EUROPEAN INFLUENCER MARKETING SWEEP 2026

Q&A

A short guide to the scope, findings and interpretation of the 2026 Sweep.

> In this document, Creator is an umbrella term used here to refer to content creators and influencers who produce and share content on social media. Similarly, for readability, this document uses "AdEthics publications" and "non-AdEthics publications" as shorthand for publications by AdEthics-trained creators and creators not trained through AdEthics, respectively. These terms refer to the creators' training status, not to approval or certification of individual publications.

About the Sweep

1 **What is the EASA Influencer Marketing Sweep 2026?**

It is a large-scale monitoring exercise examining commercial content and advertising disclosure practices among creators in Europe. EASA analysed 533,620 social-media publications from 34,605 creators across nine European markets.

2 **Which countries and platforms were covered?**

The Sweep covered Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, and Romania, across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts. Content was monitored from January through March 2026.

3 **What was the Sweep designed to assess?**

It examined whether observable evidence of commercial activity could be identified and, within the high-confidence commercial population, whether an advertising disclosure could be detected.

4 **Is the Sweep a legal compliance audit?**

No. It is a monitoring and analytical exercise. A detected disclosure is not necessarily legally sufficient, and the absence of detected disclosure does not independently establish an infringement.

Putting the results in context

5 **Does the Sweep produce an overall European disclosure rate?**

No. The AdEthics and non-AdEthics datasets are separately constructed analytical populations. Their relative sizes do not reproduce the proportion of trained and non-trained creators in the wider European influencer population, so they should not be combined and presented as a representative European disclosure rate.

6 **Can the results be compared directly with the earlier European Commission exercise?**

No. The two exercises differ in sampling, scope, methodology, and unit of analysis. The EASA Sweep should therefore be understood as a new and substantially larger publication-level evidence base rather than a direct measurement of change.

7 **Is the Sweep representative of every influencer in Europe?**

No. The reported findings cover defined populations in nine participating markets and creators. They should not be treated as a census of all European influencer activity.

How to read the Sweep findings

8 **What is the main finding?**

75% of high-confidence commercial publications from AdEthics-trained creators contained a detected advertising disclosure.

9 **Was the result consistent across different audience sizes?**

Yes. Higher detected disclosure rates for AdEthics publications were observed across all four audience tiers: 82% versus 61% for Mega, 80% versus 60% for Macro, 76% versus 53% for Mid-Tier and 72% versus 40% for Micro creators.

10 **Does this prove that AdEthics caused the difference?**

No. The comparison is observational. The results show a strong and consistent association between AdEthics training and better observed disclosure practices, but do not establish causality.

11 **Is the situation therefore satisfactory?**

Yes, although there is still room for improvement. The encouraging finding is that stronger outcomes are consistently associated with trained creators, while the remaining gaps help identify where further guidance and education may be useful.

Understanding the methodology

12 **How many publications entered the disclosure analysis?**

59,043 publications classified as High-Confidence Commercial Evidence: 17,926 AdEthics publications and 41,117 non-AdEthics publications.

13 **Why were not all 533,620 publications included in the disclosure rate?**

Disclosure rates were calculated only for publications meeting the High-Confidence Commercial Evidence threshold. Publications with low, residual or no commercial evidence were excluded from the disclosure-rate denominator.

14 **Did AI decide whether content was commercial?**

Not on its own. AI was used to extract predefined signals from content, while predefined classification rules determined the final analytical classification. The methodology also included automated consistency checks and human validation of a sample.

15 **Does every brand mention count as advertising?**

No. Brand mentions, product appearances and similar signals can occur in organic content. The methodology therefore distinguishes strong commercial evidence from less conclusive promotional signals.

What the undisclosed content tells us

16 **Does the Sweep explain why some commercial publications are not disclosed?**

Not definitively. It identifies patterns but cannot establish why an individual creator did not disclose. That would require case-specific assessment.

17 **What clues does the data provide?**

The patterns differ between the two populations. Among AdEthics publications without detected disclosure, commercial-relationship evidence was identified in 64%, monetisation-related evidence in 33% and converging strong promotional signals in 40%. Among non-AdEthics publications without detected disclosure, converging strong promotional signals appeared in 68%.

18 **What might those patterns mean?**

They suggest that recognising when content is commercial and knowing how to disclose it may be two distinct challenges. The findings point to the value of practical, continuously updated education, while not establishing the reason for any individual publication.

