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Periodic insight n°20

DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE

06/06/2023 to 06/09/2023

edmo.eu   Twitter: @EDMO_EUI

Published on 8 September 2023

False information circulating on the war: 6 Categories and their narratives

Category #1

Counter-offensive related disinformation

The Ukrainian counter-offensive is a failure (e.g., here)

Ukraine mobilises foreign residents to fuel its counter-offensive (e.g., here)

☐ 19% of analysis *

Category #2

Discrediting the Ukrainian government

Ukrainian authorities are corrupted and embezzling international aid funds (e.g., here)

Damaging Zelensky's public figure (e.g., here)

Ukraine runs a global weapon-smuggling scheme (e.g., here)

☐ 19% of analysis **

Category #3

Compromising Ukrainians' image

Ukrainians are lying about the war (e.g., here)

Ukrainians are Nazis and murderers (e.g., here)

Ukrainian refugees are a danger to host societies (e.g., here)

☐ 17% of analysis

Category #4

Legitimizing Russia and the invasion

Russia has many and powerful allies (e.g., here)

Russia is fighting a war against NATO/The West (e.g., here)

☐ 16% of analysis

Category #5

Attacking NATO and Ukraine foreign supporters

Western supporters are warmongers (e.g., here)

Ukraine used to revamp conspiracy theories against the West (e.g., here)

Economic support to Ukraine is backfiring on EU populations (e.g., here)

Western media is lying about the war (e.g., here)

☐ 14% of analysis

Category #6

SPECIAL CATEGORY: Misinformation on Kakhovka Dam explosion

Various misattributions of photo- and video-evidence of the explosion (e.g., here)

☐ 6% of analysis

* This new category emerged over the summer and grew quickly to become the most prevalent topic of EDMO-detected disinformation

** Another new category was singled out from existing categories and narratives due to its increased prevalence and projected growth

=> 10% of analyses did not fall into any of the categories

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⚠️ EARLY-WARNING: WHAT TO EXPECT

In Bratislava it's rainy with a chance of electoral disinformation

Slovak parliamentary elections, scheduled for September 30, 2023, will be ones to watch, ahead of the European Parliament race looming in 2024. Over the next month, it is probable that both internal and external actors will unroll and test electoral disinformation in Slovakia – and Ukraine-related topics are likely to be very prominent. There are already multiple reports, here gathered by CEDMO Hub, of opposition politicians attacking the current government with manipulated content related to military and economic aid for Ukraine. This trend is likely to grow before the voting day and is bound to come up in other countries and European electoral cycles. The general narratives exploiting the electorate's aid fatigue most likely will be supplemented by "localized" disinformation – in the Slovak case, for example, Ukrainian wheat imports and the ability of refugees from Ukraine to "sway elections" could gain relevant salience.

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Hunger games

Since pulling out of the Black Sea Grain Initiative earlier this summer, Russia has been actively bombing Ukrainian ports and grain terminals, and so far has refused to agree on safe passage to ships carrying crops from Ukraine. As the autumn harvest unfolds, and especially with ongoing talks on continuing the Black Sea Grain Initiative brokered by Turkish President Erdogan, expect increased volumes of disinformation aimed at portraying Ukraine as the villain of the piece, withholding food from the hungry. This narrative can be especially salient in Global South countries, which were traditionally the main consumers of Ukrainian grain.

DATA PROVIDED BY EDMO'S FACT-CHECKING NETWORK

Share of categories in the fact-checking analysis published by the EDMO network between 06/06/2023 to 06/09/2023

In total, 2309 analyses have been provided by EDMO's fact-checking network partners since 24 February 2022, out of which 90 were covered by this report (06/06/2022 to 06/09/2023).

| 19% | 19% | 17% | 16% | 14% | 10% | 6% |

0%   100%

- 🟨 Discrediting the Ukrainian government
- 🟦 Counter-offensive related disinformation
- ⬜ Compromising Ukrainians' image
- 🟧 Legitimizing Russia and the invasion
- 🟦 Attacking NATO and Ukraine foreign supporters
- ⬜ NC
- 🟦 Misinformation on Kakhovka Dam explosion

Organisations contributing to EDMO's repository of fact-checking analyses

- *DPA Austria*
- *Mimikama,*
- *AFP Factuel,*
- *DPA Belgium,*
- *Factcheck Vlaanderen,*
- *Knack,*
- *AFP Proveri,*
- *AFP Na pravou míru,*
- *TjekDet,*
- *Eesti Päevaleht,*
- *AFP Faktantarkistus*
- *AFP Factcheck*
- *AFP Factuel*
- *Correctiv*
- *Demagog.cz*

- *DPA Germany*
- *AFP Faktencheck Germany/Austria*
- *AFP Factcheck Greek*
- *EllinikaHoaxes,*
- *AFP Tenykerdes,*
- *The Journal – FactCheck*
- *FactaNews*
- *Pagella Politica*
- *Re:Baltica*
- *Delfi*
- *DPA Luxembourg,*
- *AFP Faktencheck Netherlands*
- *DPA Netherlands*
- *Faktisk.no*
- *Provera činjenica,*

