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PROPAGANDA: DEEPENING THE GAP IN MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Monitoring of the Media of EaP Countries and Russia



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic



Independent Journalism Center



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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The monitoring of the media of six Eastern Partnership countries and Russia was carried out **from June 6 to July 3, 2016**, in the framework of the project “**Joining Efforts and Skills to Confront Propaganda**”, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, and implemented by Yerevan Press Club in partnership with Internews Ukraine, MEMO 98 (Slovakia), Independent Journalism Center (Moldova), Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, Belarusian Association of Journalists and a group of Azerbaijani experts.

Authors of the project assumed that the information space of EaP countries remains unified to a certain extent, and propaganda content spreads not just by itself (mostly, this is conditioned by historical connections and relative absence of language barriers), but also as a result of targeted actions of interested entities. Naturally, Russian media in general play a dominant role in post-Soviet information environment. This refers, first, to federal TV channels, which remain an important player in the media environment of former Soviet republics. The propaganda component of their programmes has a significant impact on the public opinion, particularly in the EaP countries. This circumstance is all the more important, as, given the lack of equivalent information exchange between EaP countries, largely their image of each other is formed indirectly, through Russian media.

For the purposes of this research, “propaganda” refers to media products, which:

- contain hate speech, discrimination, racism, chauvinism, glorification of war or terrorism, spread of xenophobia
- persistently present controversial issues in a stereotyped, one-sided way
- resort to manipulation of facts for political purposes
- exploit themes of prominent public interest and take advantage of the trust people have towards media in general and in journalism in particular.

This study focused on tracking and identifying the potential influence on the local audience of so called “traveling” propaganda messages (stereotypes, narratives), which are often entering the information environment, including the media of EaP countries, precisely from Russian federal channels or under the influence of their content.

Through consultations with media experts, 44 most widely circulated messages were identified. These messages were especially topical during the monitoring period.

List of Messages

M1	EU policy is completely dependent on the United States
M2	The US goal is to weaken the EU and to prevent its rapprochement with Russia
M3	European Union, its institutions and policies (the Schengen Agreement, Neighborhood policy, social policy, security, etc.) are coming to an end
M4	The fascist movements/sentiments in Europe have been on rise as a reaction to the influx of migrants; as traditional European policy
M5	The only salvation for Europe is a closer cooperation with Russia (on the latter's terms)
M6	Migrant crisis in Europe is a consequence of the Western actions and policies
M7	Modern Western values are decadent, and only Russia preserved healthy civilizational orientations
M8	Western democracy is a sham and is corrupt, as everybody and everything can be bought there
M9	International terrorism (radical Islam) is a product of the US policy
M10	Eastern Partnership is an anti-Russian project aimed to diminish the role of Russia and its influence in the former Soviet Union countries. It leads to the poverty and loss of sovereignty of the partner countries
M11	Sanctions of the West against Russia are unfair, imposed on EU by the United States and they harm, first of all, Europeans
M12	Ukraine is a failed state. It is an artificial entity created on the territories of Russia, Poland, Hungary (and so forth). Sooner or later it will collapse as a single independent state
M13	The governance in Ukraine is captured by radical nationalists (fascists)
M14	Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovich governance
M15	The inclusion of Crimea into Russia is a legitimate act of self-determination
M16	Ukraine is responsible for the failure to comply the Minsk agreements
M17	If Crimea and Donbas had not come out from the control of Kyiv, their population would have become a victim of nationalist (fascist) terror
M18	Europe does not need Ukraine
M19	The future wellbeing of Ukraine and other EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova) is possible only in an alliance with Russia (under the EAEU)
M20	Civil society (NGOs) of Ukraine and/or the country itself (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova) is a "fifth column" of the West
M21	Belarusians (Ukrainians) are the same Russians, it is impossible to divide these nations. Highlighting their self-identity is only anti-Russian intrigues of the West
M22	The delivery of the weaponry to the participants of Karabagh conflict by Russia is a measure to maintain a balance of forces. If Russia did not supply it, someone else would do it with worse consequences for safety
M23	The resumption of military clashes in Karabagh conflict zone is inspired by Turkey
M24	Defrost of Karabagh conflict is a consequence of the implementation of the West's interests
M25	Anti-Russian movement in Armenia is prepaid by the West.
M26	On the eve of parliamentary elections in Georgia, the West carries out subversive activities against Georgian authorities, who are in favor of cooperation with Russia

