KREMLIN

INFLUENCE

INDEX

2017

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Kremlin Influence Index is a quantitative tool, designed by the group of think tanks from Eastern and Central Europe to measure the ability of the government of Russian Federation to influence on information space of other countries to achieve its goals. This Report contains the results of pilot measurement of the Index in Ukraine, Georgia, Hungary and Czech Republic.

Dedicated to experts on psychological security, public officials, media experts, journalists, stratcom units and other stakeholders involved into counteracting disinformation and propaganda influences in the region.

Photo: Pixabay

CONTENTS

GREETING WORD

Dear friends,

We have to live in a difficult time. In the unstable and unpredictable time which requires that we revise our usual thoughts on the state and the society, security and freedom, peace and war. At the same time, the strength of our values is being tested - how we can protect them, and how united we can be in their protection.

This time did not begin after the annexation of the Crimea in 2014, and even not after the military aggression of Russia against Georgia in 2008. It began when people in the Kremlin government offices decided to challenge the democratic world and developed plans on how to use the achievements of democracy against itself. And perhaps above all we are speaking about the freedom of speech and media which is now used in its quasi form to destabilize societies, undermine trust in democratic institutions, incite to hatred and enmity, and create an illusory world that has little to do with the reality and the needs of people.

The governments of the democratic world, analytical centers, public organizations, and the media responded to this challenge. Active work (especially in the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe) on finding solutions that would minimize the danger and protect freedom of speech is under way. This work requires coordination of efforts and a clear understanding of the state of the problem in different countries separately and in the region as a whole.

The media must not be used as a means of propaganda and manipulation of public opinion – this is the consensus that we share, and the goal which we pursue together.

You are holding the first Report on the results of the measurement of the Kremlin Influence Index, that is, a new instrument that will allow all interested parties to have a measurable and commensurable information on the capabilities of the Russian government and Russian propagandists to influence information processes in different countries. This report is a pilot one and covers four countries. We hope that this instrument will be useful enough to be extended to other countries in the region, and that the index will be measured on a regular basis.

On behalf of the partners:
Detector Media, Ukraine
European Values, the Czech Republic
Political Capital, Hungary
Media Development Foundation, Georgia

Natalia Ligachova-Chernolutska,
Chairperson of the Detector Media

WHAT IS THIS FOR?

The Objective of Kremlin Influence Index is to measure the capacity of RF Government to influence (initiate, change) the processes in the information space (production, exchange and consuming of information) of other countries.

HOW TO USE IT?

The Index looks like number, detailed in the spiderweb diagram, for each separate country.

The larger score demonstrates the more ability of Kremlin to influence the information processes in the state. The wider the web is, the more opportunities RF Government has.

The diagram constitutes of 6 lines that are relevant to 6 components of the Index.

UKRAINE
49

CZECH REPUBLIC
48

GEORGIA
54

HUNGARY
61
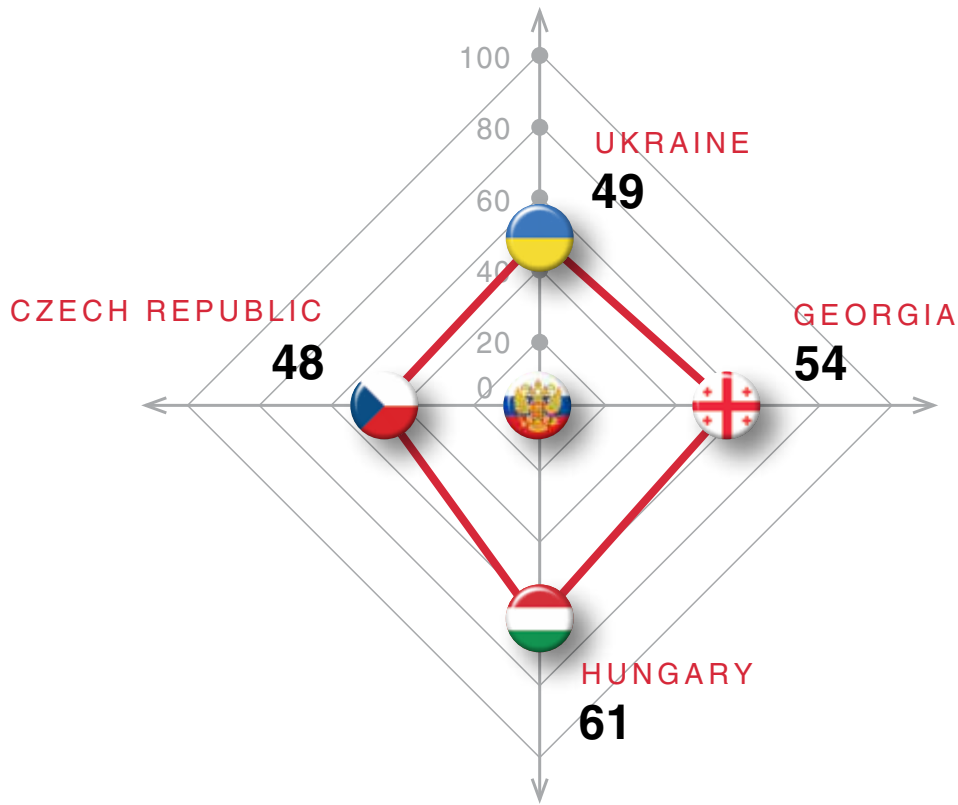
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Informational influence of Kremlin on the studied countries differs to a certain extent, but the overall trends are obvious

Over a long period of history, Ukraine and Georgia were part of Russian Empire, and now these countries are considered by the Kremlin as a part of its future geopolitical projects. Democratic development of these countries is not yet stable enough, and doubt can still be cast on their belonging to the European political tradition; thus discrediting of pro-European elites and social destabilization may lead to the situation where these states will refuse the democratic course, and in the future it may cast doubt on the statehood itself. This is a window of opportunity that the Kremlin uses primarily for informational influence on these countries. In the discourse of Ukraine and Georgia the topics of Soviet nostalgia, myth of the specific relationship between these countries and Moscow, the stereotype of Russia being a «big brother», «defender» etc. are supported; anti-Americanism and homophobia which are inherent in the Kremlin discourse are combined with the ideas of the erroneousness of the course of European integration and even independence as such. The same ideas are used to justify Russia's aggression against these countries and occupation of their territory by the Kremlin.

The Czech Republic and Hungary have more pronounced belonging to the European civilization, and it is this belonging that becomes a target for the Russian propaganda. The aim of the Kremlin is to undermine confidence in democratic values and democratic institutions, to make these societies look for «alternatives» to the current order. That is why conspiracy theories, Euroscepticism, anti-Americanism, xenophobia and homophobia are relied on. In the future, this opens up opportunities for populism and political isolationism; society that loses

faith in the democratic idea remains open to «alternative» ideas, and this is where the Kremlin feels that it is in the winning position.

Influence: Political dimension.

In all of the studied countries there are more or less strong[1] political parties and politicians that are disseminating either pro-Russian or anti-Western slogans and promoting narratives close to the Kremlin ones. These are rightist Fidesz and far-right Jobbik in Hungary, far-right Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, populistic Opposition Bloc in Ukraine, the Communist Party and «Dawn» in the Czech Republic. Political parties in these countries are (as a rule) closely related to big business, and often the relationship of this business with Russia causes pro-Russian course of political parties. This system of relationship between politics and business creates danger, because the Kremlin is able to manipulate interests of business elites, and thus the position of political forces may change depending on the interests of their curators. Conservative ideology of Kremlin, together with its disinformation efforts, gives arguments to parties from different sides of political spectrum to support its policy.

In the Czech Republic and Hungary, this influence is also exerted through senior politicians (Czech President and Hungarian Prime Minister respectively), who in their statements justify aggressive actions of Russia in the world, emphasize the strategic friendship with the Kremlin etc. In the Czech Republic, this influence is compensated by a more pragmatic and independent position of the government; in Hungary experts draw attention to the difference between the pro-Russian rhetoric and the more pragmatic line of the government following the mainstream consensus regarding sanctions, and the Minsk agreements in the EU, as well as in the NATO. Ukraine is in a state of undeclared war with Russia, so even pro-Russian political forces apply patriotic rhetoric. Georgian government exploits existing fears towards Russia and turns it to politics of neutrality thus backing the existing anti-Western rhetoric in the country.

Local authorities are also communicators of the Kremlin ideas. Here, it is not the number of these institutions that is important (it is not significant), but informational public response to their decisions or statements in which they either support the foreign policy of the Kremlin, or deliberately do no condemn it.

Influence: Media dimension.

The study confirms the thesis that the Russian media (such as Sputnik, RT, NTV, Russia 1 etc.) do not actually play a significant role in the system of disseminating Kremlin narratives among citizens. They are a source of narratives for the local pro-Russian media, in particular fringe media; they can also be referred by local mainstream and local media, which thereby disseminate the interpretations of events keeping with the Kremlin propaganda.

In Georgia and Ukraine, Russian-language Russian media are used by citizens more for entertainment than as a source of news. Thus there is rather a problem of the negative influence of their entertainment content (movies, TV series, shows, pseudoscientific programs) than the fake news.

On the other hand, the national media are becoming more influential messengers of the Kremlin narratives. Oligarchic nature of the media space in the studied countries creates favorable conditions for Russian informational influence. Alliances (either more or less stable ones) between business and political groups in the studied countries and the Kremlin give Russia an opportunity to influence editorial policies of the national and local media which are under control of these groups. Therefore, traces of the Kremlin narratives can be found in the content of the media controlled by Fidesz-KDNP in Hungary; D. Firtash, S. Kurchenko etc. - in Ukraine; Obieqtivi TV, Maestro TV and Asaval-Dasavali in Georgia; several specific narratives on TV Prima in the Czech Republic. Since it is not always in the format of fake news, there is no obvious evidence that these media work for the Kremlin; working within the national legislation, these media enjoy the freedom of speech, and there are no democratic solutions to limit their activities. Governments do not have the political will to counter destabilizing work of these media, because it means a conflict with pro-Russian oligarchs of their country.

Strong influence of the Kremlin is observed among the fringe media. Citizens' departure from the mainstream media and search for alternative sources on the Internet is a common trend. Influence of the dubious media makes a significant contribution to the system of Russian propagandistic influence.

Influence of the Russian media in the occupied territories in Ukraine and Georgia should be noted separately. The Russian government takes measures to carry out informational isolation of these territories and their integration into the Russian media realm by blocking access of citizens to the independent media and vice versa, by providing access to the Russian ones or to those controlled by the Kremlin.

Influence: Civil society dimension.

Public organizations can be used to camouflage communication activities of Kremlin. Artificia lnature of these NGOs shows such characteristic features as the absence of organizations' history, opaque financing and quality information resources. Particularly, the situation in Ukraine destabilizes on behalf of GONGOs. Another type of pro-Kremlin NGOs are organizations of artistic and cultural orientation (the Association of Tolstoy in Hungary, the Association of Independent Media in the Czech Republic), which provide an additional communication platform for pro-Kremlin political and cultural figures and increase the legitimacy of the pro-Kremlin actors in the eyes of the society. Academic institutions that promote Kremlin discourse, but they are very few in number. You can rather talk about pro-Russian propaganda by some professors than about the institutionalized influence through the academic field.

In Ukraine and Georgia, Orthodox Church (those domains of it that are subordinated to Moscow) acts as a powerful channel of Kremlin propaganda. Traditionalism, conservatism and the idea of the unity of nations that profess it are largely inherent in this confession; therefore it is used by the Kremlin to mobilize potential supporters of its ideology. There are numerous cases when members of this church of different levels came out with anti-Western messages or

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[1] Represented in the highest legislative body.

justified the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation.

In all the studied countries, Kremlin uses far-right and extremist organizations to their advantage, but their influence is limited. It is important to note that part of the territory of Ukraine and Georgia is under the control of illegal armed formations, and in these territories influence of these institutions is significant; in particular, they create their own media for the propaganda of their goals and ideology.

Response: Political dimension.

Ukraine is an obvious flagship in the matter of political response to the Russian informational aggression. Clear understanding of the threat of Russian disinformation is fixed at the level of strategic documents. A number of resolute political decisions, which were made by the state, have significantly restricted access of the Russian media products to Ukrainian citizens. These decisions include limiting the broadcast of Russian propagandistic channels; ban on showing Russian movies with the elements of propaganda; ban on the admission of artists who publicly support annexation of the Crimea and the Kremlin's military aggression; activities of the government aimed at the restoration of Ukrainian broadcasting in the frontline and occupied territories; limitation on the import of books made in Russia etc. Independent public broadcasting service is created, which has to become a better alternative to the oligarchic media. Existing problems in the state management of information security: institutional decisions (creation of the specialized ministry) have not diminished the chaos in the powers of the authorities in this field and have not contributed to the proper coordination of efforts.

In other studied countries, political response depends above all on the political will of the ruling elites. Pro-Russian orientation of the Hungarian government causes the absence of decisions in this field. Under the pressure from the realities, the government of Georgia defined informational influence of Russia as dangerous, but because of the lack of proper political will, a lot of time can be lost in the transition from declarations to real actions to improve safety. The Czech government is more active in this area; in particular, a specialized governmental structure which has to
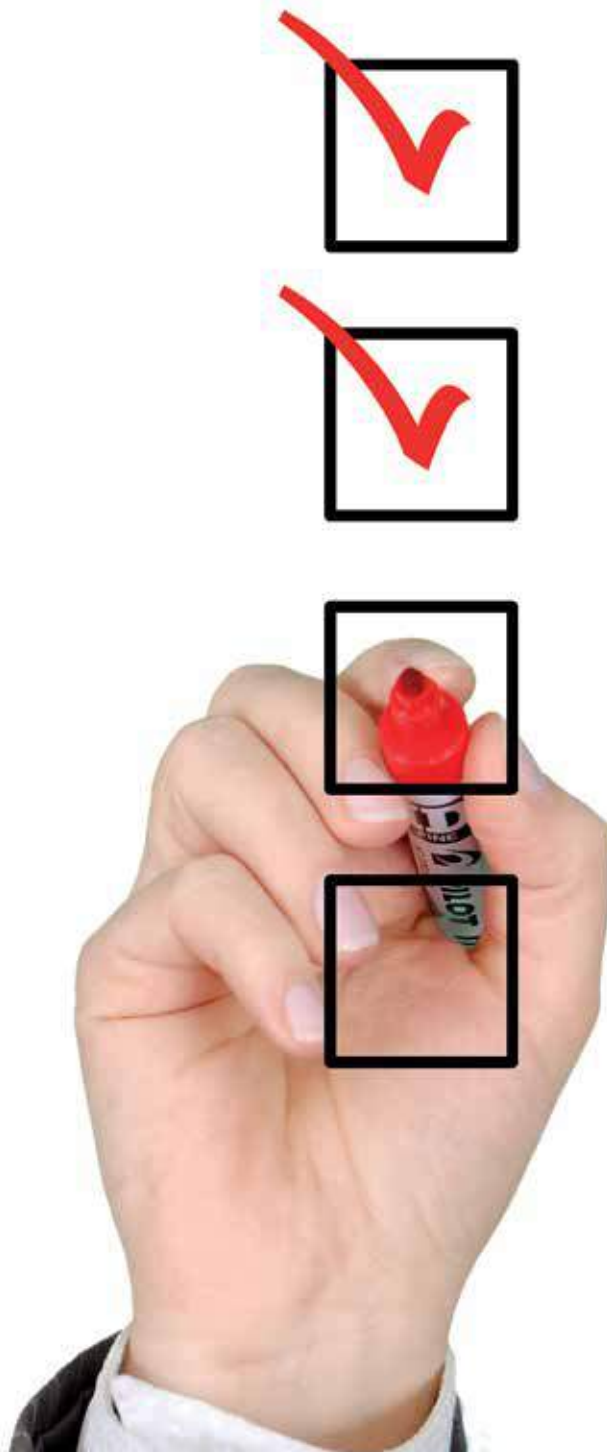
combat propaganda in the country has already been created, a full-government approach has been adopted.

All the studied countries indicate insufficient capability of their governments to implement strategic communications, as well as the absence of the issue of media literacy of citizens on the political agenda (only Ukraine and the Czech Republic have some political decisions in this area, but they are very insufficient).

Response: Media dimension.

The inability of journalists and editors to resist owners' censorship appears to be one of the major hazards, which weakens the ability of the media of the studied states to resist Russian informational aggression. This refers to the media which are controlled by pro-Russian business and political groups and are used for the propaganda of narratives advantageous to the Kremlin. Existing mechanisms of protecting the rights of journalists and of self-regulation seem to be extremely insufficient to give journalists freedom to produce objective and unbiased content that would not depend on the interests of owners.

Insufficient professionalism of journalists, lack of the ability to identify fakes and manipulations also contributes to the implementation of Kremlin's plans in the informational field. Typically, the local media use unreliable sources, social networks etc. more often, and have less access to trainings and additional education than their counterparts from national newspapers and broadcasters.

At the same time the topic of disinformation and propaganda is becoming popular among journalists and in gaining media coverage. Naturally, it is happening most actively in Ukraine, where there have already been created a lot of movies, articles and programs on disinformation; the topic is raised in the news and debates on TV channels. In other studied countries the issue of the Kremlin propaganda is highlighted by journalists, but still is not in the spotlight.

Response: Civil society dimension.

All the studied countries have a significant potential of the civil society to combat Russian informational aggression. During 2015-2017, powerful local analytical centers, research and monitoring organization joined the work in this area. Naturally, most practices and approaches have been developed in Ukraine; as early as in 2015, Ukrainian NGOs had methods for disinformation monitoring, analysis of propaganda discourse and narratives, developed approaches to the evaluation of the impact of Russian disinformation in the country. Statistics and monitoring data that reflect the Kremlin's propaganda efforts and reaction of the society to them are gathered. There is a close cooperation between journalist, security, sociology and conflictology centers; they cooperate with the media and provide support for the government.

In Georgia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, fight against Russian informational influence has not yet become so popular among the civil society, but there are powerful teams that systematically work in this area. Their number is not large, but they accumulate information about Russian influence strategy, monitor fakes, study the activities of internal agents of influence, find their relationships with the Kremlin. In Georgia and the Czech Republic these institutions are actively advising governments on strategic communications and strengthening of informational security; Hungarian Government is currently not open to such cooperation. Hungarian and Czech analytical centers make a significant contribution to the debate about these issues at the level of the EU.

Media literacy of citizens is a topic for regular discussions in the civil society, but few effective practices of the work of NGOs in this field have been developed. In each of the studied countries there are organizations that are either more or less systematically engaged in the media education of citizens, but their impact is currently limited, in particular due to the lack of resources.

In the studied countries, non-governmental organizations usually maintain a fairly high level of cooperation among themselves and with the media in the field of combating informational aggression. NGOs started working more actively with journalists, carrying out trainings on combating manipulations, fact checking etc. Cooperation between NGOs and the government is virtually absent in Hungary, while in other countries it is quite active: governments address analytical centers for research and advice. As a rule, cooperation between governments and the media within countries is complicated; also, cooperation between different media in the field of combating propaganda is quite rare. ■

BRIEF METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION

Kremlin's information influence is conditioned by its ability and resources on the one hand, and by the democratic societies' internal resilience and counteraction against its propaganda – on the other. Consequently, the Index contains two blocks:

THE INFLUENCE BLOCK

The influence block describes the extent of penetration of Kremlin-led narratives to the information space of the country, and availability of information resources to be used to achieve its goals in the particular country.

THE RESPONSE BLOCK

The response block describes the level of society's internal resistance to escalation of negative Russia's information influences; the ability to respond timely and efficiently to their negative consequences; availability of practices of counteracting Kremlin information operations so far.

Both the influence and response are measured in three dimensions:

1 Political: political subjects and institution in countries under consideration;

2 Media (attributed to Russian Federation as well as national/local media outlets of countries under consideration);

3 Civil society.

To measure the Index, a Questionnaire is designed that contains 33 questions. Each of the questions is evaluated according to the scale from 0 to 4 points. Taken together, these scores provide a figure reflecting the Kremlin's opportunities within each of the dimensions

How is it calculated?

In each of the countries involved, the research team exists that conducts desk analysis, communicates with experts, conducts events and prepares the report. It adopts the questionnaire for the national KII research: minor changes in formulation of the questions may be introduced if they are required by national peculiarities.

In each country, a group of experts is established to be involved into KII calculation. This is mandatory that these experts are recognized on the national level to be among the leading experts in the topic, and have been working actively in the field for the last 2 years. The minimum number of the experts is 8, maximum – 20 (numbers may be different for each separate country). Among them, there should be (experts may combine different fields of expertize):

● Experts on general media and media development issues (at least 3);

● Experts that conduct monitoring of national and local media outlets (TV, radio, printed, online) with regards of manipulations, hate speech, balance and neutrality (at least 3);

● Experts that monitor the activity of parliamentary factions and non-parliamentary political parties (aware of their communication activity) (at least 2);

● Experts that monitor Russian disinformation activity, its tools, narratives, proxies (at least 3);

● Experts involved into activity of the state bodies (consultations on the stage of decision-making; participating in drafting laws and regulations) or monitoring/evaluation of state policy, in the fields of information security, media policy, freedom of speech, strategic communications (at least 3);

● Experts monitoring communication activity and influences of religious movements and churches in the country (at least 1).

The experts are asked to elaborate the Questionnaire and put the scores. Since the expert scores are available, the experts are invited to participate in a meeting to discuss the figures. The final result of the discussion **on each question** is an average score per each of the questions, calculated based on totality of the individual opinions of experts. Participants are not expected to have a consensus.

