic, sarcastic or satirical (as seen in the video description of the bottom-left video in figure 4). Analysts examined the comment section to this video and found that the reactions were mixed. While many viewers condemned the narrative, others found it humorous, suggesting approval. In at least two instances, stalking victims shared their own experiences in the comments under the video that encourages applying to an ex-partner's workplace. One commented: "I changed my shift because of this [experience]... One week after breaking up he stood next to me at work." The other said, "He wanted to [appear and work] here [at my workplace] too, but I told my boss ... and luckily he told him he cannot employ him."

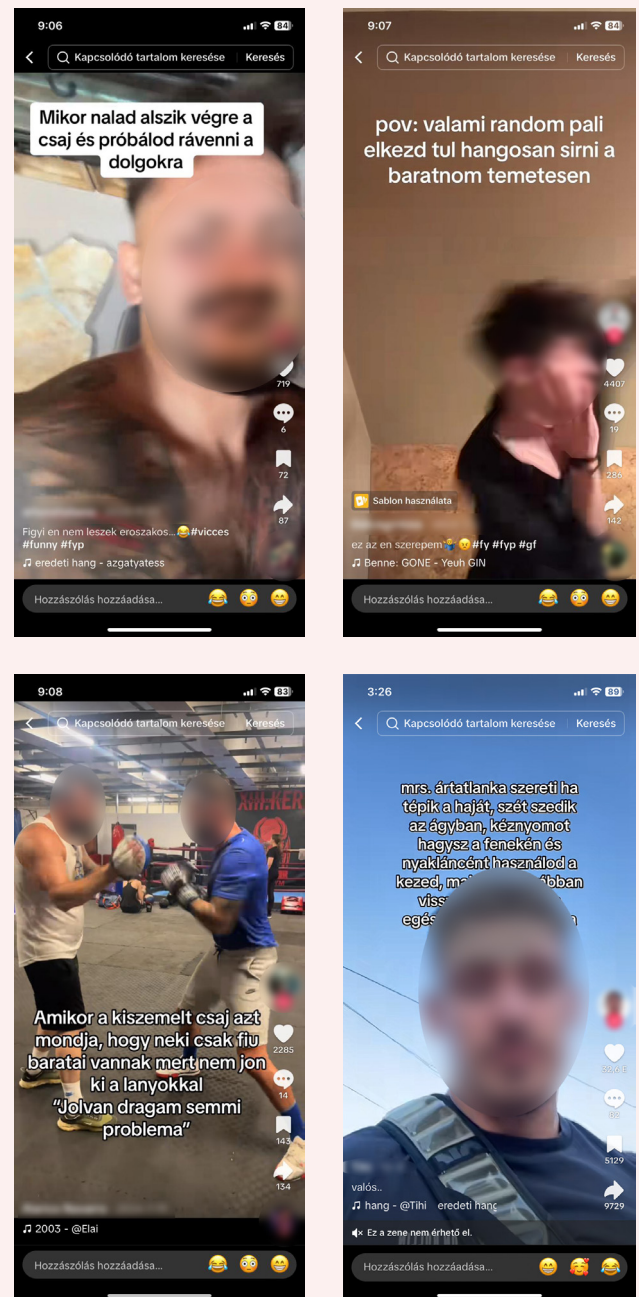
These examples shows that the scene in the video is not merely humorous fiction, but a real-life occurrence. Masking such content as comedy can serve to disguise hostile ideologies and make them appear more acceptable and normal. Researchers have previously found that even when humour is intended, content with harmful messages can still negatively impact viewers' sense of safety and well-being.

Actors and tactics

Among the 46 content creators who published the videos analysed by ISD, analysts identified 35 male content creators, 7 female and 4 of unknown gender. 22 accounts had more than 20,000 followers; 21 received more than 1m likes across their videos, while 3 of them had more than 10m likes (as of 10 December 2024). There are approximately 3.1m TikTok users in Hungary as of 2024, approximately a third of the population; there are also 5.5m Hungarian native speakers internationally. This suggests that this content has reached a significant share of TikTok's Hungarian-speaking users.

Some of the actors selected for this analysis are monetising their content, a common approach among

Figure 3: Screenshots of TikTok videos that promote or trivialise violence. The video texts in the centre translates to "When the girl finally sleeps at your place, and you try to get her to do stuff" (person imitates slapping someone); "POV: a random guy cries too loudly at my girlfriend's funeral" (person imitates punching someone); "When the girl you like says she only has male friends because she doesn't get on well with other women. It's okay baby, no problem." (two men seen boxing); "Mrs. innocent loves it when you tear her hair, tear her apart in bed, leave a handprint on her bottom and use your hand as a necklace, then if you call her back harshly after she's been sucking your blood all day, she gets all sensitive" (from top row, left to top row, right, then bottom row, left then right).



social media influencers engaged in masculinity discourses. Strategies include gaining revenues from social media views or exclusive content, and the promotion of third-party products. Six of the accounts offered additional content through paid TikTok subscriptions, while 12 had links to business ventures including discounts at online stores (e.g. Temu) or offering counselling services.

