

Disinformation Monitoring Monthly Report

- Estonia
- Month 11
- July, 2024



Key Insights:

In the month of July, Estonian social media and web-based media actors generally focused on U.S domestic politics, the presidential race, and candidates Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Discussion surrounding the pitfalls of NATO remains present, including the recurring Estonian/Russian language issues. This month, heavy emphasis was likewise placed on delegitimizing the Estonian government and its relevant authorities and projects (such as RailBaltic).

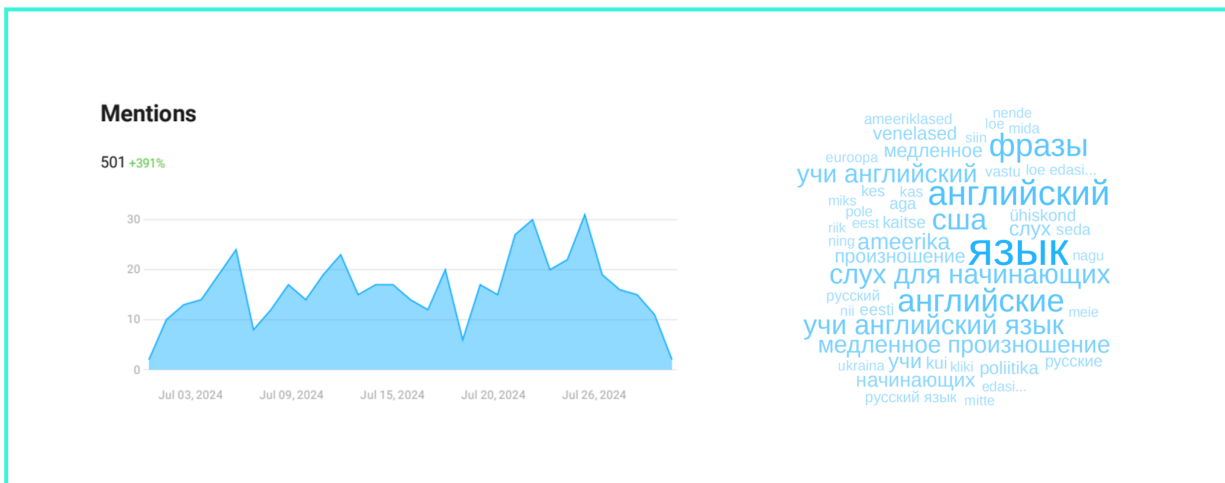
Examples of prominent narratives include:

1. The decline in Estonia's birth rate is a result of government incompetence.
2. Taxes in Estonia keep increasing, impoverishing the nation and lowering the standard of living.
3. NATO member states are extremely worried about the trajectory of U.S politics and the future of NATO.
4. The West is not ready for Ukraine to win the war against Russia.
5. The RailBaltica is a failed project and a waste of taxpayer money.
6. The new requirement for teachers to speak Estonian at the B2 level is Russophobic and discriminatory.
7. European countries are taking away the right of citizens to peacefully protest.

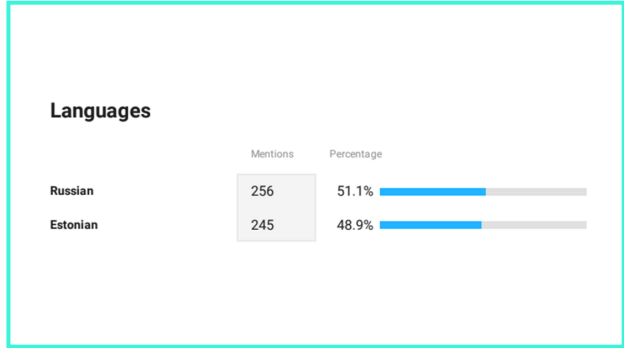
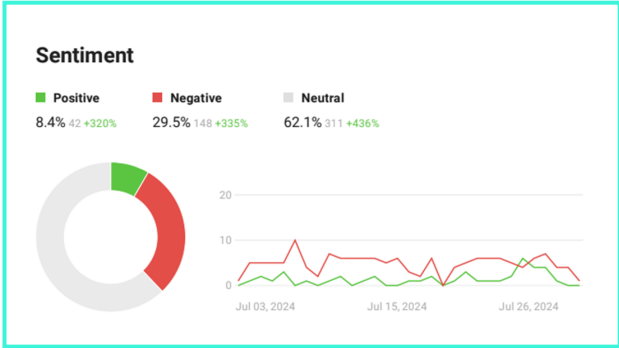
Overview of findings:



- In July, 501 social media posts were monitored on Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo and Telegram channels using the "Awario" media monitoring tool. The number of mentions (501) represents a vast increase from previous months (+391%). In addition to the monitoring provided by "Awario", separate monitoring was conducted individually. As in previous months, 20 Facebook, YouTube, Telegram and Twitter (X) personal and group accounts and 10 websites were monitored weekly. Reddit held the leading position in activity with 267 posts (53.3% of monthly posts), with Twitter (X) accounting for 46.7% of monthly posts (234 posts).
- The "topic cloud" by the "Awario" media monitoring tool reveals the most used words/topic in July, including "english" (английский), "language"(язык), "USA" (США), (see graph above).



- Data from the sentiment analysis shows that a third of the content is negative in nature. This negative percentage amount is consistent with previous months. Content with positive sentiment for July is around 8%, consistent with previous months.
- The graph above indicates that over half of the posts/content in July were in Russian. This indicates a small increase in Russian content material. As the reach of these posts continues to grow, the percentage of mentions in Russian may increase accordingly.



Story of the month:



“Opposition: The Government Has Its Hands Elbow-Deep in the Population's Pockets”

Оппозиция: правительство по локоть засунуло руки в карманы населения

ЭСТОНИЯ

Александр Крюков
20.07.2024 01:08



Лаури Лаатс (слева) и Урмас Рейнсалу. Автор: Siim Lõvi/ERR

The article critiques the new government's tax policies, mainly through the perspectives of Estonian opposition leaders. Isamaa Chair Urmas Reinsalu labels the government as "the same old tax-raising government," accusing them of breaking their promises made in January that there would be no new tax increases. He argues that Estonia will become a leader in the EU for indirect taxes, which will worsen inflation and disproportionately affect low-income individuals. Reinsalu also criticizes the

frequent tax changes for creating an unpredictable tax system that harms the business climate, stating there is "a serious issue with legitimacy."

The article mainly presents criticisms of the new government's tax policies through the lens of opposition leaders like Urmas Reinsalu from Isamaa and Martin Helme from EKRE. This focus is extremely biased and doesn't provide a complete picture. The criticisms are often vague,

lacking detailed evidence or data on how exactly the tax changes will affect low-income people and the business climate. Additionally, the article doesn't include the government's side or expert opinions on the new policies.

Furthermore, the claim that the government is excessively burdening low-income individuals overlooks the broader context of Estonia's tax reforms, which aim to address fiscal imbalances and fund essential public services in the country. Estonia's [tax system](#), with its emphasis on transparency and progressive taxation, is designed to ensure that tax revenues are used efficiently for societal benefits, including defense and infrastructure.