Scores on each of the questions are gathered to scores within each of 6 Index blocks. Based on blocks sub-indexes, the general Index is calculated. ■

Capital:

Tbilisi

Political system:

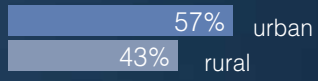Presidential republic

Population:
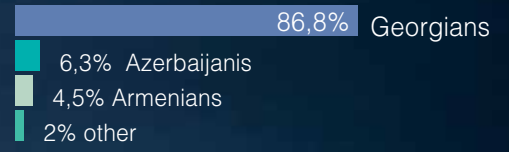
3,7 mln

GEORGIA

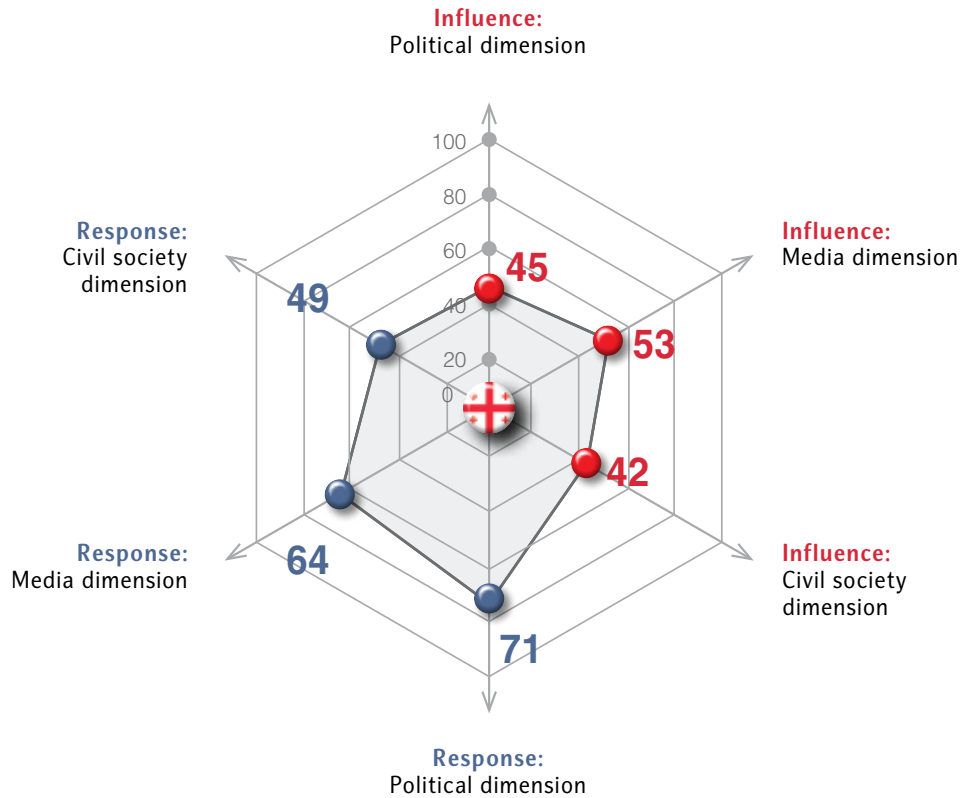**GDP per capita:**

3,67 thousand USD

Urbanization:

57% urban
43% rural

Ethnic composition:

86,8% Georgians
6,3% Azerbaijanis
4,5% Armenians
2% other

General Index

54

Influence:
Political dimension

100
80
60
45
40
20
0

Response:
Civil society
dimension

49

Influence:
Media dimension

53

42

Influence:
Civil society
dimension

Response:
Media dimension

64

71

Response:
Political dimension

CONTEXT

1

1.1. Political developments

Alongside Ukraine and Moldova, Georgia still remains in a group of "transitional government or hybrid regimes," according to the Freedom House 2017 report[1]. Georgia's democracy score (4.61) in 2017 remained unchanged over the previous year, while gradual improvement was observed since 2012 October Parliamentary Elections[2] when the first democratic transfer of power took place since the independence of the country and the incumbent United National Movement (*Ertiani Natsionaluri Modzraoba,* UNM) of President Mikheil Saakashvili was defeated by Georgian Dream (*Kartuli Otsneba,* GD) Coalition led by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili. Despite the fact that shortly after elections Ivanishvili stepped down from the position of prime minister, his informal influence over the Georgian government and judiciary raises criticism over democratic nature of governance among local and international actors[3].

President Giorgi Margvelashvili (elected in 2013) maintains strong pro-Western stance. Constitutional amendments enacted in 2013, limited nearly his all power over the executive government.Though the current Georgian government reiterates its commitments to join EU and NATO,

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[1] Freedom House, *Nations in Transit,* 2017, p. 24, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2017_booklet_FINAL_0.pdf.

[2] Freedom House. *Nations in Transit 2017,* 2012: 4.82; 2013: 4.75; 2014: 4.68; 2015: 4.64. https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/georgia. - Last visited: 19 April 2017.

[3] U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016,*
https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dlid=265422#wrapper. - Last visited: 19 April 2017

conflicting messages of individual members of the GD former ruling coalition (2012-2016) about the country's pro-Western orientation, created ambiguity among citizens. According to a survey conducted among youth, only 10.6% of respondents regarded messages from various branches of power on Euro-Atlantic integration as consistent, whereas 40.2% believed that various government representatives were making contradictory statements[4].

Incumbent center-left GD party retained power in 2016 Parliamentary elections and secured the constitutional majority. Declared orientation of the ruling party is pro-Western but it also favours close ties and normalization of relationship with Russia. The faction Georgian Dream - Entrepreneurs (political party Industry Will Save Georgia) whose leader GogiTopadze, before 2016 elections, was the most vocal critic of Georgia's integration into NATO, justifying Russia's actions in Syria and emphasizing advantages of negotiations with Russia,[5] is still among six parliamentary factions forming current ruling majority. Two strongly pro-Western parties, former members of the Georgian Dream (Kartuli Otsneba, GD) ruling coalition - the Free Democrats (Tavisufali Demokratebi) and the Republicans (Respublikelebi) - failed to clear the 5% threshold in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. The main opposition party, center-right pro-Western UNM won 27 seats in the 2016 parliamentary elections, but the second largest parliamentary party split up soon after the elections, resulting in the emergence of two separate parties - the United National Movement (National Movement faction, Natsionaluri Modzraoba) and the Movement for Freedom - European Georgia (Modzraoba Tavisuflebistvis - Evropuli Sakartvelo), represented by three factions in the parliament).

A right-wing populist party, the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (Sakartvelos Patriotta Aliansi), for the first time ever, received 5,01% support at the 2016 parliamentary election. Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (Sakartvelos Patriotta Aliansi) claims to be of right-conservative ideology and positions itself along anti-liberal, ethno-nationalistic groups known for Anti-Western sentiments related to value-based judgments on identity and individual freedoms. On its English-language website[6]. the party declares the desire to integrate into the European Union while expressing skepticism about prospects of Georgia's integration into NATO. The political party has links with TV Obieqtivi and alike this media outlet, the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (Sakartvelos Patriotta Aliansi), is notorious for its Turkophobia and homophobia[7] in anti-Western context[8].

Openly pro-Kremlin political parties were less successful at the latest parliamentary elections: the Democratic Movement - United Georgia (Demokratiuli Modzraoba - Ertiani Sakartvelo), led by former Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, failed to clear the 5% hurdle of the parliamentary elections and got only 1 seat in the Supreme Council of Adjara (Adjaris Umaghlesi Sabtcho) in the 2016 election. In the run up to the elections, the Democratic Movement - United Georgia (Demokratiuli Modzraoba - Ertiani Sakartvelo) put forward the initiative of block-free and neutral status of the country.

1.2 Media landscape

IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) showed slight slip in overall country score from 2.42 last year to 2.34 in 2017 due to concerns over plurality and concentration of ownership of government friendly media[9]. Geor-

gia is ranked 65th on the 2016 World Press Freedom Index improving its score by 5% compared to 2015. Alike IREX, Reporters Without Borders also noted a war for ownership of the main TV channels as a source of major concern about the future of pluralism[10]. Political agendas continue to permeate the media. Attempts to redistribute media ownership became more visible ahead of 2016 parliamentary elections. Georgian Supreme Court's decision to reinstate the ownership rights over most popular and outspoken government critic Rustavi 2 TV Channel to its former co-owner were harshly criticized by International human rights groups - the Amnesty International[11] and the Human Rights Watch[12] since it was perceived as a government-favored change that could significantly limit the public access to opposition views. Only interim measures applied by European Court of Human Rights suspended the implementation of the Georgian Supreme Court ruling on Rustavi 2. On March 3 2017, ECHR instructed the Government of Georgia that the enforcement of the Supreme Court's decision should be suspended and that the authorities should abstain from interfering with the applicant company's editorial policy.

A merger of other three major private TV Channels - Imedi, Maestro TV, and Georgian Dream Station (GDS) - whose editorial policies are government friendly is seen as a consolidation of ownership on the Georgian media market in 2016[13]. Moreover, replacement of the general director of the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) by producer from GDS TV owned by family of Bidzina Ivanishvili, former prime minister, raised suspicions among watchdog organizations about political motivation of the decision[14]. TV Union Obieqtivi affiliated with a right-wing APG, is not among top rated TV Channels but out of

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[4] Media Development Foundation (MDF), Youth Attitudes towards European Integration, 2015, p.51, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/uploads/library/27/file/eng/Research-Publication-ENG.pdf.

[5] MDF. Anti-Western Propaganda, 2017, p. 33, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65/.

[6] http://patriots.ge. - Last visited: 12 April 2017.

[7] MDF, Hate Speech, 2016. p. 8, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/55.

[8] MDF. Anti-Western Propaganda, 2017, p.29-31, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65/.

[9] IREX, Media Sustainability Index 2017, https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2017-georgia.pdf.

[10] Reporters Without Borders (RWB), Georgia 2016, https://rsf.org/en/georgia. – Last visited: 19 April 2017.

[11] Amnesty International (AI), Georgia: TV Channel Ownership Dispute Threatens Media Freedom in Georgia, 7 March 2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur56/5833/2017/en/.

[12] Human Rights Watch (HRW), Georgia: Media Freedom at Risk. 7 March 2017, https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/07/georgia-media-freedom-risk. - Last visited: 12 April 2017.

[13] IREX, Media Sustainability Index 2017. p.12, https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2017-georgia.pdf.

eight broadcasters with the highest revenues, is the only television which in 2016 received the greatest share of its revenues from donations (38,3%)[15]. Besides political agenda, Obieqtivi TV is notorious for hate speech and anti-Western sentiments.

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe found it incompatible with the state anti-discrimination policies that the Government of Georgia awarded service contracts in 2015 for dissemination of information and advertisement to Obieqtivi TV and other tabloid print media outlets that incited hate speech and intolerance[16]. Such practice continued in 2016 and 2017 when some ministries and other subordinated bodies awarded service contracts on dissemination of information to the media outlets with openly pro-Kremlin editorial policies (online editions Tbilisi 24, Newspress)[17].

According to the surveys conducted by the US National Democratic Institute (NDI) in 2016, majority of respondents (89%) receive information about Georgian politics and current affairs from television, while internet is the source of information for 36%, print media for 12% and radio for 2% . A recent survey by the US International Republican Institute (IRI) suggests that 93% of respondents receive information about current international situation from Georgian TV Channels and the majority (84%) trusts them; Out of 21% receiving information about international developments from Georgian internet news, only 6% trust them; 3% out of 13% Facebook information consumers trust news on foreign affairs disseminated via this social network and only 1% out of 6% sees information delivered by print media as trustful.

1.3 Legal and regulatory framework

The law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression, enacted in 2004, provides significant safeguards for the protection of freedom of expression and media[20]. Requirements for the transparency is applicable to broadcast media alone: amendments introduced to the Law on Broadcasting in 2011 bans offshore entities from owning holders of a broadcasting license or authorization; broadcasters are obliged to disclose their beneficial owners; additional financial transparency requirements, introduced to the law in 2013, made compulsory for all broadcasters to file quarterly reports about their sources of financing, including a breakdown of revenues received from advertising, sponsorship, telemarketing and contributions from owners or any other person. The law on Broadcasting contains content-related regulations for GPB, requiring from it to air programs that promote mainstreams of foreign policy of Georgia, as well as integration of Georgian into NATO and EU . In addition, law makes compulsory for GPB to allot at least 10 seconds per hour of advertisement time free of charge for social ads concerning to Georgia's integration into NATO and the EU[21]. Transparency International Georgia initiated amendments to the legislation to restrict pre-election political advertisement that undermines the statehood and sovereignty of Georgia and legitimizes Russian Occupation of Georgia's territory. Initiative was put forward after the First Channel of the GPB, ahead of parliamentary elections, aired an election campaign ad of a pro-Kremlin political party, Centrists *(Tsentristebi)*, in which it promised voters to distribute "Russian pensions" and carry out "legalization" of Russian military bases in Georgia.

On April 13, 2017, the Government of Georgia approved a new *Communication Strategy on Georgia's Membership to the EU and NATO for 2017-2020*[23] Contrary to the previous communication strategy, adopted in 2013 and covering solely EU integration issues, the newly adopted policy document, for the first time ever mentioned continued information warfare threats stemming from the Russian Federation against Georgia and other partner countries. On January 13, 2017, the Georgian government approved the National Cyber Security Strategy of Georgia for 2017-2018[24] which names cyber-attacks and cyber-crimes organized by the Russian Federation as a major threat for the country. The document states that with such actions Russia pursues the aim to hinder Georgia's integration into Euro-Atlantic family.

[14] Transparency International Georgia. *The election of Vasil Maghlaperidze points to increasing of political influence on the Public Broadcaster*, 11 January 2017, http://www.transparency.ge/en/post/general-announcement/election-vasil-maghlaperidze-points-increasing-political-influence-public-. – Last visited: 12 April 2017.

[15] MDF, *Financial Transparency of Media, 2016.* p. 7, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/63.

[16] ECRI, *ECRI Report on Georgia, fifth monitoring cycle.* Adopted on 8 December 2015, published on 1 March 2016, p. 15-16, http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Georgia/GEO-CbC-V-2016-002-ENG.pdf, - Last visited: 19 April 2017.

[17] MDF, *Financial Transparency of Media*, 2016. p 15, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/63

MDF, Practice of Allocating Budgetary Resources among Media for the Release of Information and Advertisement, 2016. p. 14. http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/31.

[18] National Democratic Institute (NDI) and CRRC Georgia, *Public attitudes in Georgia*, June 2016. p. 70. https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20%281%29.pdf

[19] Baltic Surveys/The Gallup Organization on behalf of International Republican Institute (IRI), *Survey on Public Opinion Poll in Georgia*, February 20 - March 8, 2017, p. 75-76. http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/iri_poll_presentation_georgia_2017.03-general.pdf .

[20] Article XIX. *Guide to the Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression*, 2005. https://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/analysis/georgia-foe-guide-april-2005.pdf

[21] Law of Georgia on Broadcasting, *Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC)*, 26 December, 2012. Article 16 m, Commission.http://www.gncc.ge/uploads/other/1/1252.pdf.

[22] Ibid. Article 65.para 2.

[23] Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. *Evrokavshirsa da natoshi gatsevrianebis komunikatsiis shesakheb sakartvelos mtavrobis strategia 2017- 2020* (Communication Strategy on Georgia's Membership to the EU and NATO for 2017-2020), 13 April, 2017, http://bit.ly/2o8R4t6 .

[24] Government of Georgia, *Sakartvelos kiberusafrtkhoebis 2017-2018 tslebis erovnuli strategia* (National Cyber Security Strategy of Georgia for 2017-2018), 13 January 2017, http://gov.ge/files/469_59439_212523_14.pdf

2 KREMLIN STRATEGY OF INFORMATION INFLUENCE

The goal of the Russian federation is to have satellite states in the post-Soviet area, which should act as a certain buffer in relation to the rest of the world[25]. The development of a common information-telecommunications medium on the territories of the CIS member states and in contiguous regions as a necessity for national security of Russia is also indicated in 2015 Security Strategy of Russia. Russian propaganda in Georgia is of a complex nature and corresponds with its general strategy in the region. Alongside Russian propaganda platforms, Russia's propaganda network involves Georgian fringe media, political parties, orthodox clergy, NGOs, and the so-called intelligentsia or Soviet elite, who still largely shape public opinion.

As survey conducted by the IRI[26] suggests, 93% of respondents receive information about current international situation from Georgian TV Channels and the majority (84%) trusts them. The same data indicates that the share of those respondents who receive information about international developments from Russian sources decreased by 2% as compared to 2015: in 2015, 9% of respondents received information from Russian TV channels and 2% from Russian websites[27] while in 2017 these figures decreased to 7% and 1%, respectively[28]. According to January – August 2016 data of TV MR GE[29] Nielsen Television Audience Measurement's official licensee, on average, 82.66% of Georgian viewers watches Georgian channels, while 11.41% watches Russian or other foreign channels. TV MR data also shows that Georgian viewers interested in Russian TVs are mostly watching entertainment or scientific channels (Perec TV, Boec TV, Nauka, Kuxnya TV etc.).

While the impact of the Russian media is more explicit and visible in minority-populated areas, where lack of knowledge of Georgian language is still problematic, the picture in other parts of the country is blurred and fragmented. The Pro-Kremlin channel Sputnik-Georgia, which operates as an online platform in the local language, is less popular in Georgia than other ethno-nationalistic, anti-liberal media outlets pursuing the same goals.

Even those politicians who openly support pro-Kremlin politics shun being publicly labelled as pro-Russian and claim that their agenda is pro-Georgian. The same ethno-nationalistic concept—neither Russia nor the West - is fundamental in mobilizing Georgians against anti-Western causes via different media platforms[30]. As content analysis by Media Development Foundation (MDF) indicates the main source of anti-western messages in 2016 was the media which can be divided into two groups: openly pro-Kremlin outlets (Georgia & World, Sakinformi, Politicano) and anti-liberal, ethno-nationalist platforms (Obieqtivi TV, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia) with qualitatively identical messages[31]. The same applies to political parties. The only difference between pro-Kremlin (Democratic Movement – United Georgia, Centrists etc.) and ethno-nationalistic parties (Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, Erovnulebi) is the degree of openness of support towards the Kremlin policy. The report shows that much like the previous period (2014-2015), the highest number of anti-Western messages (32.7%) media concerned the issues of identity, human rights and values. Like in other post-Soviet countries, fear is being sown that the price of integration into the Western family will be the loss of national, religious, and sexual identity; the premise being that action should be taken to defend the notion of 'honour'. In this context Orthodox Russia is often portrayed as the counterweight to the West. This popular narrative, stemming from the

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[25] Liberal Academy Tbilisi, *Threats of Russian Hard and Soft Power in Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2016, p. 3. http://www.ei-lat.ge/images/doc/threats%20of%20russian%20soft%20 and%20hard%20power.pdf

[26] Baltic Surveys/The Gallup Organization on behalf of International Republican Institute (IRI), *Survey on Public Opinion Poll in Georgia*, February 20 - March 8, 2017, p. 75-76, http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/iri_poll_presentation_georgia_2017.03-general.pdf.

[27] Baltic Surveys/The Gallup Organization on behalf of International Republican Institute (IRI), *Survey on Public Opinion Poll in Georgia, February* 3- 28 2016. p. 44. http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/iri_georgia_public_2015_final_0.pdf

[28] Baltic Surveys/The Gallup Organization on behalf of International Republican Institute (IRI), *Survey on Public Opinion Poll in Georgia*, February 20 - March 8, 2017. p.75. http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/iri_poll_presentation_georgia_2017.03-general.pdf

[29] Myth Detector, *Disinformation: Trust of Russia Today is Increasing among American Viewers*, 15 December 2016. http://eurocommunicator.ge/eng/view_myth/605. - Last visited: 13 April, 2017.

[30] Tamar Kintsurashvili, *Further from 'Russkiy Mir', Closer to the West*, Resisting Foreign State Propaganda in the New Information Environment: the Case of the EU, Russia, and the Eastern Partnership Countries. Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). p. 173. http://bsf-latvija.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/research_FEPS_BSF.pdf

[31] MDF, *Anti-Western Propaganda, 2016*, p. 20. http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65

concept of 'Russkiy mir'[32], is the most powerful message defining values-based discourse in the Georgian media landscape.

Increase in anti-NATO messages as compared to previous year is also observed, including claims that "Georgia's integration into NATO would result in the loss of Russia-occupied regions of Abkhazia and Samachablo [Tskhinvali Region]" or deployment of Turkish army in Georgia. Justification of Russia's excessive military actions in Syria also comes either from media or various politicians. The EU and the Association Agreement were equated to the obligation to receive migrants and the threat of terrorism while visa liberalization and European integration were equated to a demographic threat for the country.

The most popular propaganda tool used by a number of sources is the 'false dilemma' or 'black-and-white thinking' technique in which only two choices are present and one of them is a clearly better option. Examples of this approach is predominantly expressed through the following formulas: "If the West stands for a perverted lifestyle and the legalization of homosexuality, we do not need the West!", "If the West imposes homosexuality, the Georgian people prefer Russia to the West!"[33] Propaganda platforms, when disseminating disinformation, often apply the technique of deflection i.e. avoidance of original sources. The checking of fake information within Myth Detector platform showed that largely identical disinformation was published in Russian media outlets or various news satire media outlets[34]. All these Georgian language media outlets revealed by media monitoring are explicitly xenophobic or homophobic inciting hate speech towards various groups. The study by Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)[35] shows that majority of them are connected to the Russian foundations.

3
KREMLIN INFLUENCE INDEX

BLOCK A1.
Influence. Political dimension.
Score: 45

Experts' assessment of the government position towards Russia is mixed. The majority of them believes that the current government is neither anti-Russian nor pro-Russian while a segment of experts evaluates it as somewhat pro-Russian. A ground of the latter evaluation, according to one expert, is *"a direct or indirect government support to openly pro-Russian forces, which translated into an emergence of a new political center, the so-called nationalist pro-Georgian force (the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia) in the parliament"*. Yet another ground cited by experts for evaluating the government as somewhat pro-Russian is a restrained public position of the Georgian government about the Syria problem and the annexation of Ukraine by Russia.

The six factions composing the parliamentary majority also received a mixed assessment. Opinions of experts divided on assessing the ruling party Georgian Dream *(Kartuli Otsneba,* GD) and the factions - Georgian Dream-Conservatives *(Kartuli Otsneba - Konservatorebi)* and Georgian Dream for Development of Regions *(Kartuli Otsneba - Regionebis Ganvitarebistvis)* which, along with Georgian Dream *(Kartuli Otsneba)*, fall within the parliamentary majority: a segment of experts evaluated them as somewhat pro-Russian while another segment evaluated them as neither anti-Russian nor pro-Russian. Other majority factions - Georgian Dream-Greens *(Kartuli Otsneba - Mtsvaneebi)* and Georgian Dream-Social

[32] Nicolai N. Petro, *Russia's Orthodox Soft Power,* Carnegie Council, 2015, https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/727

[33] MDF, *Anti-Western Propaganda*, 2015. p.15. http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/15

[34] MDF, *Anti-Western Propaganda*, 2016. p. 35. http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65

[35] IDFI, *Russian Influence on Georgian NGOs and Media;* Tbilisi, 9 June 2015, https://idfi.ge/public/upload/russanimpactongeorgianmediadaNGO.pdf

Democrats *(Kartuli Otsneba - Sotsial Demokratebi)* were assessed as neither anti-Russian nor pro-Russian. The majority faction Georgian Dream-Entrepreneurs *(Kartuli Otsneba- Mretsvelebi)* was assessed by the majority of experts as strongly pro-Russian. The main factor of giving such an assessment to the latter was anti-NATO statements made by Gogi Topadze the leader of Industry Will Save Georgia *(Mretsveloba Gadaarchens Sakartvelos)* political party. Experts also recalled Topadze's statements in which he justified Russia's actions in Syria. The minority parliamentary faction: European Georgia *(Evropuli Sakartvelo)*, Movement for Freedom – European Georgia *(Modzraoba Tavisuflebistvis - Evropuli Sakartvelo)*, Movement for Freedom – Regions *(Modzraoba Tavisuflebistvis - Regionebi)* as well as the UNM (National Movement faction, *Natsionaluri Modzraoba)* were assessed as strongly anti-Russian. The majority of experts think that the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia *(Sakartvelos Patriotta Aliansi)* is strongly pro-Russian; this political party operates on the ethno-nationalist platform through its anti-Western narrative is identical to that of openly pro-Russian parties. One of the experts also recalled that the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia *(Sakartvelos Patriotta Aliansi)* introduced Turkophobia into its anti-Western discourse with the aim to shift emphasis from current threats (Russian occupation) onto historic threats (occupation of Georgia by the Ottoman Empire).