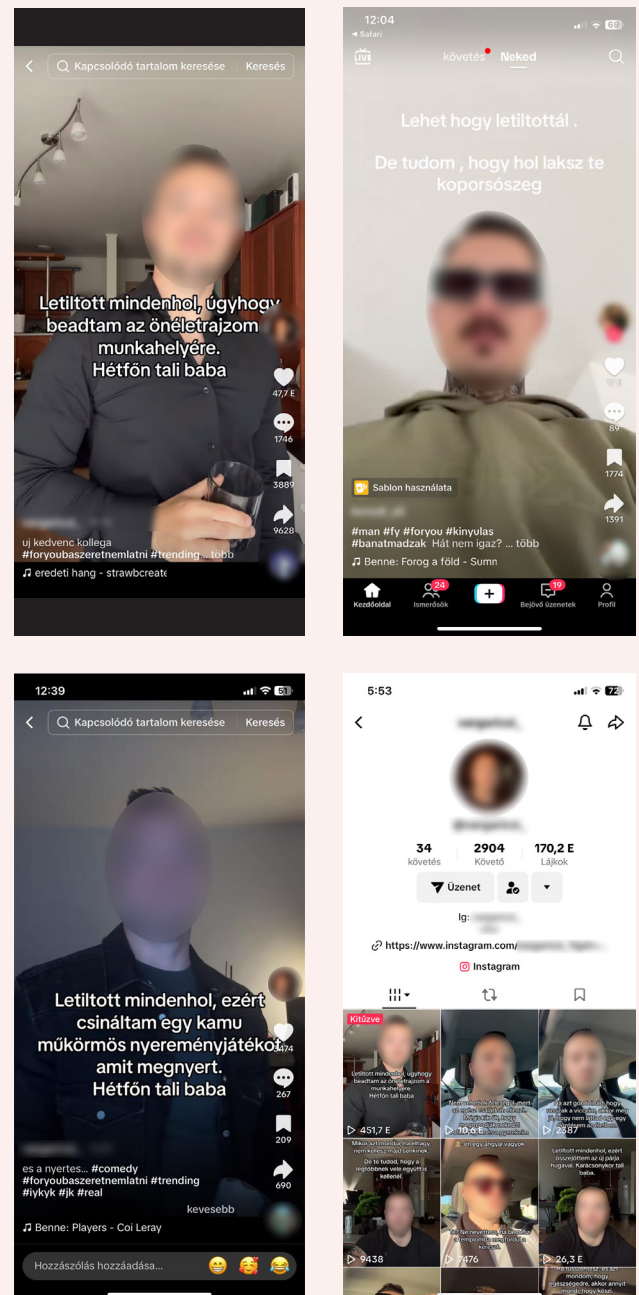
One actor's account was described as a phone seller in the profile description, linking to an online used mobile phone shop. However, only 1 of his 20 most recent videos was phone-related: the remainder featured sensationalist street interviews on topics such as youth culture, sex and dating, often with misogynistic or otherwise harmful narratives. This suggests that some users might upload misogynistic or toxic content for greater visibility and for profit. The metrics underline this assumption: the average number of views on his 19 videos related to misogynistic street interviews content was about 140,000 views, while the 1 phone-related video received only 23,000 views.

Analysts observed that many of the selected TikTok content creators frequently shared links to their Instagram accounts. Out of 46 accounts, 28 included an Instagram handle. 6 of these were private; 16 of the 22 public accounts hosted Instagram content that was entirely different from the associated TikTok profiles, featuring mostly travel images. In three cases, Instagram content partially overlapped with their TikTok content. Only three users posted the same material on both platforms. This pattern suggests that creators may be strategically curating their online presence, using TikTok rather than other platforms to publish toxic and harmful content.

Analysts also observed that Hungarian content creators sometimes blend toxic relationship advice with financial self-improvement and success statements. This is in line with strategies used by anti-feminist content creators in other languages. Figure 5 illustrates this strategy with depictions of expensive cars and luxurious hotels. These images – taken from accounts focusing on at least one of the four themes covered in this briefing – contribute to a narrative that glorifies financial success and wealth as desirable masculine traits – a recurring theme among anti-feminist content creators.