- *AFP Sprawdzam,*
- *Demagog.pl*
- *Polígrafo,*
- *AFP Verificat,*
- *AFP Fakty*
- *Ostro,*
- *AFP Comprovem*
- *AFP Factual*
- *EFE Verifica*
- *MALDITA.ES,*
- *Newtral,*
- *Verificat,*
- *15 min*
- *Källkritikbyrån*
- *DPA Switzerland*

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DATA PROVIDED BY EDMO'S FACT-CHECKING NETWORK

**Number of disinformation items per platforms
(Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Telegram, Other)**

Platform	Value
Facebook	49
Twitter	26
Telegram	6
TikTok	6
Other	3
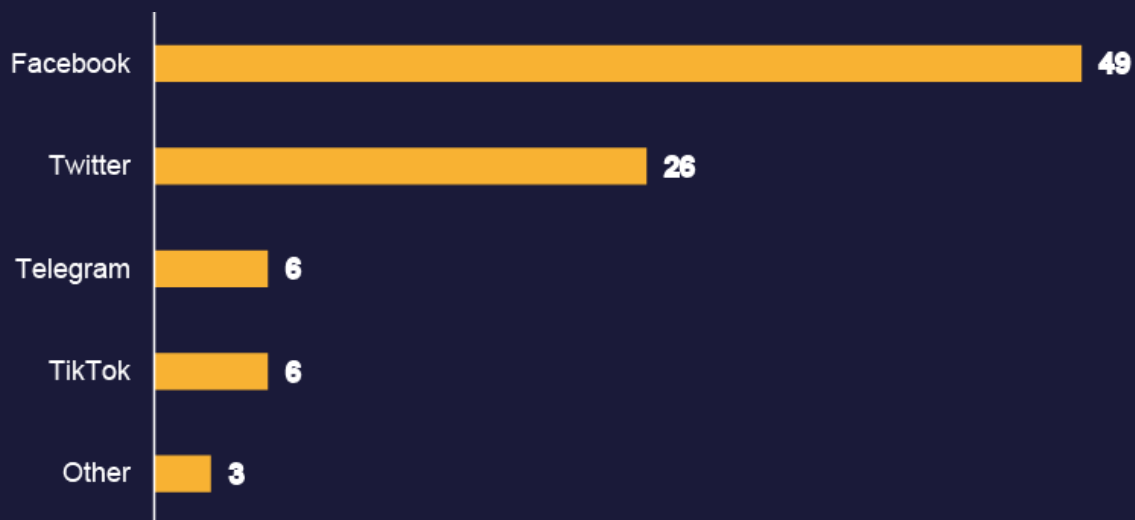
**Outlets used to convey disinformation
(Video, Photo, Text)**

- Video: 56
- Photo: 29
- Text: 5
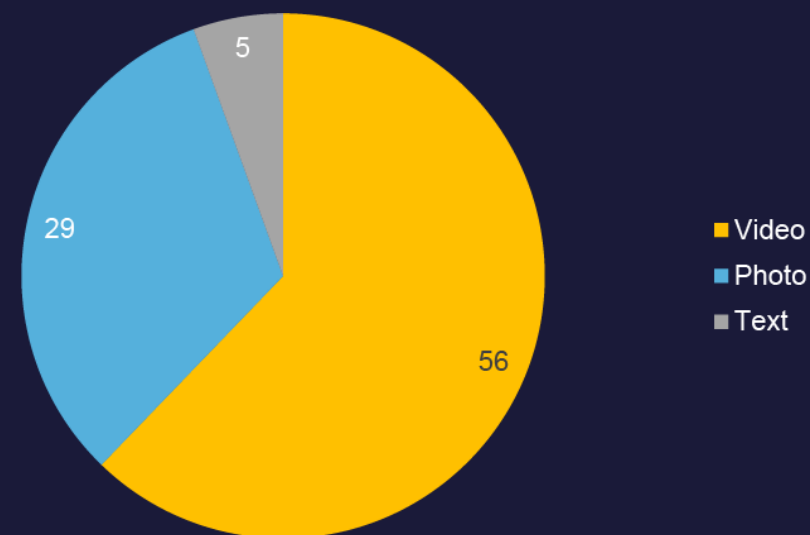
This data has been extracted from the fact-checking analyses published by EDMO's fact-checking network

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METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this brief is based on EDMO's repository of fact-checking analyses on the war in Ukraine. The repository's items are provided by the fact-checking organisations that are part of the EDMO fact-checking network.

Reference period: 6 June 2023 – 6 September 2023. Number of analyses studied: 90.

Responsible EDMO organisations: European University Institute/School of Transnational Governance; Pagella Politica/Facta.news.

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