The position of President Giorgi Margvelashvili, who was elected in 2013, was assessed as somewhat anti-Russian by the majority of experts. From non-parliamentary political parties, the Democratic Movement-United Georgia *(Demokratiuli Modzraoba - Ertiani Sakartvelo)* was assessed as strongly pro-Russian; as regards the Free Democrats *(Tavisufali Demokratebi),* a segment of experts evaluated it as strongly anti-Russian while another segment evaluated it as somewhat anti-Russian.

In the opinion of the majority of experts, open public support of the Russian Federation on the part of local self-governments was not observed, but several experts recalled that some local self-governments paid visits to the Russian Federation (a visit of Poti City Council to attend the event Days of Kaliningrad, visits of Batumi City Council, Kutaisi City Council and City Hall to attend various events).

BLOCK A2
Influence. Media dimension.
Score: 53

The influence of Russian media on public opinion is conditioned by *'familiar and customary realities',* according to the majority of experts. Consumers realize that the Russian media may be unreliable, but the narrative it offers is familiar to and popular among society. In this regard, significantly more problematic, in experts' opinion, is Georgian-language media, especially fringe media outlets. The situation would have been far more dramatic, had it not been for Rustavi 2, the TV channel with declared pro-Western course on the market; a court dispute against this company, concerning its ownership, is seen as politically motivated by local and international observers.

Imedi TV company, second by viewership, in some cases applies pro-Kremlin narrative when covering issues though, normally, it observes journalistic standards, according to experts. In political and current affairs talk-shows on Imedi as well as Maestro TV channel, *'presenters, when having respondents of pro-Russian orientation as guests, fail to adequately challenge them, thereby facilitating the spread of disinformation and negative stereotypes'.* The reason of this, according to a segment of experts, is unprofessionalism of journalists, while according to another segment of experts, a predetermined editorial policy. Regarding Maestro, the majority of experts think that in contrast to fringe media, this *"TV channel successfully uses various modern TV formats to package its pro-Russian editorial policy; this is manifested in the promotion of Russian TV series as well as the selection of questions for interactive polls, topics and respondents".*

As regards to print media, the most problematic, according to experts, is

Asaval-Dasavali newspaper with its declared ethno-nationalist editorial policy which, in reality, promotes pro-Kremlin narrative. The newspaper publishes disinformation about the West and applies hate speech. Among online media, the most problematic, in experts' view, was PIA which, on certain occasions, published unverified information about the West. Experts assessed the coverage by radio as relatively neutral. A large segment of experts believe that the majority of population understands that disinformation media outlets may try to manipulate, but nevertheless, they use and believe them.

BLOCK A3.
Influence. Civil society dimension.
Score: 42

The influence of NGOs promoting the Kremlin and its views can be observed on separate social groups, according to experts, since pro-Russian organizations often use charity events for propaganda aims. It was noted that the funding of such NGOs often lacks transparency. Experts recalled a survey of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)[36] which showed that '*talks about a great number of pro-Russian organizations is exaggerated because all organizations that make public statements are often registered on the names of same persons or their family members*'. One of such organizations is Evraziuli Archevani (Eurasian Choice), a partner of International Eurasian Movement, the organization of Alexander Dugin, ideologist of the Eurasian Union and aggressive Russian expansionist policy. The Gorchakov Fund, created under the ordinance of former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, founded the Russian-Georgian Public Center in Georgia. With the support of the organization Russkiy Mir (Russian World), which is financed from the state budget of Russia, several organizations conduct Russian language courses. In addition to manipulating with grave social situation, pro-Kremlin organizations exploit sensitive and populist topics, for example, same-sex marriage, alleging that West tries to impose it on us; or new ID cards, alleging that they contain signs of Satan, et cetera.

As regards the influence of the Russian Church, it materializes through the Georgia Orthodox Church. On the one hand, the Patriarch of Orthodox Church Ilia II publicly supports Georgia's integration into the EU, but on the other hand, the isolationist policy of Georgian Church towards the Western Christian organizations[37] as well as anti-Western statements of religious servants indicate about indirect influence of the Russian Church. As an example, experts quoted a newspaper article in one of church editions in which Ruis Urbnisi metropolitan, episcope Iobi assessed Russian bombs during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war as punishment sent from heaven. Experts noted that *"separate religious servant are distinguished for their aggressive obedience to narratives of the Russian Orthodox Church."* As much as 90% of literature of Georgian Orthodox Church is translated from Russian and in this regard, a special place is assigned to the works of the Russian Archimandrite Raphael Karelin. Martlmadidebel Mshobelta Kavshiri (The Union of Orthodox Parents), which staged protest rallies against the visit of Pope of Rome to Georgia on 30 September 2016, is associated with the ideology of this very Karelin.

Experts also named several extremist nationalist groups, such as Kartuli Dzala (Georgian Force); Edelweiss; the Georgian football club fans Ultras who, in December 2016, protested against a possibility of receiving foreign refugees[38]; a racist group Bergman which is active on social networks. According to experts, their influence on society is not notable.

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[36] Ibid

[37] For example, a decision of the Synod of Georgian Orthodox Church on the refusal to participate in the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church in Crete, Greece, on 16-27 June 2016. The Georgian Patriarchate, 10 June; http://patriarchate.ge/geo/the-decree-of-the-holy/

[38] Netgazeti, *Protest Rally of Nationalist Groups against Receipt of Foreign refugees*, 24 December 2016. http://netgazeti.ge/news/164251/. - Last visited: 12 April 2017

BLOCK B1.
Response. Political dimension.
Score: 71

The Georgian government stepped up its activity in terms of reflecting Russian propaganda threats in political documents in the beginning of 2017. It was not until 13 April 2017, as a result of lengthy and active lobbying on the part of civil society, that the Georgian government approved a document that names Russian propaganda as a threat to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration[39] . Along with the *Communication Strategy on Georgia's Membership to the EU and NATO for 2017-2020, National Cyber Security Strategy of Georgia for 2017-2018*, which was also adopted in early 2017, was assessed as a positive development. However, the experts noted that overall caution which the Georgian government displays towards Russia; for example, the failure of Georgia to join sanctions imposed by the international community on Russia because of annexation of Crimea and a lack of public statements on this topic; also, the reality that in international formats, the occupation of Georgian territories are no longer actively discussed alongside the occupation of Crimea.

The head of Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB) mentioned the absence of state information strategy, citing technical and financial problems in the switchover to digital broadcasting as a proof. Speaking about the software necessary for digital platforms, she said that Russian manufactured software is much cheaper on the market than Western manufactured software and given financial hardships of regional media, this increases risks of penetrating into the field of information.

The department of strategic communications operates in two government entities since 2015: the Ministry of Defence and the Office of the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. According to a segment of experts, certain decisions are taken both on strategic and tactical levels, but they are not sufficiently effective; the problem of coordination among entities is observed too. One expert noted that *"stratcom is a mere formality because due to lack of political will, it is not effective."* No public response is followed to flows of misinformation coming from outside in an organized manner.

The majority of experts shared the opinion that the government does not support effective and regular activities for the improvement of media literacy.

BLOCK B2
Response. Media dimension.
Score: 64

The journalists' capacity to adhere to the standards of objectivity and neutrality in their performance was assessed by the majority of experts as medium in case of national TV channels and lower than medium in case of regional media. In experts' opinion, sometimes, the problem is unprofessionalism of media and lack of awareness of issues, which create a fertile ground for uncritical spreading of pro-Russian politicians' narrative and misinformation. *"They might fail to realize, but they thus facilitate indirectly the spread of pro-Russian narrative uncritically,"* an expert said. The assessment of journalists' capacity to reveal propaganda and manipulations and to verify facts was identical for both national and regional media. Regardless of separate instances when journalists voiced their protest against the interference of owners/editors in their professional activity (Maestro,

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[39] Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. *Evrokavshirsa da natoshi gatsevrianebis komunikatsiis shesakheb sakartvelos mtavrobis strategia 2017- 2020* (Communication Strategy on Georgia's Membership to the EU and NATO for 2017-2020), 13 April 2017, http://bit.ly/2o8R4t6 .

Channel 25), the situation in this regard is not promising, according to experts. Instances were cited of one and the same journalistic corps starkly changing the editorial policy in accordance with the change in ownership, which affected the coverage of foreign policy priorities as well.

The Kremlin disinformation policy is rarely discussed on national TV channels. The exception is Rustavi 2 TV company with its several journalists showing a regular interest towards this topic and being consistent in this respect. Exceptions also include separate online editions and those programs of regional media which are produced with the assistance of international organizations. Special investigations, films and programs about disinformation, produced by media outlets themselves, are rare and the main source in this area are surveys and media content analysis conducted by NGOs, which are not covered regularly by mainstream media.

BLOCK B3.
Response. Civil society dimension.
Score: 49

Only a certain part of the civil society realizes the problem of misinformation and the climate in this regard is created by those NGOs who treat the problem purposely and work on these topics regularly. Leading NGOs operate mainly on the national level while to a lesser extent on the regional level, and they largely focus their influence on decision-makers. According to experts, of separate NGOs regularly monitor media and respond to misinformation, but on a national level alone and their influence on society, without the involvement of mainstream media, is limited.

Experts also think that programs designed to improve media literacy among society are few and on a nascent stage. In the majority of experts' view, this is due to *"dependence of NGOs on international donors, and the donor community only now start to realize that anti-Western propaganda is an increasing threat while the existing initiatives are not enough for an organized response to propaganda."*

As regards the cooperation between various stakeholders concerning counteraction to propaganda, a partnership has been built among the most successful NGOs; the establishment of Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Georgia by leading NGOs was named as an example, which plans to consolidate resources and activities in the fight against Russian propaganda. The cooperation between media and the civil society was also assessed positively. The cooperation between the civil society and the state on the level of statcom was also viewed as a positive but insufficient and irregular development. Cooperation between media outlets is successful on the regional level alone. As regards cooperation between the state and media, it is, according to one expert, *"motivated by the desire to control issues of domestic policy agenda in media outlets loyal to the government than by an objective to counteract threats of misinformation coming from the outside"*. At the same time, attempts are undertaken to marginalize NGOs by speculating on topics that relate to the protection of basic human rights and vulnerable groups. The so-called GONGOs and pro-Russian actors as well as those separate representatives of the ruling party who were in the parliamentary majority in 2012-2016, call for the prohibition of foreign-funded NGOs which, according to them, act against interests of the country . This narrative is identical to the approach declared in the 2015 National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, in which the activities of NGOs funded from abroad and by international organizations are evaluated as a threat to the country and activity directed against Russia's traditional spiritual values. ■

40 For example, statements of the former members of the ruling Georgian Dream coalition, Gogi Topadze and Tamaz Mechiauri, as well as of former deputy state minister for diaspora issues Sandro Bregadze. MDF, *Assessment of the EU Integration Communication and Information Strategy and its Action Plan of the Government of Georgia*, 2016, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/29/.

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Capital:

Budapest

Political system:

Parliamentary republic
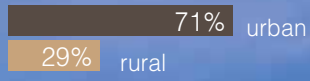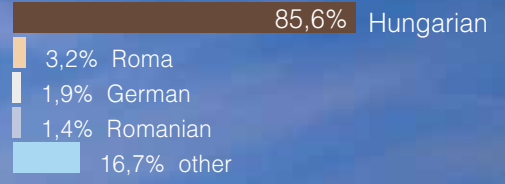
Population:

9,9 mln

HUNGARY

GDP per capita:
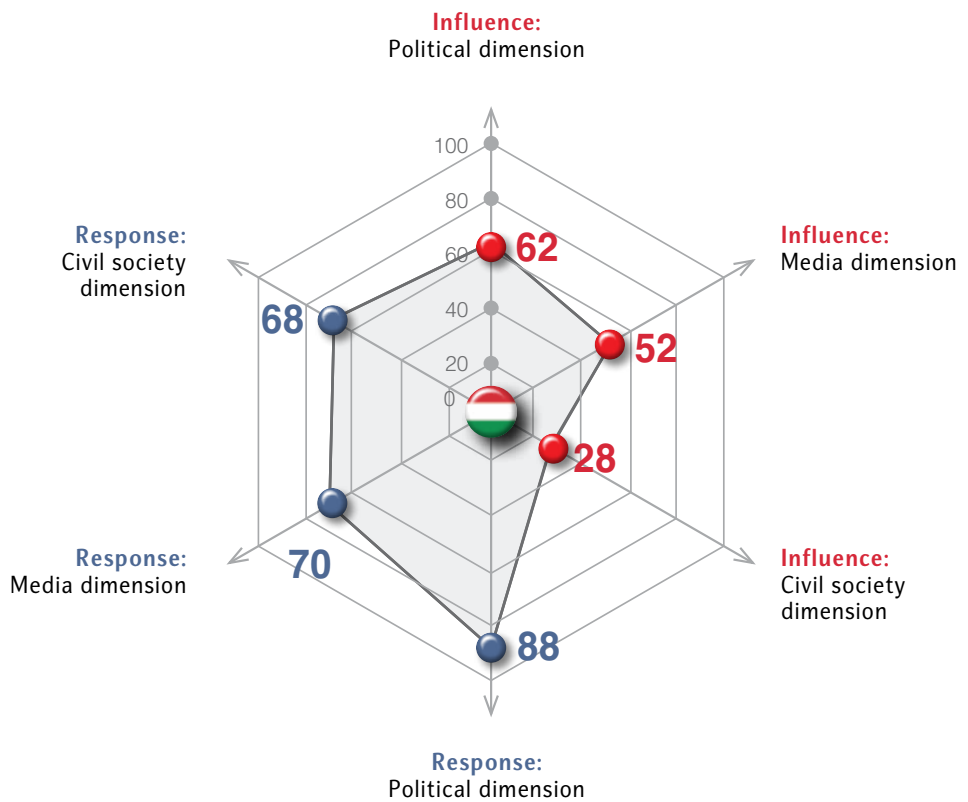
12,2 thousand USD

Urbanization:

71% urban
29% rural

Ethnic composition:

85,6% Hungarian
3,2% Roma
1,9% German
1,4% Romanian
16,7% other

General Index

61

Influence:
Political dimension

100
80
60
40
20
0

62

Influence:
Media dimension

52

28

Influence:
Civil society
dimension

Response:
Civil society
dimension

68

Response:
Media dimension

70

88

Response:
Political dimension

CONTEXT

1

1.1. Political Developments

The current ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition has been in government since 2010, which consists of centre-right Christian-conservative parties. In 2014, five political parties were able to form parliamentary groups in the National Assembly: Fidesz, the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), Jobbik, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and Politics Can be Different (LMP). According to Freedom House, the country's democratic standards have deteriorated rapidly since 2010[1]. Fidesz used to be the most fervently anti-Russian force in Hun-

gary, however, after the PM Viktor Orbán's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2009 the party's opinion on Russia changed[2]. Its first manifestation was the Paks II. project built by Rosatom[3] and recently the Hungarian government started to copy the policies of the Kremlin: foreign-funded NGOs are rhetorically labelled as foreign agents and a new piece of legislation against them was submitted to the National Assembly[4].

The government adheres to the official lines of the EU and the EPP when it comes to votes on the sanctions[5] or Russian disinformation[6],

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[1] The deterioration of democratic standards is mirrored in Freedom House's evaluation of Hungarian democracy: in 2010, the country's Freedom Rating was 1.0, the best result achievable, which has since deteriorated to 2.5, although the country is still ranked as free. Freedom House in its latest report notes that it observed „government practices that curtailed the ability of the opposition to freely and meaningfully participate in the formal political system". For more information see https://freedomhouse.org/reports.

[2] Sz. Panyi, *Orbánt is eszközként használja Putyin a Nyugat ellen*,[Orbán is being used by Putin against the West], February 3, 2017, http://index.hu/kulfold/2017/02/03/orbant_is_eszkozkent_hasznalja_informacios_haborujahoz_a_kreml/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[3] C. Keszthelyi, *PM's Office declares Paks II deal classified,* January 8, 2015, http://bbj.hu/economy/pms-office-declares-paks-ii-deal-classified_90486 - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[4] A. Byrne, *Orban takes aim at Soros and Hungarian NGOs*, January 12, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/20d291f8-d87b-11e6-944b-e7eb37a6aa8e - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

however, it rhetorically speaks out against the sanctions and tolerates disinformation and pro-Russian paramilitary radicalisation on its territory[7]. The far-right Jobbik has toned down its anti-EU/NATO and anti-US rhetoric in the frames of its push to become more appealing to a wider range of voters, however, its distinctly pro-Russian stance has not changed. Their MEP Béla Kovács has been accused of spying on EU institutions on behalf of Russia by Hungarian authorities[8]. The leftist, former governing party MSZP is neutral on Russia and considers pragmatic ties with them beneficial besides being pro-European and pro-US. LMP is fervently anti-Russian and oppose the government's close ties with the Putin-regime. The next general elections will be held in spring 2018.

1.2 Media landscape

In terms of press freedom, Hungary is ranked 67th on the 2016 World Press Freedom Index compared to 23rd place in 2010[9]. Reporters without Borders note that PM Viktor Orbán has tightened his grip on the media and his allies acquired a number

of media outlets[10]. The government censors the news programmes of the Public Broadcaster (PBS).[11] The public news channel M1 promoted the government's position 95% of the time during the campaign for the anti-quota referendum[12] and, additionally, soft censorship is also not uncommon.[13] The key independent media outlets in the country are commercial TV channel RTL, the largest online portal Index.hu and the media empire of former Orbán-ally Lajos Simicska. Pro-government oligarchs took over the second largest commercial TV channel TV2, the popular online portal Origo and the Prime Minister's advisor launched a pro-government media empire. The largest leftist daily Népszabadság's publisher Mediaworks was bought by Orbán's close friend Lőrinc Mészáros [14] and the newspaper's publication was discontinued and control over the majority of local county daily newspapers was taken over.[15]

The government's tight control over state media or commercial media with ties to pro-Fidesz oligarchs means that the foreign policy stance of the Fidesz-KDNP and pro-Russian narratives are overly represented in the Hungarian public discourse.

According to a Globsec Trends survey from 2016, 71% of Hungarians trust the mainstream media more than alternative outlets and only 16% said they favoured alternative media.[16] According to Mérték Media Monitor, the majority of the Hungarian adult population obtains political information from television channels, although the 18-29 age group uses the internet more and television less for this purpose.[17] Television is used almost exclusively by people older than 60 years of age and among those whose highest level of education attained is 8 years of primary school education or less,[18] which is a reason why the dissemination of Russian narratives through government-controlled media poses a problem.

1.3 Legal and regulatory framework

There are currently no regulations on the transparency of media ownership. Thus, numerous Hungarian media outlets are owned by offshore companies or unknown individuals, which are mostly Hungarian nationals according to investigative journalists.[19] The Hungarian Media Act enacted in 2010 and last amended in 2015 "impaired the

[5] P. Magyari, 2017, *A lengyel kormány addig lesz a magyar barátja, ameddig Orbán nem piszkálja az orosz szankciókat* [The Polish government will remain a friend of the Hungarian one as long as Orbán does not tuch sanctions against Russia], February 25, 2017, https://444.hu/2017/02/25/a-lengyel-kormany-addig-lesz-a-magyar-baratja-ameddig-orban-nem-piszkalja-az-orosz-szankciokat - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[6] *Orbán: El kell fogadni az intellektuális és politikai harcot a baloldallal* [Orbán: We must accepts the intellectual and political combat with the left], March 30, 2017, http://index.hu/kulfold/ep/2017/03/30/orban_az_eu-nak_valtoznia_kell_hogy_europa_maradjon_a_legjobb_hely_a_vilagon/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[7] Political Capital, *Far-right murder of Hungarian police officer: pro-Russian radicalisation in the CEE,* 2016, http://politicalcapital.hu/library.php?article_read=1&article_id=320 - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[8] *Tovább nyomoznak Kovács Béla ellen* [Investigation into Béla Kovács continues], January 18, 2017, https://mno.hu/belfold/tovabb-nyomoznak-kovacs-bela-el-len-1381607 - Last visited: 17 March 2017.

[9] Reporters without Borders, Hungary, 2016, https://rsf.org/en/hungary - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[10] Ibid.

[11] *Belső szerkesztői utasításra nem szerepelhetnek gyerekek a köztévé menekültes anyagaiban* [An internal memo says no children can be featured in news about refugees on the public news channel], August 25, 2015, https://444.hu/2015/08/25/belso-szerkesztoi-utasitasra-nem-szerepelhetnek-gyerekek-a-kozszolgalati-teve-menekultes-anyagaiban/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[12] Mertek Media Monitor, *Media Bias in Hungary During the Referendum, Campaign on EU Refugee Quotas, October 4, 2016*, http://mertek.eu/en/2016/10/04/dri-mertek-study-media-bias-hungary-durning-referendu-campaign-eu-refugee-quotas/ - Last visited: 31 March, 2017.

[13] Market Media Monitor, *Introduction – Crony capitalism and the media market*, May 5, 2016, http://mertek.eu/en/2016/05/05/soft-censorship-hungary-2015-2/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[14] D. Szalai, *Csak egyvalaki lesz nagyobb a médiapiacon a Mészáros Lőrinc közelébe kerülő Mediaworksnél* [Only one company will be larger than Mediaworks, the company that got close to Lőrinc Mészáros], October 26, 2016, http://24.hu/media/2016/10/26/csak-egy-valaki-lesz-nagyobb-a-mediapiacon-a-meszaros-lorinc-kozel-ebe-kerulo-mediaworksnel/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[15] *Felfüggesztették a Népszabadság kiadását* [The publication of Népszabadság was suspended], October 8, 2016, http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/08/felfuggesz-tettek_a_nepszabadsag_kiadasat/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[16] Globsec, *Central Europe under the fire of propaganda: Public oponion poll analysis in the Czech Republic, September, 2016*, Hungary and Slovakia, http://www.galerie9.com/blog/glb_trends_en.pdf - Last visited: 10 April, 2017.

[17] Mertek Media Monitor, *The sources of political information in Hungary: The state of the media structure in the time before and after its transformation*, November, 2016, http://mertek.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Mertek_newsconsumption_eng_2016.11.25.pdf - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Mertek Media Monitor, *Recent changes in media ownership*, November, 2016, http://mertek.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/mertek_media_owners2016.pdf - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[20] Ibid.

healthy operation" of the public discourse. However, the government-controlled media authority's practice has proved to be moderate and inconsistent.[20]

Both Governmental Decree 1035/2012 on Hungary's National Security Strategy[21] and Governmental Decree 1139/2013 on Hungary's Cyber Security Strategy[22] mention the threat posed by information warfare as a national security challenge to the country, however, no measures have been enacted to counter such threat or name the Russian disinformation specifically.[23]

2

KREMLIN STRATEGY OF INFORMATION INFLUENCE

In Hungary, Russian information influence is mostly dependent on political parties due to Hungarian societies traditional reservations towards Russia as a consequence of tense historical relations in the past.[24] As a consequence, the situation in Hungary is somewhat unique in that the political elite has embraced pro-Russian views, while the population in general is more pro-EU and pro-US.[25] The Kremlin successfully engineered a Hungarian fringe media-network before and after Crimea, however its influence is limited by its far-right ideology, and the general population's reliance on traditional, mainstream media.