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M27	There is pressure (repressions) in Georgia on genuinely patriotic circles, which are eager to protect national identity and resist infusion of alien (Western) values
M28	Most Moldovan citizens support the rapprochement with Russia (accession to the EAEU) and are against close ties with the West
M29	Moldova has no chance to survive economically without Russian market, as nobody else needs its products
M30	The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia
M31	RF parliament had to adopt laws stripping Russian civil society of financial aid from the West as the latter tried to meddle in the country's domestic affairs through CSOs
M32	NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to Russia's security
M33	The West should respect Russia's status as "equal" partner, accepting its "spheres of influence"
M34	Those Russians (opposition) who criticize the country's state administration are traitors
M35	Putin is the best, he is the core of Russian statehood. The main goal of the West is to remove Vladimir Putin
M36	The West is responsible for the destabilization and wars in the Northern Africa and Middle East
M37	Turkey supports terrorists in the Syrian conflict (they do not lead a real fight against them)
M38	The West supports terrorists in the Syrian conflict (they do not lead a real fight against them)
M39	The actions taken by the Western coalition in Syria are illegal
M40	Only Russia is using military force in Syria by the invitation of the legitimate authorities of this country and therefore acts lawfully and effectively
M41	"Russia stands up from its knees". Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West
M42	Germany, France, Israel (often Italy and other EU countries) are Russia's allies
M43	Nadezhda Savchenko is a pseudo-politician, radical. She is dangerous for Russia and Ukraine
M44	Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia's foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance

In the course of the monitoring we also determined the level of support of every found message by the person who voiced it (author, carrier) and by the media in which it was articulated, as well as the categories to which their authors belong (officials, international organization representatives, politicians, journalists, etc.).

The study was carried out by a single methodology, simultaneously in the media of seven countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia. Apart from the federal Russian TV channels, 16 media of Eastern Partnership countries were selected through consultations with media experts from these countries, as the ones most prone to transmitting "traveling" messages to the national audiences.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA OF THE MONITORING OF THE MEDIA OF EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES AND RUSSIA

1. TOTAL AMOUNT OF STUDIED PIECES CONTAINING MESSAGES

Throughout the monitoring period (June 6 - July 3, 2016) in the studied **media of the six EaP countries**, 852 pieces were recorded, which contained messages (narratives) of what can be described as Russian propaganda. Of these pieces, 57.1% (or 487) were recorded in the media of **Ukraine**. The studied media of **Armenia** (13.6% or 116 pieces) and **Belarus** (12.3% or 105 pieces) lagged behind Ukraine significantly. The least prone to disseminating these messages were the media of **Georgia** (4.5% or 38 pieces), **Azerbaijan** (5.8% or 49 pieces) and **Moldova** (6.7% or 57 pieces). Comparison of these quantitative data to a certain extent has a relative nature, since, first, the volumes of information of the studied media were different, and, second, the number of messages directly related to each country was different. Thus, the number of selected messages regarding Ukraine was significantly higher than in the case of other EaP countries.

In the studied **Russian media**, during the same period, 360 pieces were recorded, carrying relevant messages. In other words, one can speak about a high degree of proliferation of Russian propaganda messages in certain media of EaP countries, particularly in Ukraine.

2. FREQUENCY OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE MESSAGES IN THE PIECES

A similar conclusion can be made also with regard to the frequency of recurrence of the messages in the media pieces analyzed. Thus, of 2,310 cases of appearance of messages in the **media of the six EaP countries** most frequently they were encountered in the media of **Ukraine** (1,073 or 46.5% of all similar cases in six EaP countries). In the media of the other five countries the intensity of articulation of the messages was more or less even: **Belarus** - 390 or 16.9%, **Armenia** - 370 or 16%, **Azerbaijan** - 212 or 9.2%, **Moldova** - 146 or 6.3%, **Georgia** - 119 or 5.1%. Here it should be repeated that the volume of information in the studied media varied, and, besides, in Azerbaijan and Georgia only two media each were studied, while in every other country three media outlets were studied.