These observations highlight the strong links between financial gain and misogynistic messages, which is notable in content from other anti-feminist content creators including Andrew Tate. It promotes the notion that dominating women is a strategic component of

Figure 4: Screenshots showing content promoting stalking. The messages are translated as: "They blocked me everywhere, so I submitted my CV to his/her workplace. See you on Monday, baby" (top row, left); "You probably blocked me. But I know where you live, you [offensive slur]" (top row, right); "They blocked me everywhere, that's why I created a fake gel nail competition that they won. See you on Monday, baby" (bottom row, left); The video description shows the hashtag "#jk" for "just kidding". The screenshot on the bottom right shows the feed of the content creator from the video on the top row, left, which received more than 450k views. Note: as the Hungarian language is gender-neutral, we provide binary gendered translation for Hungarian pronouns in the examples or use 'they/them.'

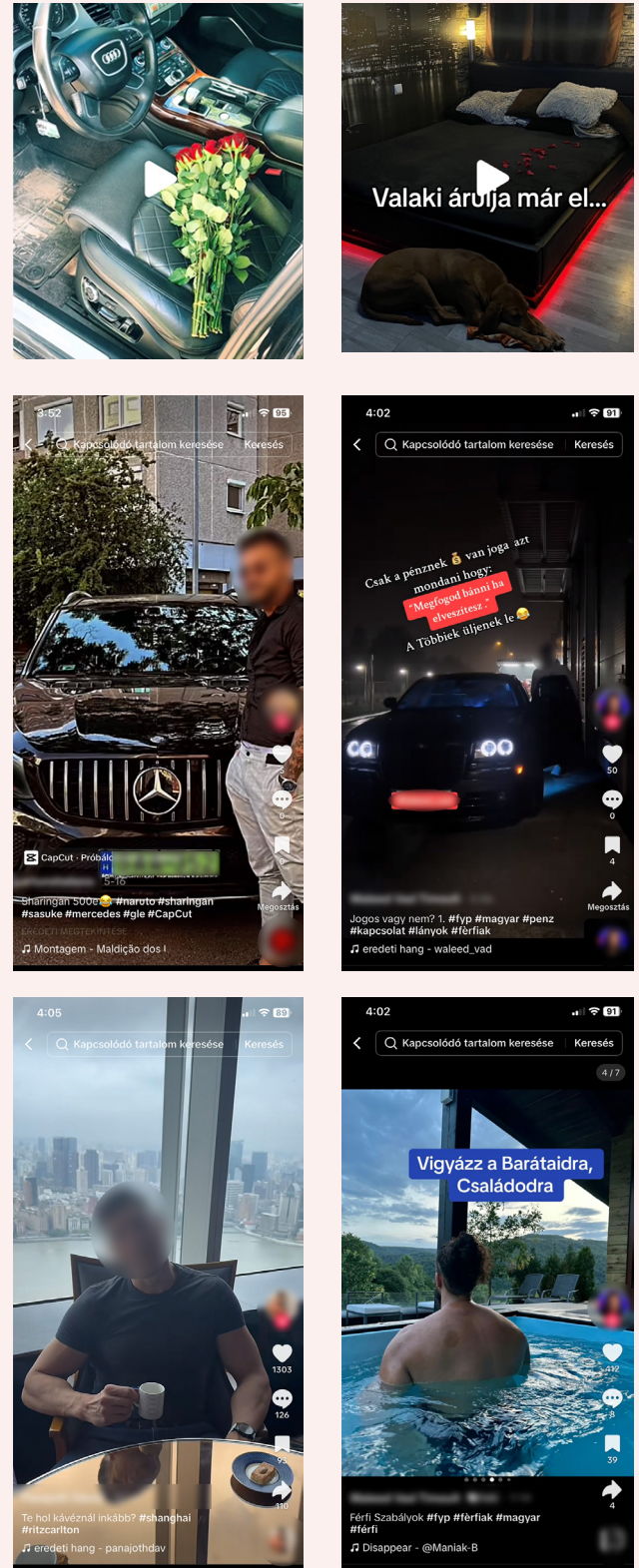


achieving financial success. More broadly, financial success and wealth accumulation are an essential step in becoming an 'alpha male,' associated with high social ranking and access to resources including heterosexual relationships. The term alpha male is mainly used by followers of the so-called 'Red Pill' philosophy, one of the main subgroups within the Manosphere. Proponents categorise attractive and powerful men as 'alpha,' while labelling less attractive men who rely on wealth or institutional power for sexual intimacy as 'beta' or other terms.