Hungarian society at large has proven difficult to influence. According to the latest polls, 53% of Hungarian claim the country should have closer ties to the US than to Russia and only 25% said the contrary, although the same survey proves that the ruling government's voters are the most Russophilic.[26] The share of Hungarians who favour a clearly pro-Eastern orientation is also very low at 6%.[27] Nevertheless, current pro-Russian narratives in Hungary are focused on inciting anti-EU, anti-NATO and anti-Western sentiments, which got even stronger after the eruption of the migration crisis and these messages are spread not only by alternative media but also by the government and the press allied to Hungarian leadership, including the public news channel.[28] Pro-government mainstream media spread disinformation via three channels: there is a Russian-language news programme on the main state-owned channel M1 and pro-Russian narratives and conspiracy theories are broadcast in its programmes.[29] Pro-government media pro forma supports Ukraine's territorial sovereignty, however, Russia and President Putin is depicted as a key ally of Hungary in preserving Christian Europe against liberal forces.[30] The Hungarian government's stance on migration, its rhetorical offensive against the EU and migration all help Russia achieve its foreign policy priorities.[31] A report of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (KKI), a background institution for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trada (KKM), states that Hungary for the domestic Russian audience is depicted in a somewhat positive light, but in Russian media providing content for Western audiences the conflict between the EU and Hungary is used as proof for the approaching disintegration of the union.[32] Moreover, for the countries Russia considers its "near abroad" Hungary is shown as a destabilising element and its alleged ambitions to annex Transcarpathia as proof for Ukraine's weakness.[33] In conclusion, the KKI's report suggests Hungary is often used in Russian propaganda to help achieve Russia's geopolitical goals.[34]

Currently, no Hungarian-language Russian media outlet is operating in Hungary, which has been the case since the Hungarian Voice of Russia closed at the end of 2014.[35] However, it is suspected that the online portal Hídfő, currently using a Rus-

[19] Mertek Media Monitor, *Recent changes in media ownership, November*, 2016, http://mertek.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/mertek_media_owners2016.pdf - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[20] Ibid.

[21] A Kormány 1035/2012. (II. 21.) *Korm. határozata Magyarország Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról, Magyar Közlöny 19, 2012*, http://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/f/49/70000/1035_2012_korm_hatarozat.pdf

[22] A Kormány 1139/2013 (III.21.) *Korm. határozata Magyarország Nemzeti Kiberbiztonsági Stratégiájáról, Magyar Közlöny 47, 2013*, https://www.enisa.europa.eu/topics/national-cyber-security-strategies/ncss-map/HU_NCSS.pdf

[23] Panyi Sz., *Lázár magasról tesz az orosz információs hadviselés elleni védekezésre.* [Lázár is not really bothered by defending against Russian information warfare], February 8, 2017, http://index.hu/belfold/2017/02/08/lazar_magasrol_tesz_az_orosz_informacios_haboru_elleni_vedekezesre/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[24] P. Krekó et al. *The Weaponisation of Culture.*

[25] Ibid.

[26] P. Magyari, *A magyarok többsége Amerikát választaná és nem Oroszországot* [The majority of Hungarians would choose America and not Russia], January 7, 2015, https://444.hu/2015/01/07/a-magyarok-tobbsege-amerikat-valasztana-es-nem-oroszorszagot/ - Last visited: 10 April, 2017.

[27] Globsec, *Central Europe under the fire of propaganda: Public oponion poll analysis in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, September, 2016*, http://www.galerie9.com/blog/glb_trends_en.pdf - Last visited: April 10, 2017.

[28] P. Krekó et al. *The Weaponisation of Culture.*

[29] For more on this see: *P. Krekó et al. The Weaponisation of Culture.*
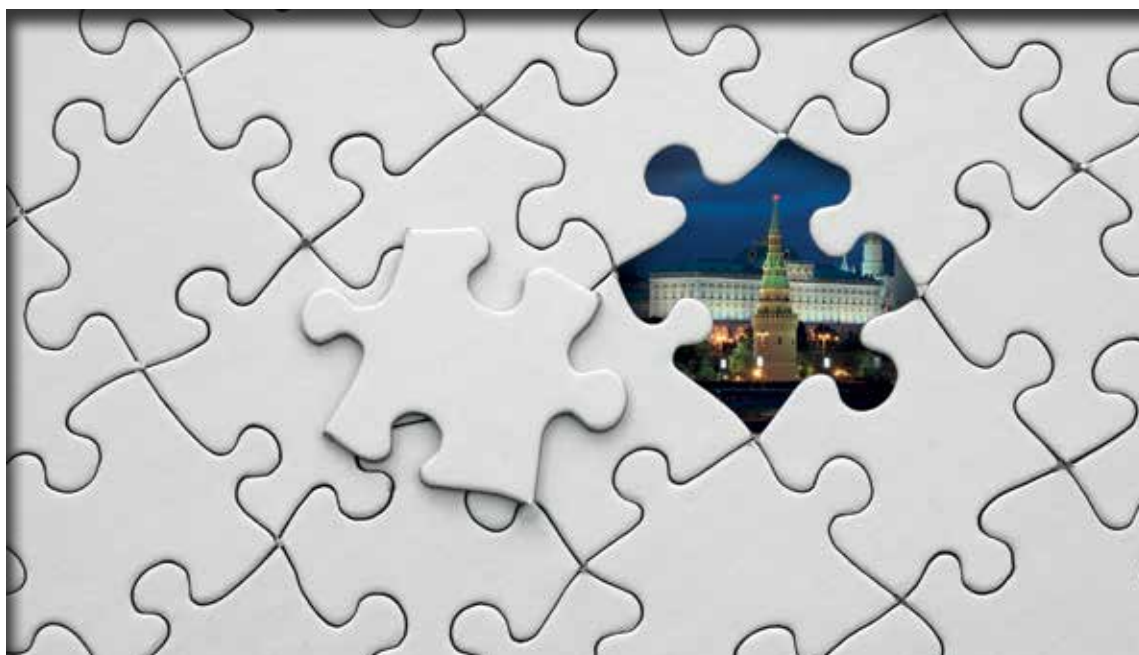
sian domain, is being operated with the aid of Russian secret services.[36] The neo-Nazi organisation MNA established the website in 2012, which was passed onto the Russian intelligence agencies as part of an active measure.[37] Alternative media outlets, blogs and social media pages such as Hídfő can be considered the primary mouthpieces for the Kremlin, as they openly and continuously promote Russia's foreign policy goals and illiberal agenda.[38]

After the eruption of the Ukrainian crisis about 100[39]Facebook pages and alternative blogs supporting the Kremlin's agenda have been discovered and the migration crisis led to the foundation of a new wave of such sites.[40] In 2016, only 16% of Hungarians claimed they rather or definitely trust alternative media over mainstream media,[41] but they are overrepresented among those who attained a secondary diploma and they generally live in Budapest or smaller settlements.[42] Jobbik's voters are especially prone to influence disseminated through these outlets as 41% of the far-right party's supporters trust alternative media more than the mainstream outlets.[43] Alternative (and sometimes the pro-government) media deal with a wide range of topics advancing both Kremlin's domestic value set and its geopolitical agenda often curtailed to the peculiarities of Hungary. These areas of interest include the 1956 revolution in Hungary, the destruction of Sweden by liberalism, migration, the alleged anti-terror fight of Russia in Syria and well-known conspiracies about Ukraine. [44]

In conclusion, Hungary is affected by pro-Russian propaganda disseminated both by mainstream and alternative outlets and the country itself is used as a tool to further Russia's geopolitical aims as well.

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Political Capital, *Orbán tovább menetel a putyini úton*, February 3, 2017, http://politicalcapital.hu/konyvtar.php?article_read=1&article_id=398 - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[32] B. Tölgyesi, *Magyarország-kép az orosz és ukrán médiában 2016-ban* [The depiction of Hungary in Russian and Ukrainian media in 2016], 2017 http://kki.gov.hu/download/f/4e/a1000/01_KKI-elemzes_HUN_Tolgyesi_20170105.pdf - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] P. Krekó et al. *The Weaponisation of Culture*.

[36] A. Dezső and Sz. Panyi, *Orosz diplomaták gyakorlatoztak a rendőrgyilkos brigádjával*, October 27, 2016, http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/27/orosz_hirszerzok_gyakorlatoztak_a_rendorgyilkos_harcosaival/ - Last visited: 31 March 2017.

[37] Ibid.

[38] P. Krekó et al. *The Weaponisation of Culture*.

[39] A. Báthorfy and Zsuzsa Szánthó, , *Bivalybasznádi álhírvállalkozó és Oroszország magyar hangjai* [Fake media entrepreneur from nowhere and Russia's Hungarian voices], 2016, http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/bivalybasznadi-alhirvallalkozok-es-oroszorszag-magyar-hangjai-0407#!s1 - Last visited: 17 March 2017.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Globsec, *Central Europe under the fire of propaganda: Public oponion poll analysis in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, September, 2016*, http://www.galerie9.com/blog/glb_trends_en.pdf - Last visited: April 10, 2017.

[42] Political Capital's own calculations based on the TNS Hoffmann survey conducted in 2016 for the Globsec Trends study.

[43] Ibid.

[44] For more on this see: http://politicalcapital.hu/konyvtar.php?article_read=1&article_id=310

3
KREMLIN
INFLUENCE
INDEX

BLOCK A1.
Influence. Political dimension. Score: 62

Experts' opinion produced quite a coherent result regarding Hungarian parties' stance on Russia. The parties' views on Russia depict a left-right divide between the political actors in parliament. Jobbik proved to be the most pro-Russian party probably due to its early "Eastern Opening" policy towards the Kremlin and the party's MEP Béla Kovács's alleged spying on the EU in favour of Russia must have played a role in this as well. The ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition was generally characterised as somewhat pro-Russian despite the parties' strong geopolitical turn towards the East after 2010.[45] The respondents mostly declined to use the strongest option for the pro-Russian stance of the Fidesz-KDNP, since the Hungarian government *"acts within the boundaries of Western structures,"* one expert noted. Another said that *"we are not a puppet state after all,"* and the government always emphasizes its *"pragmatic relationship"* with the Kremlin.

The leftist MSZP was considered to be neither anti-Russian nor pro-Russian, while the green LMP was found to be anti-Russian. The difference stems from the fact that the MSZP was in government between 2002 and 2010, when it decided to support the now abandoned South Stream Project and voted for constructing the Paks 2 nuclear reactor, which Rosatom will start building in 2018. The project is financed by a EUR 10 billion credit line from Russia. Thus, the respondents considered the current anti-Russian stance of the MSZP unauthentic. As one expert put it, *"the MSZP would do the same with regards to Moscow, if they were in power."* The green LMP has no such problems because the party was formed in 2009, prior to the 2010 elections.

The media impact of each party was in line with their official political stance according to the experts. János Áder, the president of Hungary since 2012, was believed to be neither anti-Russian nor pro-Russian mainly because he did not voice any opinion in the political debate on Russia in the Hungarian political discourse. There are no known cases of local authorities supporting the Russian Federation, however, the respondents thought some local officials or authorities might support the Kremlin. The uncertainty regarding the local level is caused by two factors: there are no grassroots pro-Russian movements, localities in Hungary as the country lacks significant Russian diaspora. Nevertheless, some local politicians follow the pro-Russian line their parties support nationally. The most significant example of local pro-Russian policymaking is the public procurement tender for the refurbishment of subway cars of Budapest won by a Russian company, which is a case suspected to involve corruption.

BLOCK A2
Influence. Media dimension.
Score: 52

We cannot talk about the Russian media's influence on the public opinion in a strict sense, because there is no Russian media present in the Hungarian media space and the Hungarian populace does not speak Russian to directly access Russian media online or via satellite. On the other hand, pro-Russian media does exist, either in the form of mainstream media under the control of the pro-Russian ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition and the far-right Jobbik, or in the form of fringe media on new media platforms operated by unknown authors. So, when experts answered that the Kremlin's narrative is popular among some visible groups or Russian media makes a visible impact on Hungarian public opinion, they

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[45] Although the questionnaire treats Fidesz and KDNP separately, they are one political actor in political terms. They have separate fractions in the parliament, but the Christian-Democratic KDNP runs only with the main rightist party Fidesz in all the elections, and their political communication is also coordinated or in full alignment with Fidesz most of the time.

meant Hungarian-owned and/or operated media spreading Russian narratives. According to the experts, these receptive groups can be identified on a party political basis, consisting of *"the core voters of Fidesz or Jobbik,"* because the *"loyalty towards Fidesz upends the traditional rightist anti-Russian stance."* As one of the experts noted, "the veterans of communist intelligence," who are probably partly involved in such media activities is another pro-Russian group of the audience. The "Ukraine is fascist" narrative may be quite effective among the older generations of *"communists,"* one expert said.

To judge the Hungarian media's pro-Russian stance, the authors chose three of the most popular television channels, print daily newspapers, radios and online news media.[46] These media outlets' pro-Russian stance continue to follow the government's/opposition's lines, since the vast majority of media is under the control of the ruling Fidesz-KDNP, which spreads pro-government or pro-Russian narratives in a centralized manner through news media. Thus, the commercial online portal Origo.hu, the television channel TV2, the daily Magyar Idők, state-owned Kossuth Radio, as well as Petőfi Radio can be all be considered to be manipulating, distorting information in favour of the Kremlin. Almost all independent media was deemed completely accurate or impartial by the experts with the notable exception of the daily Magyar Nemzet. Magyar Nemzet belongs to one of the biggest oligarchs, Lajos Simicska, who fell out from PM Viktor Orbán's grace in in 2014. Consequently, the Simicska media portfolio's geopolitical stance has become more pro-West. The experts failed to cast any of the media as completely inaccurate and impartial, since they reserved that category for clear-cut pro-Russian fringe media.

Regarding the impact, the respondents thought that the Hungarian public either trusts or uses pro-Russian media regardless of their manipulation efforts, because *"they seek out those sources that balance the liberal messages coming from, for example, CNN,"* as one expert put it.

BLOCK A3.
Influence. Civil society dimension.
Score: 28

Civil society is the least affected by Russian information influence due to the fact that the shared Russophile history, orthodoxy or Panslavic ideology lacks in Hungarian society and its institutions. For this reason, the respondents could name only one or two pro-Russian NGOs like the Tolstoy Association or the Lakitelek Népfőiskola (Lakitelek People's College) founded by Sándor Lezsák, the deputy speaker of the National Assembly. Experts highlighted that the real danger is posed not by pro-Russian organisations, but by pro-government organisations or GONGOs like the Civil Összefogás Fórum (Civil Union Public Benefit Foundation) which is modelled after the Russian example. As one of the expert noticed, *"the CÖF's method is Russian, (...) this is a Russian receipt for creating a mass movement supporting the government."*

The Russian Orthodox Church' presence is also negligible because there are only a few practitioners of the religion in Hungary, which is predominantly Roman Catholic or Calvinist. However, one expert added that the Orthodox Church may have a significance in *"small subcultures."* Another expert noted even noted that *"the FSB is still using"* the Orthodox Church in Hungary for its operations. Altogether, no Hungarian Church has a significant impact on the Hungarian public, because they lack mass media channels, except for the Pentecostal Faith Church Hungary, which owns the ATV television channel.

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[46] The main M1 television channel was not included in the list because of low viewership, however since the channel relies on a centralized official news production, hirado.hu, all the other state-owned media, the Kossuth Radio, and Petofi Radio reflect the public-media's official line of communication. Another reason for the trier approach was the lack of independent media in Hungary, since two-thirds of all media either is public media or it is owned by oligarchs close to the ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition.

The most divisive issue was the geopolitical stance of academic institutions. On the one hand, academic lecturers downplayed the significance of the Kremlin's leverage over Hungarian academic activities because there are just no pro-Russian curricula. On the contrary, the nation's historians are still uncovering the communist past with sporadic demands for releasing the intelligence files of that period. On the other hand, other experts tended to include semi-academic activities or institutions as well in their answers, like the Lakitelek Népfőiskola (Lakitelek People's College).

Extremist organisations and paramilitary groups play a moderate role in furthering the Kremlin's agenda either through some individual supporters or through some separate social groups. The latter instance is not a surprise given that the Hungarian paramilitary organisations form a tight subculture around the pro-Russian far-right Jobbik party. The experts estimated that there could be "several thousand people" involved in paramilitary activity. One expert noted that the revisionist Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom (Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement) bears the signs of Russian meddling, they *"seem to be built from the outside, they pursued autonomy for Transcarpathia."[47]*

BLOCK B1.
Response. Political dimension.
Score: 88

The Hungarian political sphere is clearly the most vulnerable to Russian disinformation influence, since the rightist ruling Fidesz-KDNP and the far-right Jobbik pursue a pro-Russian foreign policy in an electorate that has dramatically shifted to the right since 2010. Therefore, the pro-Russian attitude is almost entirely an elite-driven phenomenon in Hungary obstructing the present or future defensive capabilities of the Hungarian state against the Kremlin.

The experts were very consistent in diagnosing the lack of adequate political answers in this respect. According to the consensus, there is no elaboration of disinformation operations of the Russian Federation in official Hungarian documents such as the Security Strategy or Foreign Policy Strategy. By contrast, Hungarian intelligence officials complained back in 2013 that they lack adequate resources for SIGINT. As one of the experts noted, *"the state defends itself from the wrong directions, it defends itself from Western influence, (…) there are these huge articles about Russian influence and the Hungarian state says not even a word."* State strategies, doctrines regulating the media and freedom of speech still offer some solutions to the problems, however, they are not effective enough. Experts agreed that there are established institutions within the intelligence community authorized to monitor information activities of the Russian Federation, but respondents expressed scepticism that these tasks are fulfilled

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[47] Transcarpathia is a Western part of Ukraine bordering Hungary with a small Hungarian minority. The territory used to be part of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy before World War One, so Hungarian revisionist movements views it as one of the "lost territories" of Hungary.

to the necessary extent. As one expert put it: *"they did not do proper intelligence screening in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or abroad in Moscow (...), they are impotent in defending the Hungarian News Agency, public media or politics."* Moreover, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority is *"completely passive in this respect."* When these institutions do act, they do not perform the proper functions of information security or they lack capacity due to *"political reasons."*

So, the government has no impetus whatsoever to increase Hungarian citizens' media literacy or awareness of Russian disinformation. Experts agreed that there is no effort or state-sponsored activity to increase literacy. According to one expert, *"if the intelligence community would possess the necessary knowledge, which they do not, they would need to educate civil society in this respect."* One important conclusion to be drawn is the asymmetric relationship between the Hungarian government and the Kremlin, which discourages the Hungarian political elite from taking any steps to defend itself as long as Moscow is using the long-term Hungarian-Russian gas contracts or the Paks 2 investment worth EUR 10 billion as carrots or sticks.

BLOCK B2
Response. Media dimension.
Score: 70

The Hungarian media is overtly influenced by the pro-Russian government, which resulted in the majority the Hungarian media spreading pro-Kremlin stances under the influence of the state or oligarchs close to Fidesz. Only a small independent part of the news media and investigative media publish critical reports about the relationship between Budapest and Moscow, including the disinformation activities of the Kremlin in Hungary.

Overall, the respondents regarded the nation-wide media more apt to follow the standards of objectivity, reveal propaganda and manipulations, as well as preserve journalists' independence from censorship. A one of the experts noticed, *"I think local media have generally lower standards when compared to national media."* Another factor in the Hungarian local media's weak performance is that the majority of local print daily journals have been recently acquired by the closest oligarch of PM Orbán, Lőrinc Mészáros.

The media attention to the Kremlin disinformation in media with nation-wide coverage was rated average, meaning that the topic is discussed in media frequently, but it is not in the spotlight. Experts explained the reasons behind this phenomenon in two ways. First, disinformation in the Hungarian political discourse was never at the centre stage. *"The government covering much of the public is not interested in or indifferent regarding disinformation, while the opposition is weak and deals with the issue only if there is a concrete political advantage to be gained,"* one expert said. Second, the topic in itself is too narrow to attract a large audience. Another expert noted that *"the readers are not really interested, (...) a spy scandal can reach those as well who are underinformed in foreign policy matters, however information warfare is a narrow field even within foreign policy reaching only journalists, intellectuals."* The same expert explained the professional obstacles to reporting more about disinformation more bluntly: *"this topic does not concern the everyday lives of the people, so no editorial board can allow to devote a piece to it on a weekly basis."* Thus, it is not a surprise that most of the respondents thought the journalistic activity disclosing Russian disinformation is confined to a small circle of professionals with few projects focusing on the issue. The journalist respondent emphasized that this is matter of both capacity and the availability of stories. As one expert noticed, *"the truth lies between the two options. There are 4-5 stories which we could pursue should we have more resources, time. We are two journalists working on this issue on a more regular basis, however other media can pursue this only sporadically. We lack the expert base, there are a dozen of people, and then everybody knows everybody. (...) We also fall short of stories, (...) a big story comes to light every half a year only."*

BLOCK B3.
Response. Civil society dimension. Score: 68

Hungarian mainstream politics' (Fidesz and Jobbik) pro-Russian stance leaves a profound mark on the civilian resilience towards Russian disinformation as well. The latest legislative proposal of the government directly follows the Kremlin's footsteps in branding and registering independent NGOs as "foreign funded organisation,"[48] hich gives the upper hand to GONGOs supported and established by the government. The combined power and bias of legislature targeting NGOs and GONGOs mean that the efficiency of any joint effort of governmental and non-governmental entities in fighting disinformation is very low. Consequently, any involvement of the state in such counter-measures lowers the rate of success rather than boosting the NGOs ability to withstand the Kremlin's influence. One expert noted, *"there are projects, initiatives in the civil society, however the state is not open to it. The state persecutes NGOs."* Due to the low number of independent and specialized NGOs dealing with propaganda, Hungarian civil society is only partially able to properly identify the problem of disinformation or their voice is marginalized in the public. As one expert put it, *"the understanding of disinformation is to be found among the opposition intellectuals, however they are not in the mainstream. There are 6-7 million people who cannot access this information because they live in the countryside, consume local media. There are a few organisations, Political Capital, CEID, previously the Institute for Foreign Affairs, otherwise there are just no organisations"* up for the task. The concrete operational capacities of civil society reflect the lack of specialized institutions. Respondents rated the journalists' or officials' education in fact checking, strategic communications and political counter-measures the lowest meaning that either there is no activity at all or there are no specialized institutions, expertise available. Disinformation monitoring and the response to pro-Russian fringe media were rated higher, there seem to be at least a few institutions capable of dealing with these issues. The improvement of citizens' media literacy proved to be one of the most divisive question.

