La Voce del Trentino is owned by Cierre Edizioni Sas, a private company based in Trento which also publishes La Voce di Bolzano, another website covering the Trentino-Alto Adige area.

According to the Italian Business Registry, Cierre Edizioni Sas’s CEO is media entrepreneur Roberto Conci. In 2018, Conci briefly ran for a council member position in Trento under the Agire per il Trentino party, a center-right local party. Conci abandoned his bid before the 2018 local election.

The site generates revenue from advertisements.

La Voce del Trentino primarily covers local news in the province of Trento and the wider region of Trentino-Alto Adige. The website’s “News from the Valleys” (“News dalle Valli”) section, divides content by different geographical areas in Trentino-Alto Adige. Other sections include Art and Culture (Arte e Cultura), Italy-Foreign (Italia-Estero), Sport, and Society (Società).

Typical headlines include “Coronavirus in Italy: over one hundred thousand infected people, but numbers are decreasing, 1,590 people recovered today” (“Coronavirus in Italia: superati i centomila contagi ma in calo, 1.590 guariti solo oggi”); “The very black future of the trade sector in Trentino. Rents must be suspended immediately” (“Il nerissimo futuro del commercio trentino. È necessario sospendere subito gli affitti”); and “With the beginning of the week, cold weather and snow are back also at low altitude” (“Con l’inizio della settimana tornano freddo e neve anche a bassa quota”).

The site also publishes original videos. A Columns (Rubriche) section hosts topics such as Food&Wine, Wellbeing and Health (Benessere e Salute), Economy and Finance (Economia e Finanza), and Real Estate (Vetrina immobiliare).

La Voce del Trentino says on its Facebook page that 30 people contribute content for the site. Articles often include original reporting and attribute information to press releases and local politicians. However, the
website has repeatedly published unsubstantiated and misleading claims, including false information about the 2020 coronavirus outbreak.

For example, a March 2020 article headlined “Coronavirus and 5G investigation: does a link really exist?” (“Inchiesta coronavirus e 5G: allora il collegamento esiste davvero?”), linked the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic to the population’s exposure to 5G cell phone technology, asserting that exposure to electromagnetic fields “can actually produce a weakened immune system”.

There is no reliable evidence that 5G is connected to the 2020 coronavirus outbreak. According to a January 2020 article published by U.K. fact-checking organization FullFact.org, there is no evidence that 5G can damage people’s immune systems. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration states on its website that “to date, there is no consistent or credible scientific evidence of health problems caused by the exposure to radio frequency energy emitted by cell phones.”

In response to NewsGuard's questions about the article, Elisabetta Cardinali, La Voce del Trentino’s editor in chief, told NewsGuard in a telephone interview in May 2020 that she would ask the author to amend the article to add “the official positions of the scientific community” (“le posizioni prevalenti nella comunità scientifica”).

Another March 2020 article, headlined “Coronavirus, 2015 TGR Leonardo: did a Chinese laboratory create pulmonary supervirus?” (“Coronavirus, servizio del Tgr Leonardo del 2015: laboratorio cinese creò supervirus polmonare?”), promoted two unsubstantiated theories about the virus: that it was created by China and that it was engineered in a military lab.

The article’s author referred to a 2015 report by the RAI TV network, which claimed at the time that a virus had been created from bats and mice for research purposes in China. The author wrote, “For those who have seen that video or are reading these lines, it’s inevitable to make a connection with the situation we are experiencing due to COVID-19” (“Per chi ha visto questo video o legge queste righe è inevitabile il paragone con la situazione che stiamo vivendo a causa del contagio rispetto al COVID-19”).

The article then cited false claims made in January 2020 by TgCom24’s editor-in-chief, Paolo Liguori, who claimed in a video op-ed that the 2020 coronavirus “was engineered in a military laboratory where experiments were carried out to modify the SARS virus for war
The LaVocedelTrentino.it article said that Liguori “said that through a reliable source it seemed that it was all born from a Wuhan laboratory” where dangerous viruses were regularly studied.

The claim that the coronavirus was produced in China, and engineered and leaked from a military lab has been denied by biologists, fact-checkers, and major health organizations. A February 2020 report by the World Health Organization said, “increasing evidence demonstrates the link between the 2019-nCoV and other similar known coronaviruses (CoV) circulating in bats.” A study published the same month in Nature found that the virus is “96% identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus.”

Cardinali, La Voce del Trentino’s editor-in-chief, told NewsGuard that the author of the article did not intend to advance Liguori’s false claims about the origins of the outbreak.

