

# MEPs sound alarm on anti-EU propaganda from Russia and Islamist terrorist groups

Plenary sessions [23-11-2016 - 13:35]

**Propaganda pressure on the EU from Russia and Islamist terrorist groups is growing, MEPs warn in a resolution voted on Wednesday. It seeks to distort the truth, incite fear, provoke doubt and divide the EU. To counteract anti-EU campaigns, MEPs suggest reinforcing the EU's tiny "strategic communication" task force and investing more in awareness raising, education, online and local media, investigative journalism and information literacy.**

"I was given the task of describing the propaganda of both state and non-state actors. We have seen many transformations of it. As regards the Russian Federation, the situation is now clear. After its annexation of Crimea and aggression in the eastern part of Ukraine, many countries are fully aware of its disinformation and manipulation", said rapporteur Anna Fotyga (ECR, PL). "This report, in the course of its preparation, was also a target of hostile propaganda", she added.

The resolution stresses that the EU needs to counter disinformation campaigns and propaganda from countries, such as Russia, and non-state actors, like Daesh, Al-Qaeda and other violent jihadi terrorist groups.

Hostile propaganda against the EU and its member states seeks to distort the truth, provoke doubt, divide the EU and its North American partners, paralyse the decision-making process, discredit the EU institutions and incite fear and uncertainty among EU citizens, says the text.

## **Russia seeks to divide**

MEPs warn that the Kremlin has stepped up its propaganda against EU since annexing Crimea and waging hybrid war in the Donbass. They note that "the Russian government is employing a wide range of tools and instruments, such as think tanks [...], multilingual TV stations (e.g. Russia Today), pseudo-news agencies and multimedia services (e.g. Sputnik) [...], social media and internet trolls, to challenge democratic values, divide Europe, gather domestic support and create the perception of failed states in the EU's eastern neighbourhood".

The resolution stresses that the "Kremlin is funding political parties and other organisations within the EU" and deplores "Russian backing of anti-EU forces" such as extreme-right parties and populist forces.

## **Daesh targets the EU**

As the EU and its citizens are major targets of Daesh, MEPs call on EU member states to work more closely to protect society from its recruitment drives and enhance resilience against radicalisation. They also suggest developing a narrative to counter Daesh, "including through the empowerment and increased visibility of mainstream Muslim scholars who have the credibility to delegitimise Daesh propaganda."

## **Information literacy**

# Press release

To counteract anti-EU campaigns, MEPs suggest investing in awareness raising, education, online and local media, investigative journalism and information literacy, which would empower citizens to analyse media content critically. It is equally important to adapt communication to specific regions, including access to information in local languages, says the text.

The resolution also suggests deepening EU and NATO cooperation on strategic communication, reinforcing the EU's 9-strong strategic communication task force and providing more support to boost media resilience in EU neighbourhood countries.

The resolution was approved by 304 votes to 179, with 208 abstentions.

*Procedure: Non-legislative resolution*

## Further information

- Adopted text (2016/2030 (INI)) will soon be available here (23.11.2016)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 22.11.2016)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>
- Video of the press conference (23.11.2016 at 15.30)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/schedule>
- EbS+ (22.11.2016)  
: <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm?sitelang=en&page=3&institution=0&date=11/22/2016>
- EP study on EU strategic communication (May 2016)  
: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/578008/EXPO\\_IDA\(2016\)578008\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/578008/EXPO_IDA(2016)578008_EN.pdf)
- EP Research note on Russia's information war (October 2016)  
: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/589810/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)589810\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/589810/EPRS_BRI(2016)589810_EN.pdf)
- Audiovisual material for media  
: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/default.aspx>

## Political groups

- Press release by the EPP group  
: <http://bit.ly/2g7nAln>
- News pages of the S&D group  
: <http://bit.ly/1WWG6F4>
- News pages of the ECR group  
: <http://bit.ly/1Y0YFj>
- News pages of the ALDE group  
: <http://bit.ly/1XbSQs6>
- News pages of the GUE/NGL group  
: <http://bit.ly/1UrAIM9>
- News pages of the Greens/EFA group  
: <http://bit.ly/1TV9vvr>
- News pages of the EFDD group  
: <http://bit.ly/1TUnDFU>
- News pages of the ENF group  
: <http://bit.ly/2cxzxcR>

## Contacts

### Gediminas VILKAS

Press Officer

Telephone number: (+32) 2 28 46396 (BXL)

Telephone number: (+33) 3 881 64504 (STR)

Mobile number: (+32) 498 98 33 30

Email: [gediminas.vilkas@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:gediminas.vilkas@europarl.europa.eu)

Email: [foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu)

Twitter: EP\_ForeignAff