Cooperation between different stakeholders to counter propaganda depicts the dysfunction of the Hungarian state and state institutions. Experts believed there is minimal or no collaboration between state actors and the media or state actors and civil society. As one expert noted, *"Hungary is following a different path, it plays on the other team."* Civil society-media, and civil society-civil society cooperation was generally regarded as highly synergic with intense dialogue or project-based cooperation among the actors. Still, one respondent questioned the merit of civil society's actions on political grounds, *"civil actors are 'under attack' in Hungary, so success is rare, (…) as well as I do not recall three NGOs' cooperation yielding any visible results. There are only a few NGOs capable of cooperation, and those are doing all the same, producing analysis, and organising conferences."* The relationship between media actors proved to be more problematic, some argued that the scene lacks successful projects, while others argued that there are attempts to build dialogue, coordination. One expert noted the type of media is crucial in this respect, *"the function of the media is not cooperation, (…) there should be no cooperation between the independent media, and the state, whereas the state needs to collaborate with public media closely.* ■

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[48] Amnesty International, Hungary: *Plan to brand NGOs has sombre echoes of Russia's 'foreign agents law'*, April 7, 2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/04/hungary-plan-to-brand-ngos-has-sombre-echoes-of-russias-foreign-agents-law/ - Last visited: April 11, 2017.

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- **Panyi Szabolcs,** index.hu

- **János Széky,** Élet és Irodalom

- **Edit Zgut,** Political Capital
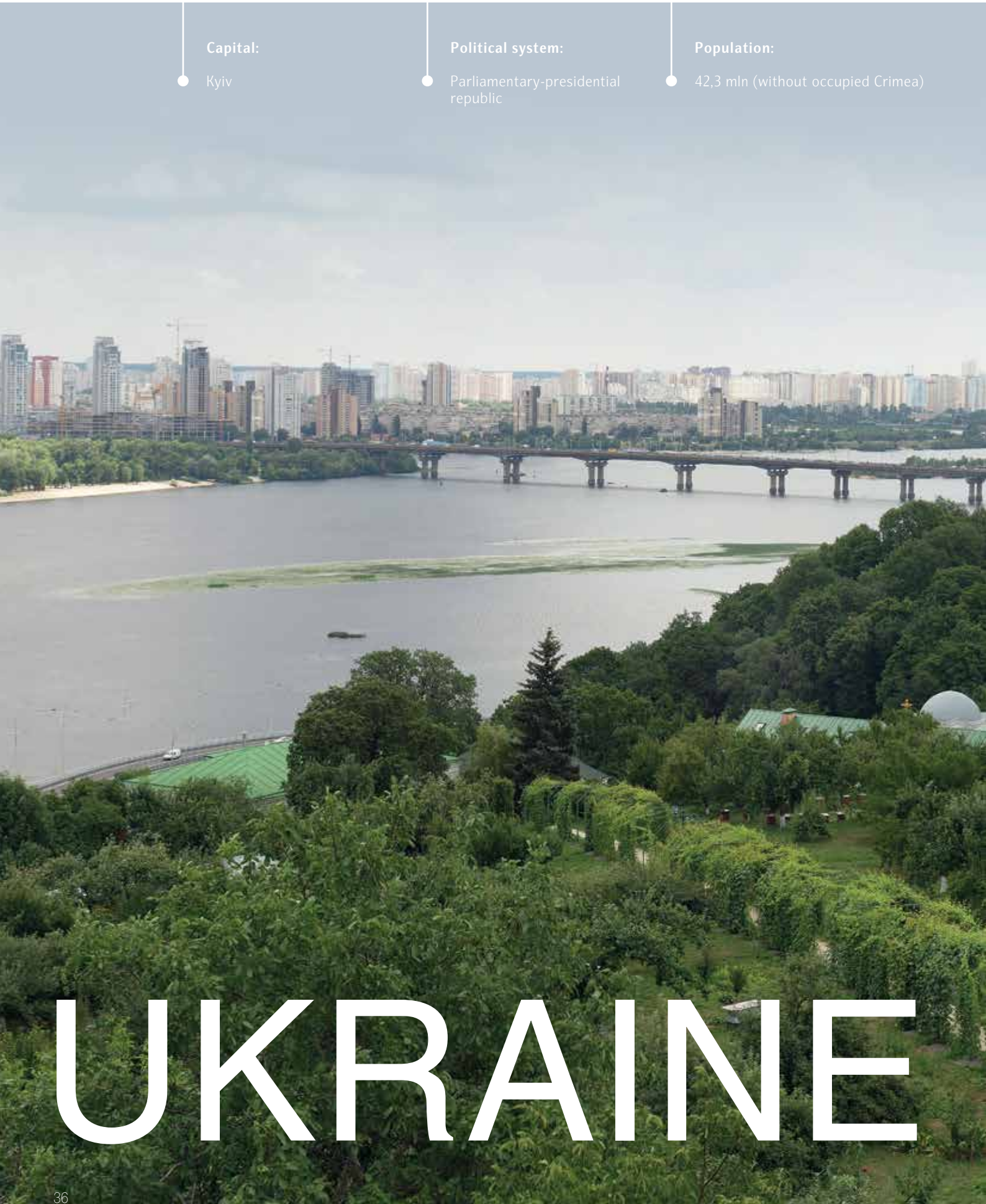
Capital:

Kyiv

Political system:

Parliamentary-presidential republic

Population:

42,3 mln (without occupied Crimea)

UKRAINE
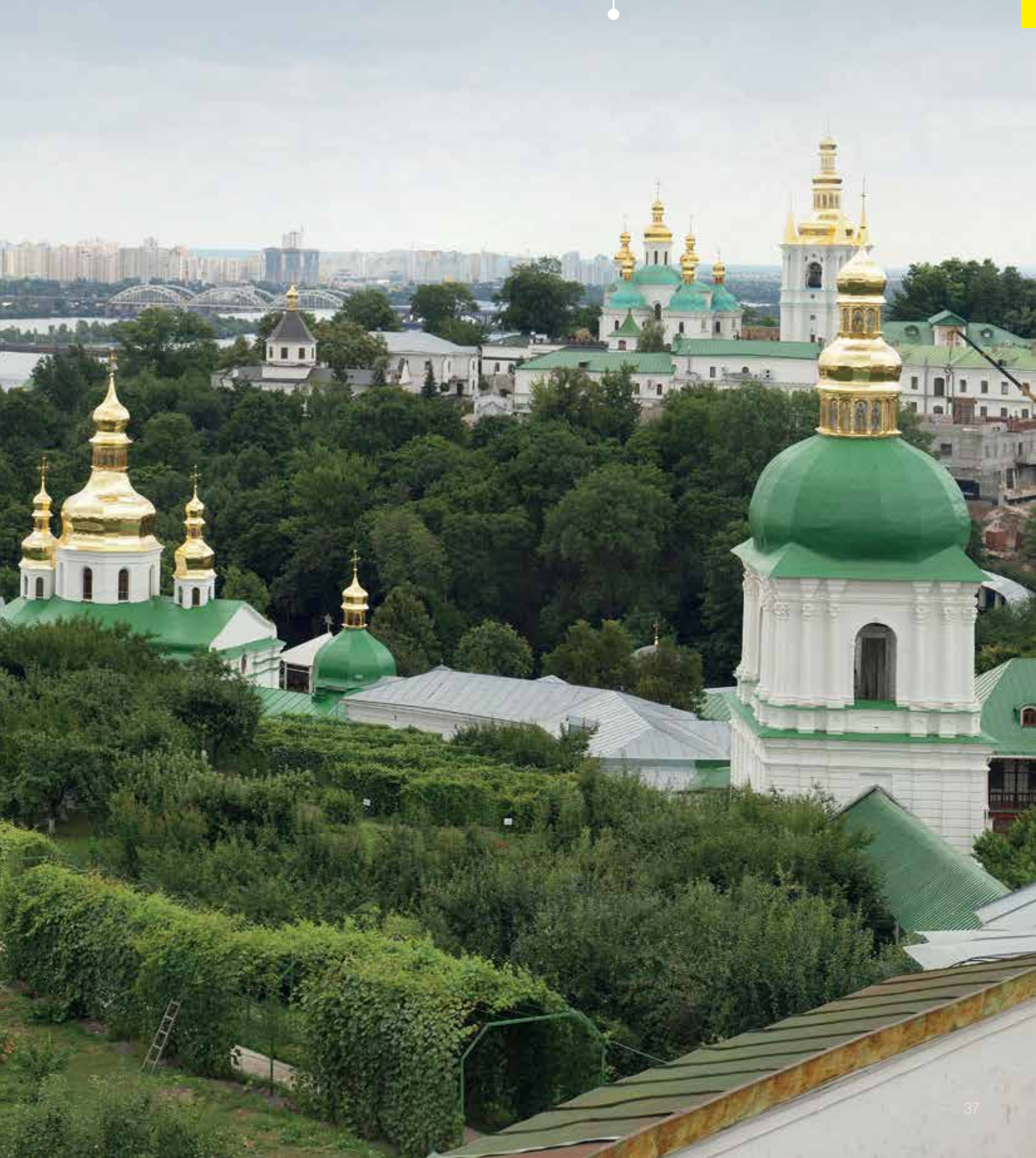
GDP per capita:

2,1 thousand USD

Urbanization:

69% urban
31% rural

Ethnic composition:

77,8% Ukrainians
17,3% Russians
4,9% other

**General
Index**

49

Influence:
Political dimension

Influence:
Media dimension

Response:
Civil society
dimension

31

49

45

58

65

45

Response:
Media dimension

Response:
Political dimension

Influence:
Civil society
dimension

CONTEXT

1
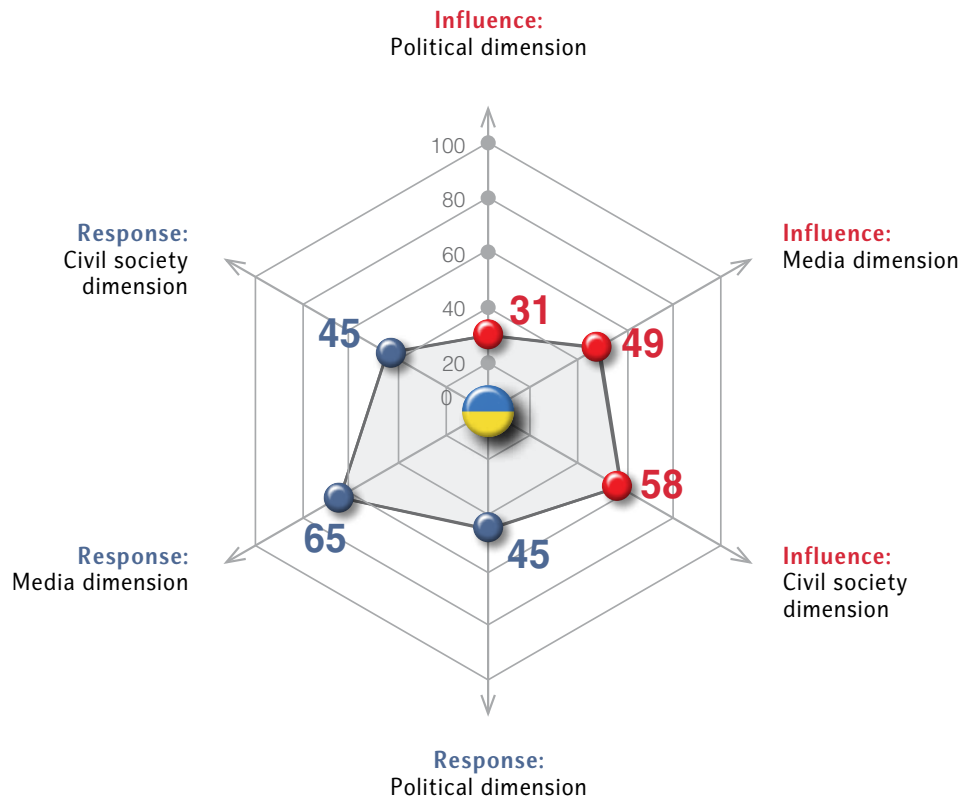
1.1. Political Developments

Overview. Since late 1990ies, Ukraine has got an oligarchic social model where a limited number of business and political groups accumulated the economic and political influence in their hands. Political confrontation is mainly a kind of their interests confrontation; political parties function as their political agents. Civil society longs for political influence; it tries to ride out the oligarchic opposition to this longing partly by means of evolutions and revolutions (the events of 2004 and 2014).

The events of 2013-2014, aka the Revolution of Dignity, became a new burst for democratic development in Ukraine. The State's authoritarian pressure has decreased; the freedom of speech and political expression have become realistic. The involvement of non-governmental institutions in policy elaboration at all levels has become more active. The 2014-2017 period saw considerable reforms, including the administrative reform, the healthcare reform, the law enforcement reform, etc. The governmental regulation of media is actively undergoing reforms. The pressure of international partners as well as of civil society were not least of all to stimulate these reforms.

Since 2014, 7% of Ukrainian territories are not controlled by the Government (44 thousands m²): territories in the east and the Crimea peninsula). The Crimea was annexed by Russia but the world community has not recognized the fact of annexation. There are puppet regimes established in occupied areas in the

Eastern Ukraine: 'Donetsk People's Republic' ('DPR') and 'Luhansk People's Republic' ('LPR'); they are supported by armed groups. The death toll among the Ukrainians as a result of defending against Russian military aggression is over 10 thousand. The war undermines the Ukrainian economy and exhausts the resources that could have been used for reforms.

The war polarizes attitudes, and politicians take advantage of that. People are getting tired of war, of the drop of living standards; the Government's policies about the occupied territories, displaced people, defense seem incomprehensible and inconsistent. This is a lever to criticize the government and escalate anti-government and anti-military (virtually, surrender) sentiments. However, the Government actively turns to military and patriotic language to have support from the public.

People do not have a uniform opinion about the Russian aggression. An important part of the society more or less shares the myths and beliefs set by Kremlin. The situation in the Ukraine's south is especially sensitive, as the Russian-speaking population there has the world view close to the Russian one. Corruption, economic problems, inefficient communication of the Government contribute to the issue.

The President and the Parliament of Ukraine were elected after the Revolution of Dignity in 2014. Petro Poroshenko became the President. The President is a significant figure in the country's political life; he is also the Commander-in-Chief, so his speeches urge to struggle against the Russian aggression, though they never cross the line of hate speech or uncovered militarism.

The Parliament (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) is mixed (a half of PMs is elected at single mandate constituency, the second half is elected from party lists); the major factions are the Block of Petro Poroshenko (31%), Narodnyi Front (People's Front) (18%), Opposition Block (10%), Samopomich (Self Reliance) (6%), Batkivshchyna (Motherland) (4%), and Radical Party (4%). All of them, except for Oppoblock, exploit the patriotic and anti-Kremlin rhetoric. The current composition of the Parliament does not reflect the actual social support of political parties: Over the last two years, the President's party has lost its popularity, and today BPP, Narodnyi Front and Opposition Block enjoy almost the same support. The parliamentary election is scheduled in March 2019; the president is to be elected the same year in October.

The Government is headed by the President's protégé Volodymyr Groisman; the Government is made up by the representatives of the parties major in the Parliament (BPP, Narodnyi Front, Samopomich). The Government is set by the Parliament of Ukraine; the current composition of the Government was appointed in 2016; the new Cabinet of Ministers is to be determined by the freshly-elected Verkhovna Rada in 2017, unless the former is dismissed by then.

1.2 Media Landscape

Ukraine is number 107 in the RSF ranking. The governmental pressure on media is almost null. Ukrainian media outlets are not profitable and depend on sponsors and owners; so the latter enjoy very strong influence on the editorial policy. Key national media belong to oligarch groups and are used as political and economic levers. Local media outlets have too much of invited materials and hidden ads. Few independent media outlets work due to the donor funding mainly.

Experts point out low professionalism of journalists in general. Over the last two years, their capacity to avoid hate speech and detect fakes has slightly increased; but the capacity to observe standards and produce quality news is still low (being higher within the national media, and lower within the local ones).

[1] Detector Media, How Russia propaganda affects the public opinion in Ukraine (research), http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/mediaprosvita/research/yak_rosiyska_propaganda_vplivae_na_suspilnu_dumku_v_ukraini_doslidzhennya/ - Last visited: 13 April 2017.

[2] Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2016: political bottom lines – national survey, http://dif.org.ua/article/2016-y-politichni-pidsumki-zagalnonatsionalne-opituvannya. – Last visited: 13 April 2017.

[3] Detector Media, How Russia propaganda affects the public opinion in Ukraine (research), http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/mediaprosvita/research/yak_rosiyska_propaganda_vplivae_na_suspilnu_dumku_v_ukraini_doslidzhennya/ - Last visited: 13 April 2017.

Key media players:

● Star Light Media: STB, ICTV, Novyi TV-channels and other media outlets; owner: Viktor Pinchuk, more focused on entertainment;

● Inter Media Group: Inter TV-channel etc.; owners: Dmytro Firtash and Serhiy Liovochkin from the team of former president Yanukovych;

● Media Group Ukraina: Ukraina TV-channel, Segodnia newspaper, other media outlets; owner: Rynat Akhmetov from the team of former president Yanukovych;

● 1+1 Media Holding: 1+1, 2+2 TV-channels, UNIAN agency, other media outlets; owner: Igor Kolomoiskyi;

● 5 channel, owner: Petro Poroshenko.

TV keeps being the key news source (87%). The interpersonal communication (48%) and online media (41%)[1] are second important communication sources This is because of low trust to the national media observed since 2014 (47%)[2]. Russian media have no noticeable share in the media consumption (8%)[3]. Broadcasting of Russian TV-channels is limited in Ukraine, nevertheless people have access to them via satellite, Internet, or even analog antenna. There is a range of media outlets linked to the Russian business or pro-Russian political actors (like Inter Media Group, Media Group Ukraina, Vesti Holding with unknown holder) often accused of manipulations for the benefit of Krem-

lin. In August 2016, there was a huge scandal about potential coordination of Inter TV-channel's news policy with the heads of Donetsk terrorist group 'DPR'.

Areas close to the front line have a specific media landscape. Local media infrastructure is destroyed there; TV-signal coverage is poor, while they have access to propaganda sources of 'DPR' and 'LPR'; the confidence in the national media is very low.

The occupied territories practically do not have access to Ukrainian media. Ukrainian journalists can't work there. Occupation authorities block Ukrainian news web-sites and jam the TV-signal. There are no independent media left, freedom of speech is very limited. They practice personal terror against dissenters. Locals use the media of Russia or occupation administrations. Local journalists that didn't accept to work in such conditions had to leave to the area controlled by the Ukrainian Government; so local media outlets of Donbas and Crimea had to move to Kyiv and now work here (ATR, Chernomorska TV and Radio Company, Realnaya Gazeta newspaper, etc.)

1.3 Regulatory Framework

Key media-regulating laws: the Constitution of Ukraine, the Law on TV and Radio Broadcasting (obsolete; drafting of a new framework law on audiovisual services is on its way), the Law on Printed Media, etc. 2014-2016 saw a range of progressive reforms: public service broadcaster was es-

tablished on the basis of the state-owned broadcasting system; state-owned (and municipal) press is being denationalized; requirements to the TV-channel ownership transparency were introduced.

Decisions aimed at limiting the influence of Russian media have been taken. The Information Security Strategy with much attention to the RF threats was adopted. Decisions of the courts and regulator put an end to broadcasting of over 70 Russian channels spreading the Kremlin propaganda. Distribution and broadcasting of Russian propagandist films have been forbidden. But these measures concern broadcasters mainly, there are no decisions about the Kremlin influence via the Internet. Moreover, the restrictions concern the Russian media and content only; there are no efficient levers towards the Ukrainian media controlled by the pro-Russian business and promoting Kremlin narratives in Ukraine.

Ukraine has got the Ministry of Information Policy but has neither powers nor capacity to influence considerably the information processes or operation of media. There are also other bodies responsible for information security functions; but the inefficiency of powers distribution, poor coordination make this system rater inefficient.

The Ukrainian legislation doesn't apply to the occupied areas. The southern occupied area is under the Russian legislation, the eastern occupied area is under the rule of local militants.

2

STRATEGY OF KREMLIN'S INFORMATION INFLUENCE
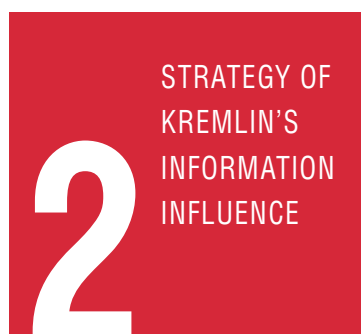
First stages of the information war, as a part of the Kremlin's hybrid war against Ukraine, are described in details in the analytical report of Ukrainian and European think-tanks. With the outbreak of revolutionary events in Kyiv in November 2013, the RF Government followed the "misinformation - destabilization - enemy image projection - invasion legitimization" algorithm; the Kremlin relied both on the Russian media and on the extensive network of agents inside Ukraine (allied media, local elites, political parties, NGOs, Black Sea Navy Fleet, church). The regions of the Ukraine's South and East suffered the most from the influence, as the Kremlin was hoping that the locals would support the 'Russian spring'.

Starting from the autumn 2014, the Kremlin's tactics has changed. It turned out that the Donbas scenario wouldn't work in other Ukrainian regions; so the Kremlin focused on separate actions to destabilize Ukraine from the inside. **The ultimate purpose of the Kremlin's information influence is to break the Ukraine's resistance to the Russian aggression and to restore peace on the Moscow's terms.**

Bringing social sentiments incompatible with the resistance. 2014-

2015 saw the performance of "revolt of mothers" in different regions of Ukraine. Demonstrative rallies of women against the mobilization; round-tables and other public events – these activities in different regions were organized by the same person and, obviously, aimed at the mobilization breakdown, staging of image for the foreign media, shattering of the soldiers' morale.

Social networks and media spread hatred towards the Donbas and Crimea locals, the accusations of no resistance to the "men in green"; persuasions that they had never been real Ukrainians and there was no point of combating for them.

The Russian propaganda gets more and more active in spreading the sentiment about the Ukraine's incapacity to be an independent state; about the incapacity of Ukrainian elites to lead the country; that Ukraine's back-off as a part of Russia is inevitable. The idea of Ukraine as a failed state is also proven by another narrative of Ukraine as a chaos place; the area of uncontrolled nationalist gangs being above the law; or contrariwise, the area of oligarch diktat when people are exploited to make wealthy people richer.

The social fatigue of war, apathy, disbelief in victory are fueled; peace at any price is presented as the desired solution to economic and social problems. Russia is shown as a long-standing partner, friendly country, and upsetting relations with it was a mistake. The Russia's economic and military power are exaggerated ("we can't beat them'). In late 2016, the experts observed the targeted communication of the message that restoring relations with Russia is inevitable. As a rule, Kyiv is made responsible for the outbreak of war (it didn't "hear Donbas", it's has interest in the war continuation) in such cases. This rhetoric is particularly used by the Opposition Block party.

Pro-Russia political actors support.

