

Disinformation Review Issue No 59 - 23 February

Date	Language / Targeted Audience	Summary	Link	Outlet(s)	Disproof	Reported by
2017-02-08	BGR	According to EU Commissioner Hahn, Bulgaria will disappear as a nation in 40 years. Hahn claims that this process is irreversible and that the EU should claim the territory.	http://bit.ly/2lyZgEu	The Bulgarian Times	The European Commission's Representation in Bulgaria has denied that European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hanh made statements of a negative nature about Bulgaria. http://bit.ly/2kZFXRP	East Stratcom Network
2017-02-09	RUS	Sending NATO forces to the Eastern flank of the Alliance is a provocation against Russia.	http://bit.ly/2m4CtxZ	Kanal 5	Debunked many times before. The enforcement of the Eastern flank is a response to Russia's aggressive foreign policy and actions in Ukraine. http://bit.ly/2iMmGkG	Source from an EU country
2017-02-10	RUS	The Baltic states are plotting to attack Russia, shown by the arrival of NATO troops in the Baltics as the largest troop presence in the region since WWII and furthermore all three countries are nearly bankrupt due to their anti-Russia foreign policies.	http://bit.ly/2m0Cfvi	TV Zvezda	Debunked many times before. The enforcement of the Eastern flank is a response to Russia's aggressive foreign policy and actions in Ukraine. http://bit.ly/2iMmGkG . The economies of the Baltic States have prospered since joining the EU: according to Eurostat, GDP per capita at market prices has grown 45% in EE; 39% in LV & 42% in LT since 2004.	Source from an EU country
2017-02-10	CZE	There has been an agreement between president Bush and president Gorbachev that NATO won't be enlarged by the Eastern European countries in exchange for USSR's agreement with the unification of Germany.	http://bit.ly/2m4Umqg	protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz	No such promise was ever made, and Russia has never produced any evidence to back up its claim: http://bit.ly/2eFPg9s	Kremlin Watch (European Values think-tank), http://www.europeanvalues.net/kremlinwatch/
2017-02-10	RUS	A delegation from the University of Bristol will start excavations of historical sites in Crimea.	http://bit.ly/2lpYilp	RIA Novosti	In a statement, the University of Bristol confirmed that they were not linked to any planned project in Crimea. http://bit.ly/2lhDHRz	East Stratcom Network
2017-02-12	CZE	Migrants from the Middle East and Africa attacked and sexually harassed people in Frankfurt during New Years Eve celebration.	http://bit.ly/2m3KCD6	euportal.parlamentnilisty.cz	The news about attack in Frankfurt, originally presented by German tabloid Bild, was based on false testimonies. Bild itself recognized that it was mistaken (unlike the disinformation oriented outlets which continue spreading this false information): http://huff.to/2kE3onq	Collected by the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI) within the framework of the Centre for International Relations' project co-financed by the Visegrad Fund

2017-02-12	RUS	NATO violates its own Charter. When it was created in 1949, the First Article of the Charter declared that NATO would fulfill all the requirements of the UN. And then NATO began introducing an aggressive ideology in other documents.	http://bit.ly/2l2lF8P	Vecher s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (09:52)	No evidence given. See e.g. "The Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia" (communiqué after the 2016 NATO summit): http://bit.ly/29wEikw	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-12	RUS	The West has always despised Russia and has always been trying to teach her a lesson.	http://bit.ly/2l2lF8P	Vecher s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (15:22)	There is a clear record of strong cooperation between the EU and Russia, dating back to 1994, when the two sides negotiated a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Russia was identified as a strategic partner for the EU, and was the only country with which the EU held summits not once, but twice a year. A new EU-Russia agreement was being negotiated up until 2014, at which point talks were suspended due to Russia's involvement in the Ukraine conflict. Negotiations were also in train on visa facilitation. There was also cooperation between the EU and Russia on a number of foreign policy issues, some of which continues to this day. The EU and its Member States have maintained a clear policy of reaching out to Russian society and youth, mainly through the Erasmus+ student exchange programme and other people to people contacts. // NATO has consistently striven to build a cooperative relationship with Russia since the early 1990s, through the Partnership for Peace and creation of a NATO-Russia Council, and specific cooperation in the Western Balkans on and issues like counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism. No other NATO partner has been offered a comparable relationship, nor a similarly comprehensive institutional framework: http://bit.ly/2e0TZnG // Russia has been invited into many other international bodies.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-12	RUS	Europe has given Russia no other ideas but communism, crusades, nazism and fascism.	http://bit.ly/2l2lF8P	Vecher s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (1:11:21)	Accusations ignore centuries of cultural development in Europe.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist

2017-02-12	RUS	The project of Ukraine has no content apart from nazi ideology. The whole purpose of the independent state is being anti-Russian and "Heil Bandera".	http://bit.ly/2l2lF8P	Vecher s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (1:34:08)	Repeating a myth that has been debunked many times. There are no nazis governing Ukraine, vast majority of Ukrainians voted for democratic parties. // There is no "anti-Russian ideology", it is the actions of the current regime in the Kremlin (like illegal annexation of Crimea or military actions in the east of Ukraine) that are perceived as aggression.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-12	RUS	The only political goal of the West is to pass Ukraine into the hands of Russia, to make Kremlin preoccupied with Ukrainian problems.	http://bit.ly/2l2lF8P	Vecher s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (2:05:52)	Both the EU and the US have many political goals, not all of them connected to Ukraine. // The West does not want to pass Ukraine into Russia's hands, the West supports sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and has even imposed sanctions on Russia for violating these.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-13	RUS	People in the Baltic states were better off in the Soviet Union compared to nowadays. Sending NATO forces to the Eastern flank of the Alliance is a provocation against Russia.	http://bit.ly/2l048zk	TVC	Debunked many times before. During the post-war period, the USSR priorities were not the investment in industry, but the repression of the national resistance movement and the militarization of the territory. The Baltic States as a whole were Soviet economy donors http://bit.ly/2lBzobb whereas now, the Baltic economies are doing well in comparison see e.g http://bit.ly/2lLv35P , https://goo.gl/PeFLEV . The enforcement of the eastern flank is a response to Russia's aggressive foreign policy and actions in Ukraine. http://bit.ly/2iMmGkG .	Source from an EU country
2017-02-13	ENG	Kyiv's armed forces have been using weapons of mass destruction (Tochka-U tactical missile system) against civilians in Eastern Ukraine.	http://bit.ly/2mf6MI7	RT	The General Staff of Ukraine disputes Russia's accusations. The claims concerning the use of Tochka-U have been made previously by the separatists supported by Russia, but no evidence has ever been presented. http://bit.ly/2lGjl6l . Further debunking at The Insider http://bit.ly/2lhdIAm .	Promote Ukraine
2017-02-13	RUS	Kyiv's armed forces have been using weapons of mass destruction (Tochka-U tactical missile system) against civilians in eastern Ukraine.	http://bit.ly/2lh9Pva	Komsomolskaya Pravda	Russian translation of the RT article above.	Promote Ukraine
2017-02-13	ENG	Ukrainian authorities are losing control over the situation in the army. The nationalists broke the truce and began the hostilities in Avdiivka without any coordination with the Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.	http://bit.ly/2m3lq2X	Horizont	No evidence given. It was the Russian backed forces that began the shelling: http://bit.ly/2kEVGsu	Promote Ukraine

2017-02-13	RUS	The placement of four NATO battalions in the Baltics and in Poland is done in order to encircle Russia by a ring of military bases and provide a pretext for military provocations.	http://bit.ly/2lhNhKN	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (8:12)	The battalions are there to ensure the allies of NATO's readiness to defend them: http://cnn.it/28JwTnX	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-13	RUS	The last time NATO has attacked Russia was November 2015, when a NATO country shot down a Russian plane.	http://bit.ly/2lhNhKN	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (13:56)	Turkey was defending its own airspace against repeated airspace violations from Russian jets: http://bbc.in/1SirLNH	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-13	RUS	The placement of NATO battalions in the Baltics is an act of intimidation by the US and NATO. They want to claim the territory belonging to the Russian world. Baltic countries are a part of the Russian world, the people there love Russia.	http://bit.ly/2lhNhKN	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (24:10)	Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are not part of a 'Russian world', they are sovereign and independent states which have joined NATO voluntarily. // Lithuania welcomed the NATO troops: http://bit.ly/2liobgr and actually would like to see more of them because of Russia' aggressive behaviour: http://reut.rs/2loTWEp // Latvia as well: http://bloom.bg/2IBVMkz // Similarly in Estonia: http://bit.ly/2kerQeQ	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-13	RUS	The West has promised Russia that NATO will not expand.	http://bit.ly/2lhNhKN	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (34:40)	No such promise was ever made, and Russia has never produced any evidence to back up its claim: http://bit.ly/2eFPg9s	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-13	RUS	The task [of the West] is to use force, terror and propaganda to make Ukraine an anti-Russian power in order to set it against Russia later, and then to destroy both Russia and Ukraine.	http://bit.ly/2m3uPaK	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (24:48)	The EU and US respect both the Ukrainian and Russian sovereignty and territorial integrity. The West does not "create" anti-Russian power in Ukraine, the anti-Russian sentiments in Ukraine are caused by Russian military aggression on Ukrainian territory.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-14	RUS	People in Ukraine are humiliated because of their Russian origin or because they are Russian-speaking. It is a common practice there.	http://bit.ly/2l3eYEI	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (22:27)	Repeating disinformation that has been debunked many times. There is no problem with using Russian language in Ukraine. According to Ukraine's Constitution and the Law on languages, every person is guaranteed the right to choose the language he or she wishes to speak and no restrictions have ever been enacted limiting that choice (see Article 10: http://bit.ly/2ep35dP)	Pavel Spirin, former journalist