“At least in the intentions, this is not what we meant, if the message that has been perceived is different, I am certainly sorry. … It was a quote. They were Liguori’s words.” (“Almeno nelle intenzioni non era questo, poi se dopo il messaggio che è passato è diverso, questo mi dispiace sicuramente… Era una citazione, erano le parole di Liguori”).

In March 2018, La Voce Del Trentino published an article headlined “Vaccines, shock statement: ‘In 2032 50% of the population will be autistic’” (“Vaccini dichiarazione shock: ‘Nel 2032 il 50% della popolazione sarà autistica’”). Citing the views of Stefano Montanari, an Italian researcher who opposes vaccinations, the article claimed that vaccines are “contaminated with heavy metal fragments […] and can lead to very serious side effects, among many others: encephalopathies, cerebral palsy, autism and even death” (“inquinati da scorie di metalli pesanti […] che possono portare a gravissime controindicazioni, tra le tante: encefalopatie, paralisi cerebrali, autismo e finanche la morte”).

No major health or science organization, including the U.K. National Health Service and the World Health Organization, supports a link between autism and vaccines. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared that “there is no link between vaccines and autism,” a conclusion backed by an abundance of scientific evidence.

Cardinali told NewsGuard in May 2020 that she planned to amend the article on vaccines to present alternative points of view.
Because La Voce del Trentino frequently publishes misleading and unsubstantiated claims in articles, NewsGuard has determined that the site fails to meet its standard for gathering and presenting information responsibly.

The website does not disclose an overall political viewpoint. It has dedicated sections for opinionated content, such as the Blog category and the opinion section “This is what I think” (“Io la penso così”). However, articles that appear throughout other sections of the website also feature opinion, and frequently criticize the Democratic Party and the Five Star Movement, the coalition in charge of Italy’s government.

For example, in a March 2020 article labeled “Politics,” the author criticized Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte’s economic measures to help Italians facing the COVID-19 crisis, stating “Here something is wrong! Conte, you better wake up! Italy is on the brink of the abyss” (“Qui c’è qualcosa che non va! Conte Svegliati! L’italia è sull’orlo del baratro”).

In a February 2020 article labeled “Italy and Abroad,” the author criticized Mattia Santori, the Sardines Movement’s leader, saying he “does not think about what he says because he is just playing a role, probably too big for him. A role where he is in a plaster cast and has to give only predictable answers” (“non pensa a ciò che dice perché recita un ruolo forse troppo grande per lui dove è ingessato e preparato a dare solo risposte scontate”).

A September 2019 headline published in the “Italy and Abroad” section, called the new government made by the coalition between the Democratic Party and the Five Star Movement “the ‘scam’ government made of mediocre people” (“il governo ‘truffa’ dei mediocri”).

Because La Voce Del Trentino frequently publishes unlabeled opinion in news stories from an undisclosed right-leaning perspective, NewsGuard has determined that La Voce Del Trentino does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

In May 2020, asked about how the site handles the difference between news and opinions, Cardinali told NewsGuard in a telephone interview, “This is something that we need to fix” (“È una cosa che la testata deve correggere”). Cardinali explained she plans to introduce an opinion section to host opinionated content. She acknowledged that the site “definitely has a political orientation” (“certamente un orientamento politico ce l’ha”).
The site does not articulate a corrections policy and NewsGuard was not able to find any examples of clearly labeled corrections on the site.

Cardinali told NewsGuard that the site generally corrects errors without notifying readers. She said in May 2020 that the website planned to issue transparent corrections in the future.

Transparency

The site identifies its owner, Cierre Edizioni Sas, and its editor-in-chief, Elisabetta Cardinali, at the bottom of the site. The website also provides a WhatsApp contact number and email addresses for Cardinali and the newsroom.

The site does not consistently identify its content creators. Some articles have bylines and link to profile pages, which include the writer’s biographical and contact information. However, many articles are not credited to authors, and attributed only to “Newsroom,” which is why NewsGuard has determined that the website fails to meet NewsGuard’s standard for providing information about content creators.

Cardinali told NewsGuard, “Generally news articles, those that simply describe the facts, are signed with the generic byline “Newsroom” (“Solitamente gli articoli di cronaca, quelli che descrivono il fatto, sono tutti firmati Redazione”). She added that the site would consider adding bylines for all articles.

Advertising is distinguishable from editorial content.

History

The site launched in 2011, according to La Voce Del Trentino’s Facebook page.

Correction: An earlier version of this Nutrition Label inaccurately reported that La Voce Del Trentino articles have frequently included opinions in support of League leader Matteo Salvini. The reference to Salvini has been removed. NewsGuard apologizes for the error.

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on May 11, 2020, to add comments throughout from the website’s editor-in-chief.

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