To change the Kyiv's political elite with more Russia-friendly one is one of the optimum ways for the Kremlin to achieve its interests in Ukraine. The country has a very powerful actor established by former V.Yanukovych allies – the Opposition Block; it is doing its best to get political dividends from

the fatigue of war by promising to put an end to it (actually, to capitulate). Big business supporting this party has a powerful media resource (e.g. Inter and Ukraina TV-channels) and uses it to communicate their ideas and sentiments.

Though currently the OppoBlock seems to be the most loyal to Russia, there is always a chance that the Kremlin can have a deal with other Ukrainian oligarchs and win them over to its side. So there is a risk that Moscow-friendly elites would come in making use of the patriotic and anti-Kremlin rhetoric.

Destabilizing inside Ukraine.

2015-2017, there were many efforts to escalate all possible (latent and potential) conflicts in the Ukrainian society. We have already evoked fueling of hatred towards the Donbas and Crimea locals. Some ops were taken to discredit internally displaced persons; there were fake news about "bad in-migrants" allegedly conflicting with host people because of the language, improper conduct, public support to separatists. And these ops had their effect: partly because of them the internally displaced persons often face the discrimination. This gives the Kremlin a dual result: the in-migrants tell their friends who stayed in the occupied areas about the hostile treatment, and confirm myths and stereotypes that Ukraine hates in-migrants spread by the Kremlin.

Destabilizing of border regions – habitats of Bulgarians, Romanians, Polish – was undertaken in 2014, and was relaunched in the late 2016. Ethnic hatred between Ukrainians and other nationalities is fueled deliberately.

Protest sentiments are being actively brought up. The Kremlin influence agents are keen on using the mistakes of the current authorities to stoke anti-government sentiments. The "third Maidan" as another coup d'etat keeps lingering on the agenda (but this time it might have more disastrous outcome for the sovereignty). This is triggered by economic problems, high municipal charges, low military action, etc. So, to get what the Kremlin wants, they mobilize not only the Russia supporters but also socially vulnerable and radicalized patriot groups.

Agents of Influence.

Despite the ban to broadcast the Russian TV-channels in Ukraine, the citizens have access to the Russian media via satellite and Internet. But only 1% of citizens trusts them as the news source. So far, the Kremlin-friendly business and political groups are the key agents of the Kremlin information influence. They control political parties and have a powerful media resource. **Ukrainian media are the key communicators of the Kremlin narrative in Ukraine.** Social media (VKontakte mainly) and shady web-sites also play an important part. Another significant channel of influence is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (of Moscow Patriarchate) and local elites who support the Kremlin (in the southern and eastern Ukraine mainly). There is an extensive network of agents in the form of NGOs .

The Kremlin's information policy about the occupied areas is to arrange their absolute isolation from the Ukraine's media landscape and legitimation of their rejection. One can see that the Crimean media are ignoring the topic of Ukraine as something that has nothing to do with the Crimea; the cliché "Crimean island" was often used in 2014, this was supposed to underline no ties of the peninsula with the "mainland" (i.e. the rest of Ukraine). This was to make locals feel complete RF citizens and forget about the connection to Ukraine.

Whereas in the eastern occupied territories, the demonization of Ukraine, the Ukrainians, Ukrainian Forces is an important part of the discourse. Ukraine is shown as a stronghold of chaos, tyranny of fascists, poverty and degradation of people; this reality is supposed to frighten and underline "the success of young republics".

The occupied areas are heavily affected by the Kremlin narratives that were designed firstly for the RF citizens: the nostalgia for the totalitarian past; glorification of Stalin's victory in the WW2; the cult of Putin; "fascist" myth; justification of the Russia's rights to the geopolitical leadership; militaristic and imperialist ideas; homophobia, conformity; anti-American and anti-European sentiments. Locals of the rest of Ukraine are also affected by these narratives as they consume the Russian news and entertaining content.

3 KREMLIN INFLUENCE INDEX

BLOCK A1.
Influence: Political dimension. Score: 31

The potential of the Kremlin in this dimension was estimated by experts as the most limited. None of Ukrainian political parties or leaders will dare to officially deny the fact of the aggression, the presence of Russian troops in Ukraine, justify the annexation of the Crimea or other aggressive actions by the Kremlin, even if they have ties with the Kremlin. After the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, pro-European parties came to power; thus, these political forces and leaders became responsible for the proper rebuff to information and military aggression by the Russian Federation. Therefore, the official position of all senior officials tends to be anti-Kremlin.

The score of the Verkhovna Rada is slightly higher than the scores of the President and of the Government, because it comprises not only pro-European forces. Key factions declare pro-European position, willingness to fight for the integrity of Ukraine; they call Russia an enemy (the political party of the President – the PPB – is more moderate, while the Radical Party of Lyashko and "Batkivshchyna" (Ukrainian for "Fatherland") have a more radical and bellicose position). The "Opposition Bloc", for its part, avoids direct positive assessment of the Russian Federation aggressive policy (justification of the aggression, the occupation of Crimea etc.) but primarily blames Kyiv for unleashing and continuing the war and calls for dialog with the Kremlin[5], promising peaceful life to citizens (the price of such peace for Ukraine is not specified). Therefore, some experts evaluated this party with 4 points mainly not for their pro-Russian position, but because of the fact that the party's communication matches with the Kremlin interests. The same applies to a variety of other political forces which are exploiting patrioteer slogans but actually play into the hands of Russia and promote its interests.

At the local level, especially in the eastern and southern regions, quite strong pro-Russian positions of the elite are observed. Occasionally, this results in demonstrative actions or decisions of local authorities which are interpreted as support (or demonstration of nonjudgmental position) of actions of the Russian Federation[6] The potential of the Kremlin in this chapter is estimated at the highest level – 2.5.

Experts noted that not only communication, but real actions of the actors who sometimes go contrary to their rhetoric deserve a separate assessment. In particular, some experts have doubts about the President's consistency in coping with the aggression (in the presence of highlighted anti-Russian rhetoric); the involvement of some political forces to achieve the objectives of the Kremlin in Ukraine cannot be excluded

BLOCK A2
Influence. Media dimension. Score: 49

Despite the sociological data which indicate a low level of trust in the Russian media, experts evaluated their influence on the public opinion in Ukraine as rather high, with 2.6 points. Firstly, despite the restrictions, people still watch RTR, NTV, "Russia 1" via satellite and over the Internet. Though they are not trusted as news sources, their entertainment content - shows, movies, TV series – is highly popular, and it is a powerful information weapon, because most of these products carry a charge of Kremlin ideology and propaganda. Secondly, people increasingly get their news from friends, co-workers[7] and use this communication as a source

[5] Opposition Block, *Прекратить огонь и начать немедленные переговоры. Гибель и страдания людей на Донбассе нужно остановить: Заявление Оппозиционного блока* [Cease firing and start immediate negotiations. Death and suffering must be stopped in the Donbas: The Oppositional Bloc statement], 03 February 2017, http://opposition.org.ua/news/pripiniti-vogon-i-rozpochati-negajni-peregovori-zagibel-i-strazhdannya-lyudej-na-donbasi-potribno-zupiniti.html - Last visited: 21 April 2017.

[6] Example: RBC-Ukraine, *Горсовет Кривого Рога не признал Россию страной-агрессором* [The City Council of Kryvyi Rih did not recognize Russia as aggressor country], 31 January 2015, https://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/gorsovet-krivogo-roga-ne-priznal-rossiyu-stranoy-agressorom-31012015145100 — Last accessed: 21 April 2017.

of news. Thirdly, the influence of Russian media content is particularly noticeable, in the frontline areas in the east of the country (which have an extremely low level of trust in the Ukrainian media, and in which Russian TV channels can be received over an analog antenna).

As already mentioned before, active carriers of the Kremlin narratives in Ukraine are own Ukrainian media financed by pro-Russian politicians and businessmen. Thus, a number of media the editorial policy of which is assessed as rather friendly to the Kremlin (more than three points) can be singled out, namely: newspapers "Vesti" and "KP in Ukraine", Korrespondent.net. More than two points were received by TV-channels "Inter" and "Ukraine" and by radio "Era". It is important to note that these media are either related to the pro-Russian political and business groups, or their owners are unknown. During 2015-2017, these media were regularly at the center of scandals connected to their sympathy for the Kremlin. Thus, the newspaper "Vesti" (it is distributed for free and has a daily circulation of more than 300 thousand copies, the funding source is hidden) is a constant target of criticism by the public because of manipulation in favor of the Kremlin[8]; there were evidence of coordination of the TV-channel "Inter" news policy with the organization "DNR"[9]; TV-channel "Ukraine" actually copied the propaganda of separatist groups in their series[10].

Same as in case with political actors, the experts pointed out that not the positive evaluation of the Kremlin's actions (which is in principle unacceptable in Ukrainian situation) is important, but the spreading of narratives close to the Kremlin one's and creating the social climate that contributes to accomplishing the objectives of the Kremlin in Ukraine. Furthermore, the study did not include a number of important media which are less popular, but still are quite influential (especially among opinion leaders) and are also often criticized for manipulation in favor of Russia (NewsOne, "112 Ukraine", 17-th channel, etc.).

The fact that the influence of the Russian media on the public opinion in the occupied territories is crucial, since they have an information monopoly there, was mentioned separately.

BLOCK A3.
Influence: Civil society dimension.
Score: 58

Ukrainian Orthodox Church subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) has great influence in Ukraine. The Kremlin is actively using the church to strengthen its position within Russia and to promote its interests abroad; so the representatives of this church in Ukraine are active communicators of the Kremlin narratives. *"The influence of the UOC MP ... will be strengthened significantly provided that the anti-Russian sentiments of the government and of the active part of the society decreases. It is an extremely powerful spring that is temporarily pressed in its possibilities because of political reasons ",* said the expert. However, participants of the study could not make an unambiguous assessment of the position of this church. *"I would not say that the whole UOC MP is "close to the Kremlin" because I personally know a number of influential Metropolitans who are condemning the Russia's position concerning Ukraine, and there are many of such cases at the level of church communities,"* the expert said. *"The Russian Fed-*

[7] Detector Media, Survey of Russian Propaganda Influence on Public Opinion in Ukraine Findings, 13 February 2017, http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/detector_media_en/reports_eng/survey_of_russian_propaganda_influence_on_public_opinion_in_ukraine_findings/ – Last accessed: 21 April 2017.

[8] R. Shutov, Метаморфози російської пропаганди: газета «Вести» [Metamorphosis of Russian propaganda. Newspaper "Vesti"], MediaSapiens, 14 June 2014, http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/monitoring/advocacy_and_influence/metamorfozi_rosiyskoi_propagandi_gazeta_vesti/ – Last accessed: 21 April 2017.

[9] Detector Media, Редактори «Інтера» та телеканалу «Донбас» звітували перед органами держбезпеки «ДНР»? [The editors of the TV channels "Inter" and "Donbas" reported to the security bodies of "DNR"], 03 August 2016, http://detector.media/infospace/article/117468/2016-08-03-redaktori-intera-ta-telekanalu-donbas-zvituvali-pered-organami-derzhbezpeki-dnr-dopovneno/ – Last accessed: 21 April 2017.

[10] Conclusions by the Independent Media Council on the series "Ne zarikaysia" ["Never say never"], 27 April 2016, http://detector.media/infospace/article/114699/2016-04-27-visnovok-nezalezhnoi-mediinoi-radi-shchodo-serialu-ne-zarikaisya/ – Last accessed: 21 April 2017

eration simply uses certain personalities of the UOC MP to create the effect of religious persecution of the "church for the Russian-speaking", but the situation is much more complicated."

The work through public organizations was active before the beginning of the war in 2014; in 2015-17, the activity of such institutions decreased significantly. There are several organizations the work of which seems to be clearly synchronized with the policy of the Kremlin. In particular, this refers to the so-called Foundation "Antyvoyna" ("Anti-war")[11], which organized "anti-war" events in different cities of Ukraine. *"In the information field, there is a certain threat and visibility of pro-Russian NGOs abroad; they conduct anti-Ukrainian rallies, accuse Ukraine of fascism, and then present these attacks as positions of European citizens and countries,"* the experts say. *"Pro-Russian organizations that publicly take the position of reconciliation in Donbas have certain little influence."* They also *collaborate with the UOC MP."* These organizations are usually not large, they do not have a long history of existence, but have good media resources, which also shows their artificial nature.

The influence of educational facilities was rated by experts as low, primarily because they generally have low influence in the country. But experts pointed out that often professors who have pro-Russian views, use their work to outreach.

Assessing the impact of extremist and paramilitary groups, the experts noted that these groups - in the eastern occupied areas - have a decisive influence on local life and very powerful influence on the views of citizens. Paramilitary structures "DNR" and "LNR" began to create an extensive system of their own propaganda channels (often using equipment and facilities which were left by the local media) already in 2014; now they have fully functional TV-channels, radio stations, newspapers and websites. These propagandist channels *"significantly influence the residents in the occupied territories, in the "gray zone" and in the liberated territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the displaced persons through their relatives who stayed in the occupied territories." They "are quoted even by Ukrainian media which do not assume the pro-Kremlin position."* So, paramilitary groups not only control the media scene in the occupied areas of Donbas, but also have influence in the rest of Ukrainian territory.

BLOCK B1.
Response: Political dimension. Score: 45

Ukraine has been involved in active defensive war for more than three years, so information security is among the key issues on the political agenda. In the National Security Strategy of Ukraine (2015) aggressive actions by the Russian Federation and *"formation of communications which are alternative to reality and of distorted information picture of the world by Russian media"* are mentioned in the list of threats. The disinformation efforts of the Kremlin are in the focus of the Information Security Doctrine of Ukraine (2017) and of a number of regulations concerning the Russian movie industry products, exports of Russian books, broadcasting of television channels etc. Meanwhile, the government's Action Plan for the Occupied Territories (2016) does not contain any references to the danger of disinformation, though it gives attention to the information needs of the citizens residing in the occupied territory. Despite the large number of such regulations, according to experts, not always there are sufficient mechanisms for the full application of this legislation.

In Ukraine, there are a number of authorities, somehow dealing with information security. These include the Security Service of Ukraine, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Council on Television and Radio Broadcasting etc. Since the beginning of the war, the Ministry of Information Policy and the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories were added. The full audit of responsibilities of these bodies was not carried

[11] http://shilova.org/

out, and therefore their responsibilities often overlap. This leads to inconsistent and uncoordinated actions[12]. Part of the problem was solved by the creation of interagency working groups (including the successful experience of the working group on restoration of Ukrainian broadcasting in the area of ATO).

The experts note a rather high efficiency of public policies to limit Russian information influence, but draw attention to the extremely inadequate government efforts to increase the media literacy of the citizens. *"There are practically no actions aimed at improving the media literacy; mainly NGOs are dealing with it,"* the expert said. The only achievement of public policy in this area is a pilot implementation of media literacy course in the middle school.

Block B2
Response: Media dimension. Score: 65

The topic of Russian disinformation takes its rightful place in the media discourse. As this topic is addressed by the politicians, it is often heard in political talk shows and in the news, in analytical programs about the development of the fighting, security etc. There is a number of journalists who specialize in this topic and who are authors of articles in the national press, host TV programs on national TV; there is a number of documentary projects which in some way address the topic of propaganda ("Hromadske TV"); the problem of disinformation is paid attention to in talk show (e.g.: "Right to Rule", "1+1") and entertainment format (e.g.: "Morning in the Big City" on ICTV).

Experts point out numerous problems of Ukrainian journalism that make Ukrainian media vulnerable to Russian disinformation influence. Ukrainian media are not profitable and therefore dependent on financing sources, which allows their owners to interfere with their editorial policy and to order their discourse. Hence, professionalism and ethics of journalists will not become significant obstacles to the interests of the owners, if they will want to use their media resources in favor of the Kremlin.

The level of journalists professionalism itself (their ability to adhere to journalistic standards) did not get high marks from the experts too. The studies by Detector Media[13] indicate a very poor quality of professional education of journalists. Every other journalist working in local media has no professional education. Monitoring the quality of news and studies among journalists which are carried out by Detector Media, Institute of Mass Information, and Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy indicate a general lack of journalists' ability to produce quality news.

Experts are also critical about the ability of journalists to check the facts and to avoid manipulative influences in their work. This problem is particularly acute in the local media, which often do not produce their own news but reprint news from the Internet without proper verification[14]. The *StopFake* team produced a database of such cases in the local media and in the national press[15]. The so-called Yahotyn case[16] (dissemination of fake news about settling the refugees from Syria in the town Yahotyn near Kyiv in February - March 2016) indicates the acuteness of the problem also for national TV channels.

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[12] Examples are described in the reports by Detector Media on the monitoring of the activities of governmental bodies in Ukraine in the field of information security, including the following: http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/go_telekrytyka/diyalnist/produkty/monitoringoviy_zvit_diyalnist_organiv_derzhavnoi_vladi_v_sferi_informatsiynoi_politiki_ta_regulyatsii_media_1_pivrichchya_2016/

[13] The State of Journalism Education at Journalism Departments in Ukraine (pilot survey findings) // MediaSapiens. — 31.03.2016. — http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/go_telekrytyka/diyalnist/produkty/the_state_of_journalism_education_at_journalism_departments_in_ukraine_pilot_survey_findings/

[14] Case Example: Vchasno News service, *Інформація про переселенців, які святкували анексію Криму, виявилась фейком* [Information about refugees that celebrated the annexation of Crimea turn out to be fake], 04 March 2015, http://v4asno.com/informaciya-pro-pereselenciv-yaki-svyatkuvali-aneksiyu-krimu-viyavilas-fejkom/ — Last visited: 21 April 2017.

[15] Database: www.stopfake.org

[16] S. Lefter. *Залякати сирійськими біженцями. Майстер-клас від українських ЗМІ* [Intimidate with Syrian refugees. Master class of Ukrainian Media], 18 March 2016, http://detector.media/kritika/article/113658/2016-03-18-zalyakati-siriiskimi-bizhentsyami-maister-klas-ukrainskikh-zmi/ — Last visited: 21 April 2017.

BLOCK B3.
Response: Civil Society dimension.
Score: 45

The problem of Russian disinformation has become the subject of public attention already during the Revolution of Dignity. In February 2014, Detector Media began the first systematic monitoring of Russian propaganda in Ukraine. In March 2014, initiatives StopFake and Informational Resistance appeared. At the beginning of 2015, a strong school of disinformation monitoring already existed in Ukraine; by the efforts of Detector Media, Institute of Mass Information, Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy, Internews-Ukraine, Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukrainian Crisis Media Center and several other analytical and monitoring centers, methodology of propaganda and hate speech monitoring and practices of discourse analysis were implemented, developed and improved. Detector Media promotes different approaches to the assessment of the impact of disinformation; IREX, Academy of Ukrainian Press, and Detector Media are among the leaders in promoting media literacy for the general population; OSCE, StopFake, Internews Ukraine, Institute of Mass Information, Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy, and Ukrainian Crisis Media Center train journalists to work against the backdrop of war, to make quality news, to check information, and to avoid stereotypes and hate speech.

The civil society is less active in working with fringe media; they are rather monitored for research of fakes or for timely detection of psychological special operations.

Non-governmental institutions advise the government on information policy. Some government officials were recruited from among the non-governmental experts. There exists practice of public work groups at ministries; they are involved in the development of legislative acts. But these processes are not sufficiently inclusive; partly because of that, the products of this cooperation are not always of sufficient quality[17]; and often the last word rests with the political will and momentary interests, not with the analysis and strategy. Also, lack of strategic vision (or the same momentary conditions) leads to the fact that a significant part of these advice remains unused.

Civil society organizations reached a certain level of synergy in their work. While there is no center to coordinate efforts or no formal network, informal communication allows key analytical centers to coordinate and synchronize their work and to create common products. Participation of the media in the joint work to combat disinformation is complicated by the fact that the media belong to the business and political groups and are subordinate to the interests of these groups; but independent media, including Hromadske TV and Hromadske Radio, the newly created public broadcaster, and some local media actively cooperate with other stakeholders in this area and are active players. However, there are almost no joint projects between different media. ■

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[17] In particular, the draft of the Information Security Concept developed by a public expert council suffered severe criticism from the Ukrainian expert community and the OSCE.