2017-02-14	RUS	There was a coup in Ukraine and the current authorities are illegitimate.	http://bit.ly/2l3eYEI	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (59:10)	Repeating disinformation that has been debunked many times. There was no coup in 2014 in Ukraine. The "Revolution of Dignity" was a spontaneous protest against the Viktor Yanukovich's regime and his U-turn on the Association Agreement with the EU. The current Parliament and the President of this country were elected in free and democratic elections after Yanukovich had fled the country.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-14	RUS	President Poroshenko was brought to power by the West in order to take all the resources from Ukraine - money, people, peoples' organs, and soil.	http://bit.ly/2l3eYEI	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (1:01:22)	Conspiracy theory. Both the EU and the US support Ukrainian sovereignty. The EU is both currently and historically the biggest donor of financial help to Ukraine.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-14	CZE	The occupation of the Czech republic continues. Based on new agreement signed by the Czech Armed Forces, one Czech army brigade will be commanded by German Bundeswehr. This is part of the German effort to dominate Europe and prevent the national states from protecting themselves against future waves of migrants.	http://bit.ly/2kDZNFm	zvedavec.org	The Czech republic is not occupied. The agreement aims to improve the interoperability among Czech, Romanian and German armies. It establishes system of common military trainings and exercises that will allow better cooperation in the case of crises. Ultimately, the Czech government has to approve the participation in those exercises: http://bit.ly/2m0tHVh	Collected by the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI) within the framework of the Centre for International Relations' project co-financed by the Visegrad Fund
2017-02-14	CZE	Jean-Claude Juncker said that he doubts the EU will not fall apart during negotiations following the UK's decision on Brexit.	http://bit.ly/2lyT4fP	ac24.cz	Jean-Claude Juncker said that the UK might try to divide Europe and that he has certain doubts whether EU27 will be united on this. Nothing about falling apart: http://bit.ly/2lH7RT9	Collected by the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI) within the framework of the Centre for International Relations' project co-financed by the Visegrad Fund
2017-02-14	LTU	German soldier serving as part of a NATO mission to Lithuania raped a teenage girl.	see the disproof column	email campaign	The story was an intentional fake, according to NATO planted by Russia: http://bit.ly/2meEIDH [DE] or http://wapo.st/2lmNRpe [EN] or http://bit.ly/2lCW5W [RU] or http://bit.ly/2m4JVcL [LV]	East Stratcom Network
2017-02-14	RUS	The soldiers of Army of Ukraine take strong psychotropic drugs that allow soldiers to fight even after being shot and wounded severely.	http://bit.ly/2lhA9p5	Izvestia	No evidence given.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-15	RUS	The US and Canada are ending their military cooperation with Ukraine.	http://bit.ly/2kDWgat	Zvezda	Ukraine will no longer be coproducing arms with certain companies from US and Canada, however, the three countries will continue to cooperate on military technology as demonstrated by new contracts and bilateral meetings. Further debunking at Stopfake http://bit.ly/2ldANnw .	Stopfake.org

