Questions and Answers about the East StratCom Task Force

Why was the East StratCom Task Force created?

The Task Force was set up to address Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns. In March 2015, the European Council tasked the High Representative in cooperation with EU institutions and Member States to submit an action plan on strategic communication.

[European Council conclusions, 19 and 20 March 2015](#)

What are the EU's objectives concerning strategic communications in its Eastern neighbourhood?

The Action Plan on Strategic Communication, presented in June 2015, has three main objectives:

•Effective communication and promotion of EU policies towards the Eastern Neighbourhood

•Strengthening the overall media environment in the Eastern Neighbourhood and in EU Member States, including support for media freedom and strengthening independent media

•Improved EU capacity to forecast, address and respond to disinformation activities by external actors

What does the East StratCom Task Force do?

The Task Force develops communication products and campaigns focused on better explaining EU policies in the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). It works closely with the EU institutions and with EU Delegations in the Eastern Partnership countries.

The Task Force supports wider EU efforts aimed at strengthening the media environment in the Eastern Partnership region, in close collaboration with other EU actors.

The Task Force reports on and analyses disinformation trends, explains and corrects disinformation narratives, and raises awareness of disinformation coming from Russian State, Russian language and Eastern neighbourhood media.

How is the team composed?

The team is made up of fourteen full-time staff, recruited from the EU institutions or seconded by EU Member States. Team members have a variety of professional communications backgrounds and speak several languages, including Russian.

Does the team have a budget?

The Task Force draws on existing resources within the EU institutions and the Member States, including staff from institutions and seconded national experts from Member States. The Task Force works within the existing budget for EU Strategic Communication at headquarters and delegation level. It also collaborates closely with the Commission to ensure a coordinated approach in support of the EU's overall objectives in the neighbourhood. In addition, the Task Force was granted €1.1 million in 2018 for its work to address disinformation. This will be used to fund a network of professional media monitors and data analysts to support the Task Force's work. It will allow the Task Force to focus on the detection and exposure of trending narratives, disinformation channels and disinformation techniques in order to increase resilience in the Eastern neighbourhood and, in cooperation with Member States, within the EU.

Does the team cooperate with other international organisations?

The Task Force works closely with the EU institutions, EU Delegations, Member States, and a wide range of other partners, both governmental and non-governmental, within the EU, in the Eastern Neighbourhood, and beyond. The aim of this wide international cooperation is to share best practices in strategic communications and access to

objective information, and to ensure support for independent media in the region.

Where can I find the Task Force's products?

The team's positive communications products are mainly focused on the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood and produced in the local languages of those countries. They can be found via the social media channels of the EU Delegations in the region, and are also carried on television and via other media and public events.

The team's main product to raise awareness of disinformation is the weekly Disinformation Review. It can provide valuable data for analysts, journalists and officials dealing with this issue. The Disinformation Review also brings the latest news and analyses of pro-Kremlin disinformation. To receive the review each week in English by email, please sign up [here]() . Please subscribe [here]() to receive the Russian language version.

You can also see and search the full record of the Task Force's work on disinformation on its website, [www.EUvsDisinfo.eu/](). You can follow the team on Twitter @EUvsDisinfo and like its Facebook page "EU vs Disinformation".

The team also runs the European External Action Service's [Russian language website](). Russian is spoken and understood by millions of people all over the world, including in EU Member States. The EEAS Russian-language website communicates primarily about the EU's foreign policy by publishing information about EU activities, as well as EU statements and press releases with relevance to the Eastern Neighbourhood in particular.

Does the disinformation review represent an official EU position?

The Review exposes latest disinformation narratives based on media reporting and therefore cannot be considered an official EU position.

Does the team engage in counter-propaganda?

No - the team's main task is to explain and promote the European Union's policies in the Eastern Neighbourhood. It also identifies and corrects disinformation.

Does the Task Force target anti-EU opinions and "propagandists"?

The Task Force does not target opinions and does not seek to "blacklist" anyone. It checks facts and identifies disinformation coming from Russian State, Russian language and Eastern Neighbourhood media. It focuses on the disinformation message, not the messenger.

Has the Council assessed the work of the Task Force?

Member States continue to volunteer significant staff resource to the Task Force in terms of seconded staff. The April 2018 Foreign Affairs Council "commended the work conducted by East StratComms taskforce" in the context of the need to strengthen the resilience of the EU and its neighbours against Russian threats, including hybrid threats.

What do I do if I think I have spotted a mistake in the Task Force's products?

You can contact the Task Force via its website or send an email

Media enquiries:

For all media enquiries, please contact the EEAS press team.

Contact details for the EEAS press team