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Inna Pidluska, International Renaissance Foundation

Oksana Romaniuk, Institute of Mass Information

Vitaliy Syzov, Donetsk Institute of Information

Yulia Tyshchenko, Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Studies

Svitlana Yeremenko, Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy

Serhiy Zdioruk, National Institute for Strategic Studies

Capital:

Prague

Political system:

Parliamentary republic

Population:

10,6 mln

CZECH
REPUBLIC

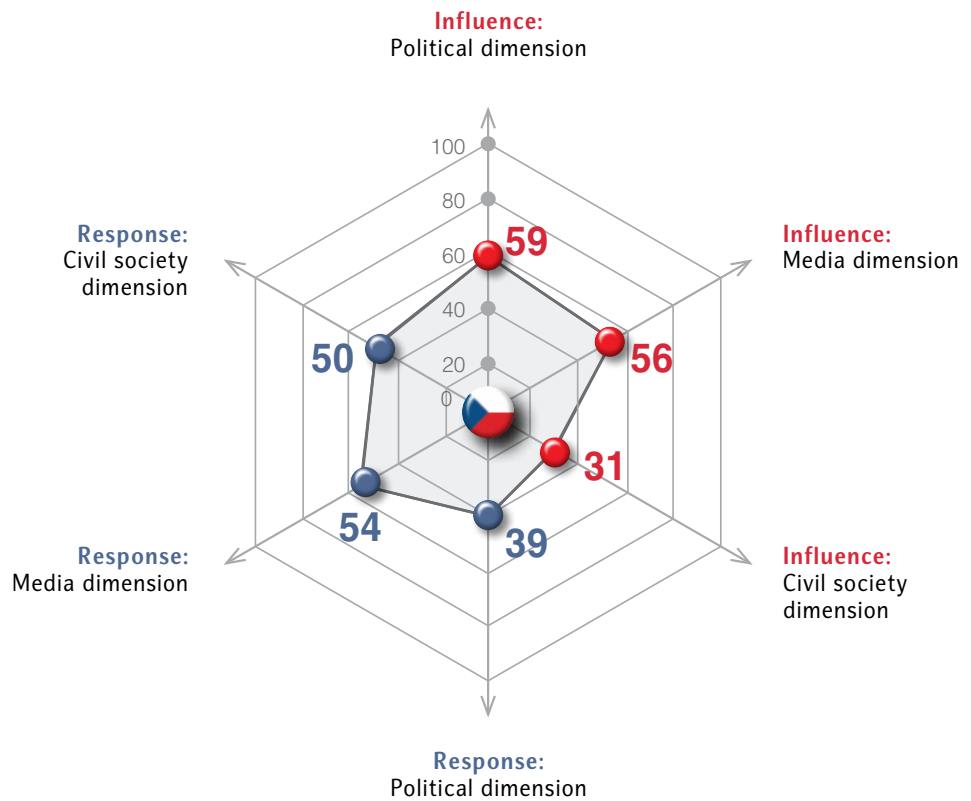**GDP per capita:**

17,3 thousand USD

Urbanization:

73% urban

27% rural

Ethnic composition:

64,3% Czechs

5% Moravians

1,4% Slovaks

1,4% Poles

27,9% other

General Index

48

Influence:
Political dimension

Influence:
Media dimension

Influence:
Civil society
dimension

Response:
Political dimension

Response:
Media dimension

Response:
Civil society
dimension

59

56

31

39

54

50

CONTEXT

1
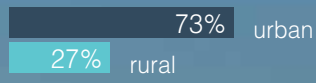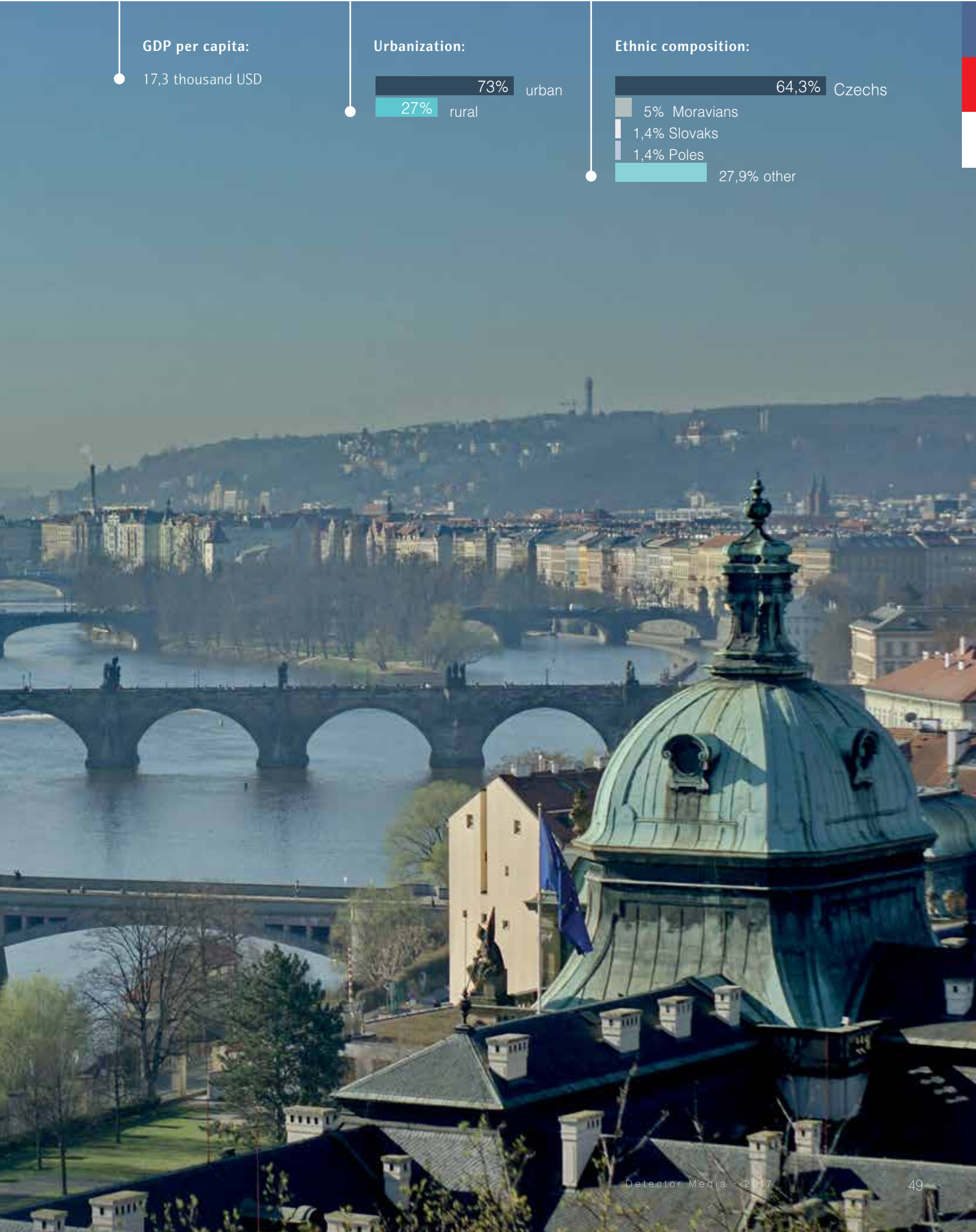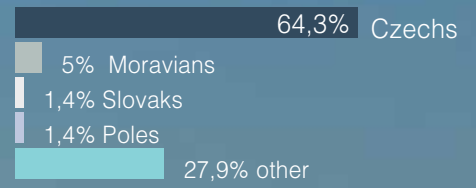
1.1. Political Developments

The recent years have been distinctive in the political sphere by the decreasing relevance of traditional political parties, establishment of new movements and penetration of these movements into political institutions, specifically into the Parliament consisting of the generally more powerful Chamber of Deputies and Senate.

The necessity of the existence of the Senate has been disputed several times, recently by the current Deputy Prime Minister[1]. In 2012, the direct election of the president was approved by the Parliament and, therefore, the third president of the Czech Republic has been elected by a popular vote.

The biggest party in the Parliament right now is the Czech Social Democratic Party *(Česká strana sociálně demokratická, ČSSD)* with 50 MPs (out of 200) in the Lower House. The second most influential party is ANO 2011, a movement founded in May 2012 by Andrej Babiš, a wealthy businessman and an owner of several Czech media. The Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party *(Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová, KDU-ČSL)* is a Christian democratic party which has been a part of many past governments.

The social democrats occupy the most important posts in foreign policy and diplomacy – Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are both from ČSSD. Bohuslav Sobotka, the Prime Minister, visited the United States twice in his term, the Foreign Minister has been frequently visiting Ukraine. After some hesitation, the government with ČSSD in the lead supported the economic sanctions against Russia and, except for a few individual politicians, this is a continuous state of play. Babiš, the Deputy Prime Minister, has not been very vocal on foreign policy in general. He reassured the public that he respects the alignment of the Czech Republic with the European Union and NATO, but his more detailed views on Russian foreign policy stay mostly unknown.

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[1] Novinky.cz, *Babiš chce začít jednat o zrušení Senátu, je prý zbytečný a drahý* (Babiš wants to start negotiations on Senate abolition, it's allegedly useless and expensive), October 2016, https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/417644-babis-chce-zacit-jednat-o-zruseni-senatu-je-pry-zbytecny-a-drahy.html - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia *(Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, KSČM)* has stable support since the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. It is one of the few communist parties in Europe which did not go through a transformation and has not adjusted its views.

The rest of the parties in the Parliament represent the right-wing part of the Czech political spectrum. TOP 09 is a pro-European and liberally conservative party which became quite popular soon after its founding in 2009, mostly due to its former leader Karel Schwarzenberg, but lost many supporters after his retirement.

Civic Democratic Party *(Občanská demokratická strana, ODS)* is a traditional conservative party which used to be on the top of the political chain together with ČSSD, but several scandals made the party fight for every vote. The characteristic trend for ODS is adjusting the agenda to keep up with the extreme right.

The least seats in the Chamber of Deputies belong to Dawn – National Coalition *(Úsvit – Národní Koalice, Úsvit),* a party founded in May 2013 by a Japanese national Tomio Okamura, a former senator, entrepreneur and writer. Úsvit builds its program around anti-immigration and Eurosceptic views, promoting the referendum to leave the European Union.

The position of the president is mostly ceremonial in the Czech Republic. The president can name judges and dissolve the Parliament but he should follow the lead of the government while conducting diplomacy. In the light of the vague formulation in the Constitution, this is often not the case in practice. The current president Miloš Zeman and his predecessor Václav Klaus often used this unclarity to pursue their own policies and views when in contact with the media or international counter-parts. Zeman also enjoys the legitimacy of being the

first President elected directly by the citizens. Contrary to the government, he often repeats statements of the Kremlin.

Babiš is currently the most popular politician in the Czech Republic[2]. ANO 2011 has the biggest chance to win the upcoming general elections in October 2017. Presidential elections are coming up next year, with a high probability that Zeman is going to confirm his position.

1.2 Media Landscape

An important role in the Czech media landscape is played by Česká televize *(Czech Television)*, running several TV networks including a 24-hour news channel. There is also a public radio Český rozhlas *(Czech Radio)*. These media are independent of state influence over their content. They are financed through the concessionary charges which every Czech citizen must pay. A Council elected by the Parliament oversees each of these two channels.

There are also other private TV channels, radio stations and printed media, some of them owned by foreign entities. Mainstream media, public and private ones alike, are transparent concerning their ownership. Their liability is the ownership concentration in the hands of Babiš, the leader of ANO 2011, Finance Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister.

Furthermore, the Czech public also consumes a significant portion of the production of quasi-media outlets. Transparency of these channels, mostly websites, is either non-existent or very low. There is no known financial connection to the Kremlin, apart from an official channel of the Russian Federation, the Czech language version of Sputnik.

Most people rely on TV channels and the internet when it comes to news

consumption . Printed news and magazines are generally on the decline. When asked about their trust in mainstream or alternative media, 24.5 % of the respondents stated that they believe alternative media more than traditional ones[4].

According to the latest Media Pluralism Monitor[5], the highest risks lie in the area of political independence and social inclusiveness, as well as in market plurality domain. This is a result of concentration of cross-media ownership, lack of rules on the distribution of state advertising, insufficient availability of media platforms for community media and centralization of the media system, particularly regarding the newspaper and TV market. The 2016 Freedom of the Press[6] report issued by the Freedom House states that the media environment in the Czech Republic is generally free, but also mentions concentrated media ownership and legal restrictions, including criminal defamation. The same reasons probably resulted in the decrease of the Reporters without Borders[7] ranking, falling to the 21st place in 2016.

1.3 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Reporters without Borders also highlight the fact that there are minimal ownership restrictions in the Czech Republic and they are completely absent concerning foreign ownership. There is the Broadcasting Act 2001[8] in effect which established The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting, an administrative and regulative body responsible for regulation of broadcasting of public and private media. The Council is accountable to the Parliament. The same law also sets rules for licensing and registration of air and satellite broadcasters, principles of content regulation and sanctions for breaching them. The regulation of media is widely in accordance with the law of the European Union.

[2] Stem.cz, *Popularita politických osobností v lednu 2017* (Popularity of political personalities in January 2017), February 2017, https://www.stem.cz/popularita-politickych-osobnosti-v-lednu-2017/ - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[3] Media Guru, *Češi sledují zprávy hlavně na počítači a v televizi* (Czechs receive news mostly from their computers and television), February 2016, https://www.mediaguru.cz/2016/02/cesi-sleduji-zpravy-hlavne-na-pocitaci-a-v-televizi/ - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[4] European Values, *Disinformation operations in the Czech Republic*, September 2016, http://www.europeanvalues.net/vyzkum/disinformation-operations-in-the-czech-republic/ - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[5] Media Pluralism Monitor, *Media Pluralism Monitor 2015 – Results*, 2015, http://monitor.cmpf.eui.eu/mpm2015/results/ - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[6] Freedom House, *Czech Republic, 2016*, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/czech-republic - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[7] Reporters Without Borders, *Czech Republic, 2016*, https://rsf.org/en/czech-republic - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[8] Zákon č. 231/2001 Sb. *O provozování rozhlasového a televizního vysílání a o změně dalších zákonů, Zákony pro lidi.cz*, - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

There is no legal or judicial history concerning countering and dealing with the information influence of foreign countries. However, there are several applicable strategy documents and doctrines which at least acknowledge the existing threat and even suggest measures to be taken. Most of these documents were created by the government currently in power.

The *Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy*[9] describes the Russian Federation as an actor which "severely destabilizes the European security architecture" but also admits that it is necessary to cooperate with it. It determines the level of contacts between the two countries by the Russian respect for international law and for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighbours.

In the same year, the *Security Strategy of the Czech Republic*[10] was published. This document identifies reducing information crime as one of the important interests of the country. It warns against efforts of "some states" to revise the international order while using hybrid warfare including "propaganda using traditional and new media, disinformation intelligence operations, cyberattacks, political and economic pressures, and deployment of unmarked military personnel."

The Security Information Service described Russian activities in more detail in its *Annual Report*[11] for 2015. Among other things, it states that the Russian Federation also focused on influence and information operations related to the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts, as part of its non-linear warfare. It highlights that in 2015, Russian information operations focused for example on weakening the strength of Czech media, including the "massive production of Russian propaganda and disinformation controlled by the state", "influencing the public opinion and weakening society's will for resistance" via "information and disinformation overload" and "relativization of truth."

In *the Long Term Perspective for Defence 2030*[12], the Ministry of Defence predicts that "the misuse of information technologies and the media will increasingly contribute to the sudden shift in perception of events in terms of time and space, and therefore, will also lead to the spread of instability" and also that "the intentional misuse of the media for information warfare will grow significantly."

Finally, in 2016, the government conducted the *National Security Audit*[13] and within it devoted a chapter to the influence of foreign powers. It describes disinformation campaign clearly as a mean of information war. The Audit includes a SWOT analysis summarizing all the strong and weak aspects of vulnerability and presents several specific recommendations for strengthening the resilience of the Czech Republic. Among them, there are, for example, suggestions to establish centres for evaluation of disinformation campaigns within relevant authorities, to create a system of education for public officials to make them more resilient towards foreign influence, to come up with active media strategies for important democratic institutions or measures concerning media law.
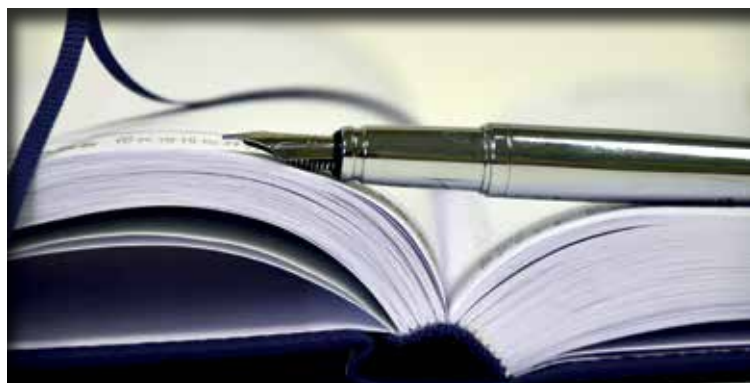
[9] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, *Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy*, 2015, http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/policy_planning/concept_of_the_czech_republic_s_foreign.mobi - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[10] Ministry of Defence & Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, *Security Strategy of the Czech Republic*, 2015, http://www.army.cz/images/id_8001_9000/8503/Security_Strategy_2015.pdf - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[11] Security Information Service, *Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2015*, 2016, https://www.bis.cz/vyrocni-zpravaEN890a.html?ArticleID=1104 - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[12] Ministry of Defence & Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, *The Long Term Perspective for Defence 2030*, 2015, http://www.army.cz/images/id_8001_9000/8503/THE_LONG_TERM_PERSPECTIVE_FOR_DEFENCE_2030.pdf - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[13] Government of the Czech Republic, *National Security Audit*, 2016, https://www.vlada.cz/assets/media-centrum/aktualne/Audit-narodni-bezpecnosti-20161201.pdf - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

2 KREMLIN STRATEGY OF INFORMATION INFLUENCE

The pro-Russian disinformation campaign in the Czech Republic has been described mostly due to the research of the Prague Security Studies Institute[14] and the European Values think-tank. They determined that the pro-Kremlin outlets and websites operating in this area lack official connections to the Kremlin, but the details about their origin, organization structure and financial sources are mostly impossible to find out. In the cases when the authors and owners are known, they are widely personally interconnected.[15] Significant portion of these websites also gets inspiration or reproduces disinformation from foreign sources, often Sputnik and RT. The five most dangerous websites which actively create disinformation are AC24, Sputnik, Svět kolem nás, První zprávy and Aeronet. The most popular platform for Czech disinformators is Parlamentní listy.

The arguments they use tend to be similar; they share anti-Western inclinations and to some extent, use pro-Kremlin rhetoric. The negative overtone of the articles they publish suggests moral, economic, political and social decline and portrays the dark future full of clashes of civilizations. Emotional and expressive vocabulary and pictures are often used.

There is a clear connection to and support from various personalities who give credibility and publicity to the campaigns, including most of the representatives of the KSČM, some representatives of the ČSSD or the far-right. The Czech President Zeman also plays an important role on the Czech disinformation scene. Most of the websites defend him and regularly elaborate on his statements. Besides giving interviews, contributing to these websites and promoting them on their social network accounts, some politicians also accept invitations of the Kremlin for the events legitimizing Vladimir Putin's regime, etc.

The disinformation projects benefit from the Czech mistrust of the public to mainstream media and politicians boosted by several scandals. The goal seems to be to turn public opinion against the West and its institutions and present Russia as the moral authority seeking stability and peace, which corresponds with the primary interests[16] of the Russian Federation – disrupting the trust of the citizens towards democratic politicians and institutions, reducing support for membership in the EU and NATO, but also strengthening the position of political allies of the Kremlin and using them for the shift of Czech politics towards Russia.

[14] Ivana Smoleňová, Proruská dezinformační kampaň v České republice a na Slovensku (Pro-Russian disinformation campaign in the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Prague Security Studies Institute, August 2016, http://www.pssi.cz/download/docs/355_desinformacni-kampan-pssi.pdf - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[15] European Values think-tank, 20 poznatků o fungování české dezinformační scény (20 findings about how the Czech disinformation sceen works), July 2016, http://www.evropskehodnoty.cz/fungovani-ceskych-dezinformacnich-webu/nejdulezitejsi-zjisteni-o-ceske-dezinformacni-scene/ - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

[16] J. Janda, O. Kundra, Schéma fungování vlivu Ruské federace v České republice (Scheme of the influence of the Russian Federation in the Czech Republic), European Values think-tank, August 2016, http://www.evropskehodnoty.cz/vyzkum/schema-fungovani-vlivu-ruske-federace-v-ceske-republice/ - Last visited: 09 April 2017.

3

KREMLIN
INFLUENCE
INDEX

BLOCK A1.
Influence: Political dimension. Score: 59

The Kremlin's influence in the political dimension has been evaluated as the highest of the three categories. The pivotal role in this matter belongs to President Zeman with his undisputable position as a Russian ally and a proponent of the Kremlin's lies about its activities in Crimea and Ukraine. The Kremlin has direct financial involvement in the Czech Presidential Office. A chief advisor of President Zeman, Mr. Martin Nejedlý, worked in Moscow for a decade. As he returned from Russia, he became a representative of the Kremlin-linked company Lukoil. When Mr. Nejedlý got indebted and his position at Zeman's office was threatened, Moscow headquarters of Lukoil bought him out of his debt[17]. The President has a positive attitude not only towards Russia, but also China, while there is a Chinese advisor in the Presidential Office.

Most of the government and opposition parties have been assessed as neutral or slightly anti-Russian, except for several individual politicians, often active in local politics. Although foreign policy issues are not often on the municipal and regional agenda, there are local leaders like the former Governor of the South Moravian region Michal Hašek (ČSSD) who met with the Night Wolves motorcycle gang; Deputy Governor of the Ústí region Jaroslav Foldyna (ČSSD) who continuously supports Russian foreign policy; or Jaroslav Doubrava, a senator from the Ústí region, who defended the annexation of Crimea. The initiatives of individual politicians, especially from the pro-Kremlin wing of the ČSSD, members of the KSČM and the SPD, together with regional activities of the President, result in corruption of local level politics by the influence of the Kremlin.

The government opposes the Russian Federation only cautiously and tries to avoid conflict with the President, although the parties do not have stronger inclinations towards the Russian regime. The most obvious allies of the Kremlin are the KSČM and the SPD, representatives of the far-left and the far-right. The position of several parties closer to the centre of the political spectrum has changed over time and a big obstacle is the fact that traditional parties are losing support.

BLOCK A2
Influence: Media dimension. Score: 56

Despite the higher score of influence on the media dimension and the slightly negative evaluation of the work of national media, a direct influence of the Kremlin or a deliberate support of the propaganda of the Kremlin is not noticeable in the media mainstream. There are cases of manipulations which have the potential to help Kremlin's goals, but they are mostly dependent not on malice, but on ignorance, unprofessionalism or on the desire to attract readers with more exciting reporting.

TV channels are still highly influential in the Czech Republic, especially amongst the older generations. TV Prima has showed tendencies to broadcast biased and factually inaccurate news, especially on the topic of migration, but also about activities of George Soroś or about the so called "chemtrails". It portrays President Zeman mostly in a very positive light and in return it often gets preferential access to him which suggests informal alliance working in favour of the pro-Kremlin actors.

President Zeman is even more closely connected with TV Barrandov where he has his own discussion show hosted by the wife of the Chancellor of the President Vratislav Mynář. However, it is important to note that there are no empirical data available for an exact evaluation of how frequently the pro-Kremlin views are present in the broadcast of these TV stations.

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[17] iDnes.cz, Milionovou pokutu za Nejedlého zaplatil Lukoil, sám nezaplatil ani korunu (Lukoil payed a million worth fine for Nejedlý, he did not have to pay anything), November 2016, http://zpravy.idnes.cz/prazsky-hrad-lukoil-martin-nejedly-dub-/domaci.aspx?c=A161103_202521_domaci_fer - Last visited: 09 April 2017

Printed media are dealing with different problems, specifically the concentration of ownership is a continuously discussed issue. It is highly uncertain, however, if Babiš, the Deputy Prime Minister, has any real influence on the content of the media his companies publish. Radio stations in the country are largely apolitical and there is not much space for manipulation. One of the liabilities of the media scene is also lack of relevant media watchdogs.

The only official Russian news source in the Czech language is Sputnik and its influence on the public is not very significant. A more dangerous threat is presented by the so called "alternative media" connected to Russian actors and interests spreading pro-Kremlin narratives. These outlets are mostly online, they are effectively using social networks, disrupting the citizens' trust to mainstream media and take the Russian media like Sputnik or RT as an inspiration. The influence of these websites is difficult to evaluate. It seems they have become an important source of information for a narrow group of citizens which might be growing but so far stays a minority.

BLOCK A3.
Influence: Civil Society dimension. Score: 31

The score of the civil society influence is rather low in the Czech Republic. One reason for that might be the fact that the Russian minority is not very significant and therefore the target group for the "non-governmental" sector is quite narrow. There are a few institutions organizing events and publishing magazines for Russian nationals. Some of them are promoting Kremlin's views, but most of them are focused on culture or social events. Most of the activities of these organizations go unnoticed by the wider society.

There are two organizations focusing on the support of the so called "alternative journalism". The first one is the Association for Independent Media. On its board, there are chief editors from some of the most popular disinformation and manipulative websites and they are handing out prizes to quasi-media projects or "journalists" called Kramerius award. There is also the project called Silver Archer Award which is supposed to appreciate projects helping the development of Russian-Czech relations. This year the award has been patronaged by President Zeman.

The activities of the Orthodox church and pro-Kremlin academia are basically non-existent in the Czech Republic, with the small exception of the Russian diaspore at the University of Economics in Prague which goes mostly unnoticed. There are several extremist, mostly far-right groups which share distinctly pro-Kremlin stances. However, they express themselves mostly via social networks and within the anti-Islam and anti-migration demonstrations.