2017-02-15	RUS	The militants of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army existing during WWII swore allegiance to Hitler.	http://bit.ly/2ldLaaY	60 minut @Rossiya 1 (29:30)	The Ukrainian Insurgent Army was created in October 1942 in order to fight against both the USSR and the Third Reich. In 1944, it collaborated with Wehrmacht for tactical reasons http://bit.ly/2meyVZD .	East Stratcom Network
2017-02-15	CZE	The Swedish governing politicians decided three years ago that they will cancel the elections and they will not allow Swedish people to vote until 2022.	http://bit.ly/2mf2MRt	protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz	In 2014, the Swedish government made a deal with the opposition to not disagree on a budget until 2022, which prevented snap elections. That deal was subsequently broken, but that has not had any effect so far. The next general election in Sweden is coming up in 2018. http://bit.ly/2IBIRjD	Kremlin Watch (European Values think-tank), http://www.europeanvalues.net/kremlinwatch/
2017-02-15	RUS	The main reason for the sharp fall of the Ukrainian economy in 2014 and later is the current government that is preparing Ukraine for a big war.	http://bit.ly/2mhf63A	Večer s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (1:04:19)	No evidence given. The thing that damages the Ukrainian economy most is the war in the East (http://bit.ly/1GGxA5M) and national corruption inherited from the past (http://bit.ly/2dbivRx), which the EU is working with the government of Ukraine to address. http://bit.ly/2dYeL4j . Despite those challenges, Recent economic indicators show that the economy continues to grow on a modest trajectory. http://bit.ly/2m3nSWU	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-15	RUS	Russia has not started the war in Ukraine, however, there is no other solution for a conflict in Donbass except for a military answer.	http://bit.ly/2mhf63A	Večer s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (1:19:38)	No evidence given. Military operations in Eastern Ukraine were launched in 2014 by an armed group under the command of Igor Girkin (nickname - "Strelkov"), Russian citizens and an agent of the secret service of the Russian army. That time, almost all the "leaders" and the commanders of the armed groups of the separatist "republics" in Donbass were also citizens of Russia that since the spring of 2014 has been massively supplying them with heavy weapons, ammunition, vehicles and fuel. See e.g http://bit.ly/1KpsngN , http://bit.ly/2lCcjFc .	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-15	RUS	The annexation of Crimea was necessary because the new Ukrainian authorities had planned to attack the base of the Russian fleet in Sevastopol and start a war against Russia.	http://bit.ly/2mhf63A	Večer s Vladimirom Solovyovym @ Rossiya-1 (1:22:18)	No evidence given. The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation took place in February-March 2014, almost two months before the pro-Russian protests in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts escalated into an armed separatist insurgency http://bbc.in/1Ffeglv . So this was clearly not a case of preventing the escalation of a conflict which had not even started.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist

2017-02-16	RUS	The ideology and practice of Nazism is a tool by which the current Ukrainian authorities "keep at bay the entire nation". After Ukraine, the next victim of Nazism will be Russia.	http://bit.ly/2mhk80d	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (33:04, 1:11:04)	No evidence given. There is no Nazi in the current Ukrainian government. The far-right Right Sector (often depicted as "fascists" or nazis by pro-Kremlin outlets) gained only 1.8% of the votes, far short of the threshold needed to enter parliament. Ukraine's electorate clearly voted for unity and moderation, not separatism or extremism, and the composition of the parliament reflects that http://bit.ly/2dFFEdi	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-16	RUS	An image shows the victim of attempted sexual assault, a Danish 17-year-old girl.	http://bit.ly/2mf1iH2	takstranno.com	The photo of the girl has been used since 2014 in many different stories claiming different cases of assaults committed by immigrants. http://bit.ly/2iC2Spi . The woman on the picture is Nanna Skovmand and she was beaten on Christmas Eve 2014 in Copenhagen - not recently in another part of denmark as the article claims. http://bit.ly/2kUO8xF .	East Stratcom Network
2017-02-16	RUS	EU's public diplomacy programmes in Russia aim at an "internal destabilisation of Russia" ahead of the 2018 presidential elections	http://bit.ly/2iC6mrY	Life.ru	EU's public diplomacy projects in Russia do not aim at destabilising Russia. On the contrary, they aim at developing human rights and democratic institutions. http://bit.ly/2m8mrmZ	EEAS
2017-02-17	RUS	In 2014, the West provoked anti-government protests of Ukrainians to distract the world from the Winter Olympics in Sochi.	http://bit.ly/2mhkS5	RIA Novosti	No evidence given. The spontaneous onset of the Euromaidan protests was a reaction of a large part of the Ukrainian society to the former President Yanukovich's departure from the Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013.	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-17	RUS	The name of 'Ukraine' is not historically correct for the country, the historical name is 'Malorossiya' and 'Novorossiya'.	http://bit.ly/2i2ShAK	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (05:10)	This claim is contrary to historical documents. Since the 16-18 centuries, the word of 'Ukraine' was in use among both the Moscovites and the Europeans, for instance in the book 'Description de l'Ukraine' by Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan published in 1648 or on the well-known map by the Black Sea, composed by Georg Matthäus Seutter in 1740. http://bit.ly/2iCc8d2	Pavel Spirin, former journalist