19 **Where could further guidance be useful?**

The report provides practical examples involving product placement, event attendance and affiliate links that could enrich existing training and refresher modules, illustrating how different brand relationships translate into clear disclosure in practice.

20 **How many high-confidence commercial publications had no detected disclosure?**

The Sweep identified 26,979 such publications: 4,461 AdEthics publications and 22,518 non-AdEthics publications.

21 **Do the patterns differ between trained and non-trained creators?**

Yes. Among AdEthics publications without detected disclosure, commercial-relationship evidence was particularly prominent. Among non-AdEthics publications without detected disclosure, converging strong promotional signals were more prominent. These are patterns in the publications, not explanations of individual behaviour.

22 **What is notable about undisclosed AdEthics publications?**

Commercial-relationship evidence was identified in 64% of AdEthics publications without detected disclosure. Monetisation-related evidence appeared in 33%, and converging strong promotional signals in 40%. The categories can overlap.

23 **What is notable about undisclosed non-AdEthics publications?**

Converging strong promotional signals were identified in 68% of non-AdEthics publications without detected disclosure. Strong promotional signals alone accounted for 46% of this population, compared with 22% of undisclosed AdEthics publications.

24 **Could some creators have difficulty recognising when content is commercial?**

This is one possible interpretation raised by the findings, but it cannot be established for individual creators. The Report suggests that recognising when a publication is commercial and knowing how to disclose it may be two distinct challenges.

25 **Are monetisation and affiliate arrangements part of the picture?**

Yes. Monetisation-related evidence was identified in 33% of undisclosed AdEthics publications and 30% of undisclosed non-AdEthics publications. The Report identifies this as an area for further examination and creator education.

26 **Do non-cash relationships create particular transparency questions?**

The findings suggest value in practical examples showing how disclosure applies to relationships that seem to involve benefits other than payment. Product placement and event attendance offer relevant starting points, without assuming that the content alone establishes gifting, an invitation or another commercial arrangement.

27 **Why can trained creators still miss disclosure?**

The Sweep cannot determine the reason for an individual publication. What it shows is that training is associated with substantially stronger disclosure outcomes, while the remaining gaps point to the value of practical examples, refresher modules and continuously updated guidance.

28 **Does no detected disclosure mean that a creator did not understand the rules?**

No. The Sweep cannot determine a creator's knowledge, intention or reason for not disclosing. It identifies the publication-level outcome and the observable commercial evidence present.

What happens next?

29 **What do the findings mean for brands, agencies and creators?**

They show that improvement is possible and reinforce the value of clear transparency expectations, accessible creator education and practical guidance. The Sweep does not assess or rank individual brands, agencies or creators.

30 **Is training enough on its own?**

No. Training should operate alongside guidance, monitoring and proportionate enforcement under the relevant national self-regulatory systems.

31 **Does the study justify the need for obligatory training/certification of influencers?**

No. The study indicates that creators are already becoming more professional, and that self-regulatory initiatives help accelerate and strengthen this progress.

32 **How will EASA use the findings?**

The findings are intended to inform refinement of AdEthics training, practical guidance, engagement with stakeholders, national monitoring and enforcement, and continued monitoring through the planned European Influencer Marketing Observatory.

IN ONE SENTENCE

The Sweep highlights that content creators are progressively adopting more transparency disclosure practices, and shows that AdEthics training is consistently associated with stronger disclosure practices across every audience tier analysed, while also identifying where further education, monitoring and improvement remain necessary.

easa
European Advertising Standards Alliance

About EASA

The European Advertising Standards Alliance, EASA, is a network of 45 organisations representing 28 advertising self-regulatory organisations from Europe, 14 European and global organisations representing the advertising ecosystem (advertisers, agencies, media) and 3 digital pure-play companies.

EASA's role is to set out high operational standards for advertising self-regulatory systems, as established in the Best Practice Model and EASA's Charter. EASA also provides a space for the advertising ecosystem to work together at the European and international levels to address common challenges and make sure advertising standards are future-proofed.

EASA helps to make sure that ads are legal, decent, honest, truthful, prepared with a sense of social responsibility and created with due respect to the rules of fair competition. The well-enforced ad standards established by Self-Regulatory Organisations ensure that ad self-regulation is better regulation.

Ad Ethics More on https://www.easa-alliance.org/

European Advertising Standards Alliance
Rue Marie-Thérèse 21
1000 Brussels - Belgium
www.easa-alliance.org

EASA is registered as an interest representative in the official EU Transparency Register under identification number 070638512780-81