BLOCK B1.
Response: Political dimension. Score: 39

As described in the chapter above, the government strategies and intelligence reports of the Czech Republic describe the disinformation campaigns and information influence activities of the Russian Federation accurately and in detail. Furthermore, following the National Security Audit, the Centre Against Terrorism and Hybrid Threats (CTHH) has been established within the Ministry of Interior. One of its aims is also to monitor the disinformation scene and to react ad hoc to fake news.

However, concerning the practical steps, there are a lot of gaps and insufficiencies. Although the existing documents describe the threat well, they are not focused enough on practical measures. The establishment of CTHH is the only recommendation which has been implemented so far. Its reactions are not sufficiently fast and since it has started working it has had to deal more with disinformation concerning its own job description than with actual threats. But it has not yet been functional long enough for objective evaluation.

Regarding the government activities targeting the boost media literacy, there is a *Strategy for digital education 2020*[18] in place and the Czech School inspectorate is overseeing the implementation, but the results have been week so far. In spite of that, the political response has been overall estimated as the most intensive from the three researched areas

BLOCK B2
Response: Media dimension. Score: 54

The response of the media to the influence of the Kremlin has been evaluated as the weakest among the three categories. Although the local media got worse scores overall, it is important to note that they do not focus on foreign policy and mostly avoid commenting on Russian activities. With the national media, however, the situation is different.

Especially due to help of individual enthusiastic journalists and activism of the non-governmental sector, the media attention given to the disinformation campaign of the Kremlin and to reporting the already revealed disinformation is on a sufficiently high level in the Czech Republic. There are both more and less successful individuals regarding their objectivity and neutrality. Overall, they are not very capable of verifying facts without specific sources or references. Most of the media do not dedicate their resources into investigative journalism. The redactions lack data departments and it is difficult to find financial resources.

The issue of independence of journalists raises the problem with concentration of ownership once again. The current state of play gives a lot of space for abuse of media as a tool for support of commercial and political interests. On the other hand, the owners are usually not interested in commenting on Russian politics.

BLOCK B3.
Response: Civil Society dimension. Score: 50

The activities of the Czech civil society targeted at dealing with disinformation campaigns and the influence of the Kremlin have changed significantly during the last year, due to external and internal factors. Before 2015, there had been basically no activity at all, since the phenomenon is rather new. Thus, most of the measures taken by the civil society have been so far reactional and ad hoc, specialized on monitoring and debunking disinformation.

There is a strong core of activists who work on the issue, but mostly from the security perspective. A more in-depth focus on journalistic dimension is lacking. There are attempts to promote education activities at high schools and universities, but these projects are only small. Media literacy is being discussed regularly but few concrete steps have been taken and none of the already existing efforts is systematic enough.

The cooperation between different sectors of society is also weak. In the case of cooperation between the civil society and the state, the biggest obstacle is presented by the differences of attitudes on various levels of the state administration. Alliance with one state body does not necessarily mean support from another one. Media projects are also cooperating rarely. They do not perceive each other as allies; their relations are much rather competitive. ■

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[18] Ministry of Education, *Youth and Sports, Strategie digitálního vzdělávání do roku 2020* (Strategy for digital education 2020), 2014, http://www.msmt.cz/ministerstvo/strategie-digitalniho-vzdelavani-do-roku-2020 - Last visited: 09 April 2017

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- **Michal Kaderka,** Alliance for Open Education

- **Roman Máca,** European Values

- **Josef Mlenek,** Charles University

- **Petr Nutil,** Manipulatori.cz

- **Josef Pazderka,** Journalist

- **Radka Pudilová,** Open Society Foundation

- **Michael Romancov,** Charles University

- **Václav Štětka,** Charles University

- **Karel Strachota,** People In Need

- **Jan Tvrdoň,** Demagog.cz

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Detector Media

Kyiv, Ukraine

www.detector.media

Detector Media (DM) is Ukrainian media platform and think tank. It is a successor of the Telekritika NGO which was founded back in January 2004. Its mission is to promote the development of democratic, free and professional media in Ukraine and the formation of critically thinking and informed media consumer. DM holds a group of web-sites; among them, the main platform is *Detector Media* (www.detector.media), which slogan is *Watchdog of Ukrainian media*.

DM conducts regular monitoring of Ukrainian media and applies the results in the following work with journalists and editors to increase their professional capacity. The organization is among the leaders in media research in Ukraine. In 2014, it was the first institution that launched comprehensive study of Kremlin propaganda in the region; nowadays, it is the acknowledged center of expertize in the field.

The DM experts consult the government and other stakeholders in media development, media reforms, state policy in the media field, psychological security etc. A separate direction of activity is spreading media literacy; for this, DM supports the dedicated website *MediaSapiens* (www.mediasapiens.ua) and produces various outputs to educate wide audience.

European Values

Prague,
Czech Republic

www.evropskehodnoty.cz

The European Values Think-Tank is a non-governmental policy institute defending liberal democracy. Its vision is that of a free, safe and prosperous Czech Republic within Central Europe that is an integral part of the West.

European Values helps to face aggressive regimes, radicalization within the society, the spread of authoritarian tendencies and extremist ideologies including Islamism. It provides decision-makers with expert recommendations and systematically watches and evaluates their performance. It considers active citizens, accountable politicians, political parties that fulfil their role, as well as cohesive society that shares the values of individual freedom, human dignity and equal rights to be the principle elements of a functioning liberal democracy.

Since 2005, as a non-governmental and a non-profitable organization which is not linked to any political party, European Values has pursued research and educational activities. In addition to publishing analytical papers and commentaries for the media, it organizes conferences, seminars and training sessions for both experts and the wider public. Its events provide a platform for dialogue amongst politicians, experts, journalists, businesspeople and students.

Political Capital

Budapest, Hungary

www.politicalcapital.hu

Political Capital is a policy research, analysis and consulting institute founded in 2001 in Budapest, Hungary. The institute owes no allegiance to any government or political body. It is committed to the basic values of parliamentary democracy, human rights and a market economy.

Political Capital has developed an extended network of professional partners, both domestically and internationally, all of whom have helped the institute to become one of the most influential think tanks in Central and East Europe. It has cordial relationships with both domestic and European decision-makers, which greatly assist it in the success and effectiveness of its work. The institute has also built up extensive media relations, and its experts give interviews to domestic and international media on a daily basis.

Political Capital focuses on issues such as democratic institutions and related challenges, political risks, radicalism and extremism, electoral systems, international migration and policies, international relations (especially between Europe and Russia), the diplomatic ties of the Visegrad countries, and relations between EU member states.

Media Development Foundation

Tbilisi, Georgia

www.mdfgeorgia.ge

Media Development Foundation (MDF) is a research, analysis and advocacy non-governmental organization. As an active supporter of the core values and principles of liberal democracy, MDF works to promote open and inclusive society, human rights, endorse the principles of ethical and accountable journalism, stimulate debates on issues of public interests and encouraging active citizenship.

MDF was established in April 2008 by a group of professional journalists and since then gained reputation of the most professional organization in media and communication analysis and researches. Since 2014 MDF runs Myth Detector web platform aimed at debunking myth and disinformation and detecting propaganda tools used by pro-Kremlin actors.

Major program areas that are in the center of MDF's thematic focus include combating hate speech and anti-Western propaganda, promoting media literacy, transparency of media ownership and funding, providing decision makers with assessments and recommendations and advocating for changes.
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QUESTIONNAIRE TO CALCULATE KII

Within each of the questions, the score is calculated as average from the scores provided by the experts.

The sub-index within each of 6 blocks demonstrates a percentage from the maximum possible sum of scores within the block (when all the scores equal 4).

The general index demonstrates percentage from the maximum possible sum of block indexes (when all the indexes equal 100).

Note 1
To answer questions A1.1 – A1.4

4. Strongly pro-Russia option means that the subject / institution, in its communication activity, spreads:
- Claims for deeper strategic partnership with Russia (especially, at the expense of relations with EU, USA etc.; especially, in the security field);
- Emphasis on inevitable character of historical ties and debts (such as WWII, protection from other aggressors etc.);
- Emphasis on inevitable character of cultural or religious ties with Russia;
- Justifications of annexation of Crimea;
- Justifications of military aggression in the South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Donbas, and of military support of its puppet-states on the territories of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova;
- Justifications of excessive military violence by Russia in Syria;
- Justifications of aggressive demonstrative gestures of military kind;
- Justifications and support of Russia's ambitions to become a global super-state, guarantor of security and center of international integration processes;
- Claims to lift the sanctions against Russia (especially, manipulating with economic data and statistics proving that they have no effect, or only negative effects to the EU itself).

3. Somewhat pro-Russia option means that the subject / institution:
- admits that some of the messages enlisted above are true;
- claims the government and international community no restrain from the active measures in order not to irritate Russia;
- claims the government and international community to hold neutral position in the fields of Russian interests (like wars in Ukraine and Syria, Russian support of puppet-states, influence in other countries).

2. Neither anti-Russia, or pro-Russia option means that the subject / institution evidently avoids to take a clear position regarding the matters related to Kremlin's foreign policy (especially those enlisted above).

1. Somewhat anti-Russia option means that the subject / institution:
- denies or questions the statements enlisted for "strongly pro-Russian" option;
- admits that Russian foreign policy is aggressive, admits that Kremlin violates international law and intervenes into internal processes in other countries;
- considers sanctions and diplomatic pressure as proper answer to Kremlin's actions;
- treats Russia as a source of threats worldwide, non-predictable partner, and claims for careful and watchful partnership with it;
- claims for better internal integrity and international cooperation for better security with regards to Russian aggressive foreign policy.

0. Strongly anti-Russia option means that the subject / institution:
- categorically denies the statements enlisted for "strongly pro-Russian" option;
- calls Russia as aggressor, danger for democratic societies;
- claims for stronger economic and military response to Russian aggressive actions.

BLOCK A1. INFLUENCE. POLITICAL DIMENSION

A1

A1.1 Evaluation of the position of the government towards Russia

What is the position of the current government towards Russia

0 – strongly anti-Russia	**1** – somewhat anti-Russia	**2** – neither anti-Russia, or pro-Russia	**3** – somewhat pro-Russia	**4** – strongly pro-Russia

A1.2 Evaluation of the position of factions in the Parliament

What is the position of the factions in the parliament towards Russia?

	0 – strongly anti-Russia	**1** – somewhat anti-Russia	**2** – neither anti-Russia, or pro-Russia	**3** – somewhat pro-Russia	**4** – strongly pro-Russia
Faction 1					

A1.3 Evaluation of the position of the president

What is the position of the president towards Russia?

0 – strongly anti-Russia	**1** – somewhat anti-Russia	**2** – neither anti-Russia, or pro-Russia	**3** – somewhat pro-Russia	**4** – strongly pro-Russia

A1.4 Evaluation of the media impact of political parties

	0 – strongly anti-Russia	**1** – somewhat anti-Russia	**2** – neither anti-Russia, or pro-Russia	**3** – somewhat pro-Russia	**4** – strongly pro-Russia
Party 1					

* All the political parties that, according to the latest opinion polls, are supported by not less than 3% of the voters, should be enlisted

A1.5 Evaluation of the position of the local authorities

To which extent is the policy of RF is supported by local authorities?

0 – no	**1** – noticeable cases of public support have not been detected, but the information activity of local officials to support the RF's policy is possible	**2** – noticeable cases of public support have not been detected (decisions, statements by authorities), but there are several local authorities (representatives) whose pro-Russia informational activity is regular though noticeable on the local level only (in particular, speeches of local officials)	**3** – A few cases of public support to RF politics from local authorities have not been detected (decisions, statements by authorities), having become noticeable in the media space of the country; or there are many local authorities (representatives) whose pro-Russia informational activity is regular though noticeable on the local level only	**4** – There are several regions or local authorities showing the support to RF politics regularly and in public (adopted claims, decisions, declarations), and this is noticeable in the country's information field

A2

BLOCK A2 .
INFLUENCE. MEDIA DIMENSION

A 2.1 How could you assess the influence of Russian media on public opinion in the country?

0	1	2	3	4
No influence	Russian media make an influence on insignificant social groups, mostly marginalized	The majority of society understands that Russian media may lie but nevertheless Kremlin's narrative is popular among some visible groups of the society	Russian media make visible impact on public opinion, though alternative (non-Kremlin) discourses are still strong and compete successfully	Russian media are able to condition the public opinion; non-Kremlin discourses are marginalized

A 2.2 Is the content in national media accurate and impartial concerning Russia?

0	1	2	3	4
Completely accurate and impartial	The media is, as a rule, accurate and impartial, though some cases are available when it seemed to distort or manipulate with information in favor of Kremlin	The media sometimes resorts to manipulations to promote pro-Kremlin narratives or create positive picture of Kremlin and its policy, but as a rule keeps journalistic standards and goes in line with ethics and truth	The media tends to create positive picture of Kremlin and its policy; information is often distorted and manipulated with; however, alternative views are still present	Completely inaccurate and partial: media tend to create overtly positive picture of Kremlin and its policy
Media 1				

* lists of 3-5 top TV, press, online and radio outlets

A 2.3 What is the influence of the pro-Kremlin disinformation outlets on the public opinion?

0	1	2	3	4
Non-existent, or have no influence	Certain insignificant social groups trust them	The majority of society understands that they may manipulate but nevertheless uses and believes them	The majority of society does not understand that that these media can manipulate, so the latter enjoy strong confidence	These media are able to influence strongly on public opinion

Note 3. Alternative media.

This study understands the alternative media as media (TV, print, online, especially public groups in social networks) specializing in disseminating of unverified information, conspiracy theories; they do not care about journalistic standards compliance, the reliability, in particular; typically, these media have concealed owners, and if taken separately, none of them has a vast audience but due to sensationalism and originality of interpretations they might have an impact on the political awareness of citizens. Also, term fringe media is applicable to them.

BLOCK A3.
INFLUENCE. CIVIL SOCIETY DIMENSION

A3

A 3.1 What is the influence of NGOs promoting the Kremlin and its views?

0	1	2	3	4
Non-existent, or have no influence	Influence is not visible, though there are some supporters attended to their pro-Kremlin position	Impact is sensible on some separate social groups	Their voice is quite sounded in the society, impact is sensible	Able to influence strongly on public opinion

A 3.2 What is the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church (or other religious groups/organizations/movements close to Kremlin) in your country?

0	1	2	3	4
Non-existent, or have no influence	Influence is not visible, though there are some supporters attended to their pro-Kremlin position	Impact is sensible on some separate social groups	Their voice is quite sounded in the society, impact is sensible	Able to influence strongly on public opinion

A 3.3 What is the influence of the academic institutions promoting the Kremlin and its views in your country?

0	1	2	3	4
Non-existent, or have no influence	Influence is not visible, though there are some supporters attended to their pro-Kremlin position	Impact is sensible on some separate social groups	Their voice is quite sounded in the society, impact is sensible	Able to influence strongly on public opinion

A 3.4 What is the influence of extremist organizations and paramilitary groups in promoting the Kremlin and its views?

0	1	2	3	4
Non-existent, or have no influence	Influence is not visible, though there are some supporters attended to their pro-Kremlin position	Impact is sensible on some separate social groups	Their voice is quite sounded in the society, impact is sensible	Able to influence strongly on public opinion

B1

BLOCK B1
RESPONSE. POLITICAL DIMENSION

B1.1 Please assess the portrayal of disinformation operations of the Russian Federation in official governmental documents (such as Security Strategy and Foreign Policy Strategy or others).

0	1	2	3	4
Very detailed description with clearly negative connotation highlighting the threat as major and one of very few large ones	Description with slightly negative connotation, Russia is seen as a threat but among many others	Description is very general but present, Russia is seen as a threat but only implicitly	Related activities are mentioned, but without an assessment of arbitrary call making it hard to distinguish what is positive or negative	Not mentioned at all, or very general so no real conclusion can be made of the official documents

B1.2 To which extent are there state strategies / doctrines / programs regulating media, freedom of speech, information security are sufficient enough to lessen the negative consequences of information influences?

(Please consider such documents as: strategic documents in (information) security; state regulations limiting broadcasting of harmful content; state regulations conditioning transparency of media ownership / funding; strategic documents on communications; state support of national production etc.)

0	1	2	3	4
Legal framework is sufficient; proper solutions are fixed on strategic and operation level; the conditions are ensured that leave limited space for harmful foreign influences	Number of legal acts are available, but they are still not enough to ensure proper conditions for security: not all of them are realistic, or some of them are declarative, or some matters remain under regulation	Some legal acts exists, but they constitute no comprehensive system; some of them are not interrelated, or not realistic enough; little effect is achieved	Some solutions are fixed on strategic or operative level, but they are not effective enough or declarative; no effect is achieved	There is no appropriate legal framework

B1.3 Are there any bodies / institutions in the state that are authorized to monitor the threats provoked by the information activities of other states (RF in particular) and to develop the appropriate state policy? How can you estimate the effectiveness of the distribution of powers among them?

0	1	2	3	4
Yes, there are the bodies (apart from special services) authorized to combat the threats within the information field. The distribution of powers is accurate and effective.	Yes, there are the bodies (apart from special services) authorized to combat the threats within the information field. The distribution of powers is not accurate enough, there are gaps and intersections; coordination is probably insufficient.	Yes, there are the bodies (apart from special services), but their duties are not prescribed distinctly; there are a lot of gaps, the duties often intersect; the actions of different bodies are undercoordinated, that has a negative impact on their effectiveness.	Yes, this task is fulfilled by special services within their common powers.	There are no appropriate bodies.

B1.4 How do you estimate the capacity of state bodies / institutions that are authorized to monitor the threats provoked by the information activities of other states (RF in particular) and to work out the appropriate policy decisions, to execute their duties?

B1

0	1	2	3	4
The appropriate bodies reveal high capacity and effectivity, in particular: i) The staff reveals proper expertise and experience; ii) the body is staffed properly; iii) there is a political will to execute the duties properly; iv) the body is financed properly; v) there is proper coordination of efforts of all the institutions involved.	One some of the key bodies are characterized with one of the following: i) not properly staffed, or the staff reveals lack of capacity; ii) no political will to perform the duties properly; iii) the body is constantly underfinanced. OR, the coordination between the bodies is improper	All of the involved bodies are characterized with one of the following: i) not properly staffed, or the staff reveals lack of capacity; ii) no political will to perform the duties properly; iii) the body is constantly underfinanced	The involved bodies do not perform the functions in information security; OR their capacity is too low	No appropriate bodies available

B1.5 How do you estimate the effectiveness government's activity directed to increase citizens' media literacy / awareness of danger of disinformation?

0	1	2	3	4
The government communicates the danger of disinformation properly; state policy is directed to introduce formal and informal tools to increase media literacy	The government communicates the danger of disinformation more or less properly; there are some actions to introduce formats to increase media literacy (separate seminars and trainings)	The government communicates the danger of disinformation more or less properly, but does not undertake any actions to increase media literacy	There is some communication on danger of disinformation, but not systematic; no actions to increase media literacy	There is no communication or any activity of that kind

B2

BLOCK B2
RESPONSE. MEDIA DIMENSION

B2.1 – 2.6 Please, estimate the following points by 5-point scale, where 4 stands for the lowest level and 0 stands for the highest level.

	National (countrywide)media	Local (community) media
The journalists' capacity to adhere to the standards of objectivity and neutrality in their performance	0 – 4	0 – 4
The journalists' capacity to reveal propaganda and manipulations and to verify facts	0 – 4	0 – 4
The journalists' independence from censorship of the owners / editors (or the ability to counteract censorship)	0 - 4	0 – 4

B2.7 Please estimate the media attention to Kremlin disinformation in national media discourse.

0	1	2	3	4
Kremlin's disinformation is a relevant issue in the media agenda; it is constantly discussed by wide circle of experts and journalists	The topic is quite discussed; there are some known experts on the issue; existence and danger of disinformation are not questioned	Time after time, the topic is discussed in media, but it is not in a spotlight; the existence and danger of disinformation are still questioned	The topic is discussed very seldom; the existence and danger of disinformation are questioned	The topic receives no attention in media

B2.8 Please estimate the level of journalists' activityin reporting disinformation.

0	1	2	3	4
There are journalists(at least 3) focused on the topic; research/ investigation of Kremlin proxies are being produced, special reports, programs on the topic prepared on regular manner	There are some journalists (1 or 2) reporting the topic on proper level (regularly, with proper understanding of the matter); there are other journalists who reveal less capacity, but try to promote the topic. Rarely, special investigations, films, programs on the topic are produced	Journalists are quite active in reporting disinformation; however, there are no journalists who are deeply aware of the issue; there may be some examples of investigations, films, programs on the topic, but not of proper quality yet	Several journalists try to rise an issue of disinformation, but not on regular basis, and they lack knowledge and understanding of the matter. No special investigations, films, programs on the topic	There are no journalists undertaking attempts to report or investigate Kremlin disinformation

BLOCK B3
RESPONSE. CIVIL SOCIETY DIMENSION

B3

B3.1 Please estimate to what extent the civil society in your country shares the understanding of problem of misinformation.

0	1	2	3	4
Civil society reveals unity and understanding of the problem. There are regular discussions, conferences, and researches. The subject is actualized in the information field	A considerable part of civil society realizes the problem of misinformation. Public actions take place, but they embrace limited audiences, predominantly security experts and journalists. Online and offline discussion platforms are arising.	A certain part of civil society realizes the problem of misinformation; there are few organizations treating the problem purposely and covering it in their publications and interviews.	The problem attracts attention of several organizations (including those in charge of security or media), but their voice is marginalized and is not taken in by the community.	The problem is not the matter of civil society interest and is not among the priorities of its activities.

B3.2 – 3.7 Please, estimate the level of capacity and activity of non-governmental organizations of your country in the following directions:

	0 At least 3 institutions are specialized in the subject; they have successful practice; even more organizations perform at both national and local levels.	1 There are institutions performing systematically, but mostly at the national level; they have successful practice; their influence is limited	2 There are institutions working in the field, but they are just acquiring the experience, expertise, and practice.	3 There are few projects only; there are no institutions to specialize in this subject; they have no successful practice available, or their own expertise.	4 No activities.
Misinformation monitoring, analysis and impact assessment					
Response to direct Russian misinformation in form of alternative (fringe) media					
Design and promotion of political decision to counteract to misinformation					
Improving media literacy of the citizens					
Journalists' education, in particular in revealing manipulations and fact checking					
Officials' education concerning counteraction to propaganda and strategic communications					

B3

B3.8 Estimate the level of cooperation between different stakeholders concerning counteraction to propaganda

	0 The synergy is there; common decisions are taken and common projects are being implemented; coordination is effective.	1 There is an intense dialogue; there are attempts to lead common projects, sometimes they are successful; coordination is insufficient.	2 There is a dialogue, but no successful attempts to act together	3 Attempts to build a dialogue and coordination are made, but not very successful	4 There is competition or no cooperation between the stakeholders
Civil society – State					
Civil society – Media					
State – Media					
Between the civil society institutions					
Between media outlets					

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