In the studied **Russian media** the selected messages were repeated 1,553 times. This indicates a significant overlap of the political content in a certain segment of the information environment of Russia and EaP countries. At the same time, as mentioned above, caution should be exercised against direct use of the quantitative data of this research, taken out of the context of the research. Based on the results of this research we can talk about the phenomenon as a whole and about certain tendencies. The experts of this research project have made a number of topical conclusions; however, the quantitative data of the monitoring provide an opportunity to continue this work for other researchers as well.

3. MOST FREQUENTLY REPEATED MESSAGES

In studied **media of the six EaP countries**, the most frequently repeated messages were the following ones:

M14. “Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovych governance”. This message was recorded 404 times. Of these, in 335 cases it was supported by the authors, it was rejected in 64 cases and was articulated in a neutral way in 5 cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in around 60% of cases.

M3. “European Union, its institutions and policies (the Schengen Agreement, Neighborhood policy, social policy, security, etc.) are coming to an end” was recorded 292 times, was supported by the authors in 240 cases, was rejected in 34 cases, was articulated neutrally in 18 cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in vast majority of cases.

M19. “The future wellbeing of Ukraine and other EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova) is possible only in an alliance with Russia (under the EAEU)” was recorded 171 times, was supported by the authors in 167 cases, was rejected in 2 cases and was articulated neutrally in 2 cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in around 85% of cases.

M20. “Civil society (NGOs) of Ukraine and/or the country itself (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova) is a “fifth column” of the West” was recorded 113 times, was supported by the authors in 112 cases, was rejected in 1 case, and was transmitted neutrally in zero cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in almost all the cases.

In the **Russian media**, the frequency of these messages was the following:

M14. was repeated 24 times, was supported by the authors 21 times, was rejected 3 times and was transmitted neutrally in zero cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in most of the cases.

M3. was repeated 149 times, was supported by the authors 142 times, was rejected 7 times and was transmitted neutrally in zero cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in around 90% of cases.

M19. was repeated 9 times, was supported by the authors 8 times, was rejected 1 time and was transmitted neutrally in zero cases. The position of the media toward this message was either positive or neutral.

M20. was encountered 14 times and was always supported by the authors. The position of the media toward this message was positive in most of the cases.

Comparison of the above-mentioned data allows making a conclusion that the most “mobile” and “mutually permeable” messages in the media of EaP countries and Russia are the ones related to the EU. Moreover, in the coverage of this topic negative assessment of the EU and skepticism regarding its future are predominant.

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It is in the **Russian media** that this tendency was the most obvious. Here the following messages were most frequently repeated:

M30. “The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia”. This message was recorded 186 times. It was supported by the authors in 171 cases, was rejected in 10 cases and was transmitted neutrally in 5 cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in around 80% of cases.

M3. “European Union, its institutions and policies (the Schengen Agreement, Neighborhood policy, social policy, security, etc.) are coming to an end” (*see above*).

M41. “Russia stands up from its knees’. Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West” was recorded 139 times. Of these it was supported by the authors in 134 cases, was rejected in 5 cases, and was transmitted neutrally zero times. The position of the media toward this message was positive in more than 80% of cases.

M44. “Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia’s foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance”. This message was recorded 95 times. It was supported by the authors 90 times, was rejected 5 times and was transmitted neutrally in zero cases. The position of the media toward this message was positive in around 80% of cases.

It is possible to mark five messages out of the 44, which were among the “leaders” (in terms of frequency) in the studied media of more than one country.

The most common was the message **M3**. “European Union, its institutions and policies (the Schengen Agreement, Neighborhood policy, social policy, security, etc.) are coming to an end”, which became one of the top four in the media of **all the six EaP countries and Russia**. Moreover, according to the aggregate indicator of the studied media of both EaP countries and Russia, this message was the second most frequently repeated. Besides, as it is possible to see based on the above-mentioned figures, the conception that EU and its institutions are in crisis, is spread by Russia’s influential media more intensively than by even those EaP countries media, which are prone to repeating Russian propaganda messages.