The combination of these strategies and narratives related to finance places the content identified in this briefing squarely within transnational trends and influences of anti-feminist content creators. These creators adapt and translate ideas and narratives into their respective languages, amplifying misogynistic harm within local contexts.

The observed narratives of slut-shaming contribute to rape culture and victim-blaming, in which women – who form the biggest group of victims of gendered violence alongside gender minorities – are framed as responsible for their own suffering. Narratives related to unwanted contact or surveillance, including knowledge of an ex-partner's location without their consent, align with definitions of stalking; this can range from harassment to intimidation and is considered a criminal offense in many jurisdictions including Hungary. Furthermore, narratives that trivialise violence are particularly harmful as they are often used to justify and rationalise physical and emotional violence driven by jealousy and possessiveness. This digital discourse extends its impact offline, fostering a culture where toxic attitudes contribute to the prevalence of male partner violence.

Figure 5: Screenshots of six TikTok videos by male Hungarian content creators. From left to right, top to bottom: an expensive car with roses; luxury-inspired interior design; expensive cars (two screenshots); a view from an expensive hotel (The Ritz); in the swimming pool of a luxury hotel. The text on the centre right image translates as: "Only money has the right to say 'You'll regret it if you lose me.' Everyone else, sit down."



Conclusion and Recommendations

This analysis is the first in-depth briefing on misogynistic Hungarian-language content on TikTok. The findings show that Hungarian anti-feminist actors utilise similar tactics and narratives to those previously observed in other languages. This briefing also highlights the widespread nature of these narratives in Hungary, as evidenced by the finding of at least 21 content creators achieving more than 1m likes each across their videos on TikTok. This significant engagement underscores the need for more research into online misogyny, particularly in less widely spoken languages which are often overlooked in global studies.

In line with other research on the global manosphere, actors were found to employ tactics such as slut-shaming, demonising women, stalking and emotional manipulation to reinforce toxic relationship dynamics and misogynistic narratives. This content fosters a misogynistic online environment, where women's autonomy is limited, abusive male dominance is normalised and women are objectified. These problematic observations are part of a rising trend of online misogyny on social media platforms with far-reaching consequences for women: they feel silenced or compelled to self-censor, they experience threats, and they face risks of violence both online and offline.

TikTok, as a VLOP, is responsible for creating a safe digital space and mitigating negative impacts on fundamental rights, as outlined in the Digital Services Act. TikTok's own community guidelines also state that the platform prohibits "any violent threats, promotion of violence, incitement to violence, or promotion of criminal activities that may harm people, animals, or property," as well as harassment; they also state that the platform seeks to provide "a space that [...] supports healthy relationships, and respects intimate privacy."

However, this analysis shows that toxic relationship advice promoting violence and harassment remains prevalent on the Hungarian-language parts of the platform. To address this, TikTok should:

- Ensure better implementation and enforcement of its policies in relation to misogynistic content, gendered abuse and harassment. This includes the timely removal of illegal hate speech in all languages – especially those other than English – as outlined in a previous report from this project.
- Ensure platform design features do not amplify misogynistic content. This may include algorithms that prioritise sensational, polarising and often harmful content (both legal and illegal). Policy approaches ensuring a risk-based or duty of care type approach could help counter the amplification of such borderline content while also preserving rights to speech and expression.
- Address the spread of legal but harmful misogynistic content by moving beyond a strictly "content-based" approach to a broader "systems-based" framework for digital regulation. This should prioritise user safety while upholding freedom of expression.
- Refine content detection mechanisms to better address satirical, humorous and implicit content. TikTok's success relies on playfulness, humour, memes, satire and trend-following; this means it is crucial for the platform to thoroughly study, investigate and understand when humorous and implicit narratives cross into potentially harmful territory.
- Consider the limitation of monetisation tools (like ad-revenue sharing) to actors that spread borderline content. This is particularly important for accounts whose content may implicitly incite violence but fail to reach strict criteria for removal.
- Allocate more specialised Hungarian-speaking content moderators to ensure better safeguarding of Hungarian users. According to the DSA Transparency Report from October 2024, TikTok currently employs 62 Hungarian-speaking moderators for 3.1m Hungarian users. This is lower than the numbers allocated for other Eastern European countries: there are 63 Czech-speaking content moderators for 2m Czech users, 41 Slovakian content moderators for 1m Slovakian users and 41 Slovenian content moderators for 500k users. More generally, TikTok should make sure users of all languages are fairly and equally safeguarded.
- Policies, mechanisms and the content moderation teams should be inclusive and culturally sensitive. This includes upskilling content moderation teams on issue-specific topics such as OGBV, local contexts and nuances of language. This will give them the ability to better address OGBV and other harmful content.



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