2017-02-17	RUS	Russia has no plans for aggression against Ukraine, so any disputes on this topic are an 'informational hypnosis'.	http://bit.ly/2l2ShAK	'Vremya pokazhet' @ 'Pervyi kanal' (20:16)	Easily disproven by the fact that Russia has been on Ukrainian territory since 2014. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court have concluded that the situation within the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol amounts to an international armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This international armed conflict began at the latest on 26 February when the Russian Federation deployed members of its armed forces to gain control over parts of the Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian Government http://bit.ly/2ftv6iT .	Pavel Spirin, former journalist
2017-02-17	CZE	USA provided Islamic state with weapons. // Claims that Flynn secretly negotiated with the Russians are fabricated. // There was nothing like annexation of Crimea, but peaceful referendum.	http://bit.ly/2lzoUJm	protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz	No evidence given // Even Mr. Flynn already admits that he had negotiated with Russians http://bbc.in/2kwnomR // Any decision relating to Ukraine's sovereignty or sovereign choices can only be taken without undue external pressure. This so-called referendum was organised in a matter of weeks by a self-proclaimed Crimean leadership lacking democratic legitimacy and installed by armed Russian military personnel following the seizure of public buildings. The EU does not recognise it.	Kremlin Watch (European Values think-tank), http://www.europeanvalues.net/kremlinwatch/

2017-02-19	ENG	Kiev launched a special military operation in southeast Ukraine in April 2014, after local residents refused to recognize the new Ukrainian authorities, which came to power as a result of a coup.	http://bit.ly/2mh811V	Sputnik	<p>The situation in Ukraine has been under the the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court preliminary examination since 25 April 2014. In their Report on Preliminary Examination Activities 2016, they conclude that the situation within the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol amounts to an international armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This international armed conflict began at the latest on 26 February when the Russian Federation deployed members of its armed forces to gain control over parts of the Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian Government http://bit.ly/2ftv6iT. According to Russian military medal "For Returning Crimea". the operation began on 20th of February http://bit.ly/231nvZ0. The 2014 presidential election in Ukraine was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and respecting fundamental freedoms, despite the hostile security environment in two eastern regions of the country. According to the OSCE (of which Russia is a participating State) "the people of Ukraine had the opportunity to genuinely express their will at the ballot box" http://bit.ly/1hqcDuR. Similarly, Ukraine's local elections in October 2015 were competitive and generally showed respect for the democratic process http://bit.ly/1VUL9V5.</p>	Promote Ukraine
2017-02-19	RUS	The Swedish city of Malmö is plagued by crime due to the high number of refugees, 50 murders were recorded during last year and the unemployment is 63%. There are official no-go zones where the police does not go.	http://bit.ly/2IAw513	Voskresenye Vremya @'Pervyi kanal'	<p>During last year, 12 - not 50 - murders were recorded in the city, which is in fact an unusually high number. There is no evidence that this has anything to do with refugees. The unemployment rate is not 63% - thats the employment rate, the unemployment is in fact 10,5%. The disinformation concerning no-go zones has been debunked before and is often repeated, there are no official no-go zones according to the Swedish authorities. Further debunking of that claim by Buzzfeed http://bzfd.it/2IBQfdQ.</p>	East Stratcom Network

DISCLAIMER: Every Thursday, the Disinformation Review brings you the latest cases of news articles carrying key examples of how pro-Kremlin disinformation finds its way in international media, as well as news and analysis on the topic. The review focuses on key messages carried in international media which have been identified as providing a partial, distorted or false view or interpretation and/or spreading key pro-Kremlin messaging. It does not necessarily imply however that the outlet concerned is linked to the Kremlin or pro-Kremlin, or that it has intentionally sought to disinform. The Review is a compilation of cases from the East StratCom Task Force's wide network of contributors and therefore cannot be considered an official EU position. Likewise, the news articles are based on the analysis of the East StratCom Task Force, so information and opinions expressed there cannot be considered an official EU position. Any errors or misrepresentations should be reported to the East Stratcom Task Force for correction at disinforeview@euvsdisinfo.eu

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