

Disinformation Monitoring Monthly Report

- Latvia
- Month 6
- February , 2024



Key insights:

During the reporting month, the content examined primarily surrounded topics such as the European Union, potential threats from Russia and corruption within the Latvian government. The main narratives are as follows:

- European Union membership has more downsides than benefits, Latvia would be better off not as a European Union member.
- Latvia is too concerned with Ukraine to the extent that it overlooks more important domestic issues.
- School reforms, the failure of the newly bought trains and Rail Baltica, and the high costs of living can all be linked to the leading coalition parties being corrupt.

Overview of findings:



- In the reporting month, TikTok, Telegram, Facebook, and X platforms were monitored. The most engagement is reached through content in video format, making TikTok and Facebook the primary channels for disseminating disinformation. A total of 150 posts were examined.
- In contrast to prior months, the content is not only limited to domestic issues. For example, with the death of Navalny and the anniversary of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, more attention has been brought to the language divide, possible threats Russia poses to the Baltic States and the effectiveness of NATO.
- Similarly, as prior month, an element common among the majority of the disinformation actors examined is a highly critical view of the European Union. The European Union is portrayed as a negative entity that is hurting the economy, and independence and that has an agenda to weaken its member states.
- Similarly, as in the previously examined months, an element common in the disinformation narratives is the mentioning of children in the content surrounding LGBTQ issues.

Story of the month:



“in two weeks, while NATO will be able to retreat to us, the Russians will have walked across Latvia twice back and forth. Article 5 is for children.” / “divās nedēļās, kamēr NATO iespēs pie mums atvilkties, krievs būs pārstaigājis Latviju divreiz turp un atpakaļ. 5.pants ir pantiņš bērniem.”

<https://twitter.com/elitaveidemane/status/1761842828236214444>

In reference to an [Article](#) published by la.lv, a leading nationalistic voice in the Latvian political X (Twitter) community published a tweet implying that there is a realistic threat posed to Latvia by Russia and that in the event of this threat materialising NATO and Article 5 will demonstrably fail.

The aforementioned Article published in the wake of the anniversary of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine refers to statements made by an ex-US commander Ben Hodges believing that in the event of a Russian attack on Lithuania, Lithuania should be able to hold off the threat independently for two weeks before receiving support from the allies. In the view of Ben Hodges, Article 5 is not automatic as it is a political decision and for these reasons, NATO countries cannot rely on immediate help.

The tweet in question misrepresented the statements made by Ben Hodges which were to merely draw to the fact that Article 5 when applied in a real scenario might not take place immediately considering that it is a political decision having to be negotiated between all NATO members. Rather the tweet concludes that Article 5 in its essence is ineffective, thus, increasing the perceived threat of Russia and decreasing trust and reliance on NATO.