

TACKLING DISINFORMATION: HOW TO RESPOND

**BRUSSELS, NOVEMBER, 2020
EAST STRATCOM TASK FORCE**

2015: EAST STRATCOM TASK FORCE

MANDATE



13. The European Council stressed the need to challenge Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns and invited the High Representative, in cooperation with Member States and EU institutions, to prepare by June an action plan on strategic communication. The establishment of a communication team is a first step in this regard.

OBJECTIVES

Communicating
EU policies
effectively

Strengthening
media
environment

Exposing &
analysing
disinformation

2018: EU ACTION PLAN AGAINST DISINFORMATION

Improved detection,
analysis & exposure

Stronger cooperation &
joint responses

Mobilising private sector

Raising awareness,
improving societal
resilience

CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

- Russia continues to engage in coordinated disinformation campaigns and influence operations globally
- On COVID-19, shift from exploiting conspiracy theories to "vaccine diplomacy", mocking others' vaccine programs
- Strategic aim: use of disinformation as part of foreign policy and hybrid toolbox to sow confusion and weaken the West
- Resources for state-controlled media by Russia remain over 1 billion EUR a year
- All foreign actors rely on domestic disinformation ecosystem and consumers
- COVID-19 brought up China as an actor engaging in disinformation campaigns, including targeting Europe

CHANGES IN MESSAGES, TACTICS AND IMPACT

TOP 5 RECURRING DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES ABOUT COVID-19



- 1 US CREATED IT
- 2 EU FAILS TO RESPOND
- 3 THE CORONAVIRUS IS NOT SERIOUS
- 4 IT'S A SECRET PLAN OF THE GLOBAL ELITES
- 5 THE CORONAVIRUS WAS PROBABLY MADE BY NATO

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TOP 5 CONSPIRACY THEORIES ABOUT COVID-19

- 1 A FORCED VACCINATION WILL INJECT **NANO CHIPS**
- 2 **BILL GATES** WANTS TO INTRODUCE MANDATORY VACCINATION TO CONTROL THE WORLD
- 3 COVID-19 MIGHT BE AN ACT OF **ANGLO-SAXON** REVENGE
- 4 A CANADIAN REPORT INDICTS THE **US** FOR SPREADING THE CORONAVIRUS
- 5 COVID-19 EPIDEMIC IS MANUFACTURED BY THE **MEDIA**



MAIN FINDINGS

- There is a crystallizing and clustering around specific topics and narratives: alleged links between COVID-19 and 5G networks; COVID-19 restrictions as pretext establishing global domination of secretive elites; and attacks on individuals engaged in the development of vaccines, especially Bill Gates.
- External actors, notably pro-Kremlin sources, are still involved in spreading disinformation, including by amplifying existing conspiracy theories, which link the COVID-19 pandemic to biological warfare, 5G technology and fuel anti-vaccination sentiment.

ALL EEAS SPECIAL REPORTS

COVID-19 DISINFORMATION
ALL EEAS SPECIAL REPORTS IN ONE PLACE



MAIN FINDINGS

20.10.2020	SWEDEN EXCLUDES CHINA FROM BUILDING 5G NETWORK AFTER PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES	vz.ru	US, Sweden
15.08.2020	NETHERLANDS TO BUILD SPECIAL HOUSES FOR 5G OPPONENTS	News Front - Georgian	The Netherlands
10.06.2020	5G SYSTEMS INCREASE CANCER INCIDENCE	A esli chestno	Russia
08.06.2020	5G TECHNOLOGY CAN HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON BIRDS	Asaval-Dasavali (print only)	Georgia
04.06.2020	5G TECHNOLOGY IS HARMFUL TO HUMAN HEALTH	A esli chestno - YouTube	Russia
23.05.2020	THE US SPREADS PROPAGANDA ABOUT 5G AND VACCINES	News Front - Bulgarian	Russia, US

HARMFUL MISINFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS



1.7M
shares



117M
views



Building up a comprehensive response:

1. Communicate strategically

Do you have a comms strategy?

2. Prepare

What are your vulnerabilities?

3. Identify and assess

What is the aim of disinformation?

4. Response options

Should you ignore or respond?



#EUvsDisinfo

RAPID ALERT SYSTEM

STRENGTHENING COORDINATED AND
JOINT RESPONSES TO DISINFORMATION



COVID-19 DISINFORMATION

EEAS SPECIAL REPORT

CORONAVIRUS: COVERAGE



STAY UP TO DATE

THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE



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