Such active presence of **M3** during the monitoring period was conditioned, most of all, by the UK June 23, 2016 referendum on leaving the EU. Already on June 24, 2016, **Sputnik Georgia** published a piece, the headlines of which contained a quote by Georgian MP Tamaz Mechiauri (in the past a representative of the parliamentary majority, the Georgian Dream faction, currently the founder of the party “Tamaz Mechiauri for United Georgia”): “Mechiauri: When Georgia Enters the EU, There Will Be Nobody Left There”. On June 26, 2016, the anchor of the Sunday news and analysis programme “Vesti Nedeli” on channel **Russia 1**, Dmitri Kisilyov, asked rhetorically: “Is there anybody else here? Hey! Ukraine asked entering the EU in 2030”, accompanying the question by an image of Winnie the Pooh with a honey pot (*see below in the section on the Russian media*). It is well known that Dmitri Kisilyov is the head of the news agency “Russia Today”, and Sputnik is part of it, therefore the repetition of the same rhetorical device was hardly a coincidence. In these examples, it can also be seen how the general idea of “the end of the EU” is transformed in the various countries into messages with “national specificity”.

Thus, in the newspaper “**Iravunk**” (Armenia), which is known for consistently “exposing” “agents of the West”, the statement that “Great Britain Will Finally Destroy the European Union” were accompanied by the question “What Conclusions Will the Armenian Westernizers Make After Britain’s Exit from the EU” (*headlines of two pieces on June 24, 2016, quoted*).

On the Belarusian channel **STV**, the results of the British referendum were also used for their own conclusions: “European analysts promise to Britain an ‘Apocalypse tomorrow’: total unemployment, loss of 40 billion dollars and real estate for pennies. However, the rupture of tight trade relations with the EU will allow the UK to go East in search of partners, and Belarus is ready to become one of these partners. Our countries have a good history of mutual ties and strengthening these ties will be helpful for both countries” (“24 hours” news programme, June 24, 2016). Against the background of reports of the same channel about general instability in Europe (strikes, terrorist acts, fights between sport fans, political crises), the benefits of the alliance with the Eastern neighbor were stressed: “The situation in the world demands an adequate assessment. Everyone has problems, but it is better to solve them jointly. A striking example is the Belarusian-Russian cooperation. Even the delicate issue of strengthening of NATO’s positions in Central Europe did not lead to unbalancing of the political system” (“24 hours”, June 7, 2016).

The idea that Brexit means the beginning of the end for the EU, that “EU is a project with past, but with no future” (“*Dodon [Ed. Note: elected as President of Moldova on November 13, 2016] about Brexit: We Should Not Be Running after a Train That Is Falling Apart*”, **Sputnik Moldova**, June 24, 2016) was often accompanied in the studied Moldovan media by statements of the benign role of Russia for the survival of Moldova as a state, for its economy and culture: “In the past, it was good to be together with Russia, because people of art had an opportunity to achieve recognition. Currently the situation is much different. Romania is not as big as Russia, and art people cannot be successful without Russia” (**NTV Moldova**, *MegaFon TV show*, June 13, 2016).

Two messages (**M19** and **M32**) were among the top four of the studied **media of three EaP countries**. **M19**. “The future wellbeing of Ukraine and other EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova) is possible only in an alliance with Russia (under the EAEU)” in **Belarus** was articulated 126 times, in **Armenia** - 22 times, in **Moldova** - 14 times. Altogether **in the six EaP countries** this message was repeated 171 times (167 times supported by the authors, 2 times rejected and 2 times articulated neutrally). In **Russian media** the same message was articulated less frequently than in the EaP countries (9 times on three federal TV channels), i.e., for the Russian audience it was less important. However, the fact that the local divisions of the Sputnik abroad transmitted it as undisputable truth, allows considering it an element of the Russian propaganda.

Almost two times less was the frequency in the studied **media of EaP countries** of the message **M32**. “NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to Russia's security”. It was in the top four in **Azerbaijan** (32 times), **Moldova** (24), and **Georgia** (8). Altogether **in the studied media of the six EaP countries** it was repeated 96 times. In 91 cases it was supported by the authors, in 5 cases it was rejected. Unlike M19, this message was widely articulated by the studied **Russian media**-73 times. Moreover, in 70 cases it was supported by the authors, in 2 cases it was rejected and in 1 case it was transmitted neutrally.

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Two messages (**M44** and **M30**) became the leading ones in the **media of two EaP countries**. **M44**. “Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia’s foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance ” was articulated 25 times in **Belarus** and 23 times in **Azerbaijan**. Altogether in the studied **media of six EaP countries** this message was repeated 67 times, of which in 64 cases it was supported by the authors, in 2 cases was rejected and in 1 case was articulated neutrally. Of 24 pieces, in which it was recorded, in 23 it was supported by the media, and in 1 case was transmitted neutrally. (For comparison see above the frequency of this message in the **Russian media**, which shows that for Russia this theme is significantly more urgent than for the EaP countries, including those that participate in common integration projects with Russia.)

M30. “The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia” was among the leaders also in the **media of two EaP countries**. In **Moldova** it was articulated 14 times, and in **Georgia**- 7 times. In the studied **media of the six EaP countries** this message was repeated 82 times (in 79 cases it was supported by the authors and in 3 cases was articulated neutrally). As seen from the data above in the **Russian media** this is the most frequently repeated message.

The “mobility” and “mutual permeability” of the content between the studied media of the EaP countries and Russia can be seen based on the data regarding messages on various topics, presented in the tables below.

MESSAGES DIRECTLY RELATED TO UKRAINE:**IN THE MEDIA OF THE SIX EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M14	404	335	64	5
M18	89	61	28	0
M13	88	85	3	0
M16	82	47	26	9
M12	76	65	4	7
M15	27	16	10	1
M43	26	22	4	0
M17	13	13	0	0
Total	805	644	139	22

IN THE RUSSIAN MEDIA

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M16	83	77	3	3
M13	74	65	8	1
M18	33	29	4	0
M17	31	30	0	1
M15	28	20	8	0
M12	27	26	1	0
M14	24	21	3	0
M43	7	2	0	5
Total	307	270	27	10

MESSAGES DIRECTLY RELATED TO RUSSIA:**IN THE MEDIA OF THE SIX EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M44	67	64	2	1
M41	45	44	0	1
M35	20	19	1	0
M40	9	8	1	0
M34	1	1	0	0
M31	0	0	0	0
Total	142	136	4	2

IN THE RUSSIAN MEDIA

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M41	139	134	5	0
M44	95	90	5	0
M35	56	54	2	0
M40	12	12	0	0
M31	0	0	0	0
M34	0	0	0	0
Total	302	290	12	0

MESSAGES RELATED TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF EASTERN PARTNERSHIP (except those, related exclusively to Ukraine):

IN THE MEDIA OF SIX EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M19	171	167	2	2
M20	113	112	1	0
M22	64	49	15	0
M21	49	48	1	0
M10	19	16	3	0
M25	16	16	0	0
M23	10	9	1	0
M24	10	10	0	0
M27	10	10	0	0
M29	9	9	0	0
M28	7	7	0	0
M26	1	1	0	0
Total	479	454	23	2

IN THE RUSSIAN MEDIA

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M21	24	24	0	0
M20	14	14	0	0
M19	9	8	1	0
M10	1	1	0	0
M22	0	0	0	0
M23	0	0	0	0
M24	0	0	0	0
M25	0	0	0	0
M26	0	0	0	0
M27	0	0	0	0
M28	0	0	0	0
M29	0	0	0	0
Total	48	47	1	0

MESSAGES RELATED TO THE EU (USA/THE WEST):**IN THE MEDIA OF SIX EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M3	292	240	34	18
M32	96	91	5	0
M11	86	60	23	3
M30	82	79	0	3
M7	51	47	4	0
M8	42	39	3	0
M36	32	27	5	0
M1	29	29	0	0
M6	29	26	1	2
M42	28	26	2	0
M9	23	20	3	0
M33	17	17	0	0
M38	14	10	4	0
M2	13	12	1	0
M5	13	12	1	0
M4	7	7	0	0
M39	0	0	0	0
Total	854	742	86	26

IN THE RUSSIAN MEDIA

Messages	Frequency of the appearance of the messages in the pieces (units)	Attitude to the messages on the part of the authors/carriers of the messages (units)		
		+	-	0
M30	186	171	10	5
M3	149	142	7	0
M7	81	76	1	4
M32	73	70	2	1
M33	72	71	1	0
M11	66	65	1	0
M42	62	62	0	0
M1	51	50	0	1
M8	50	46	3	1
M5	25	25	0	0
M38	23	22	1	0
M9	16	16	0	0
M2	14	14	0	0
M36	11	11	0	0
M4	5	5	0	0
M6	5	4	0	1
M39	0	0	0	0
Total	889	850	26	13

Monitoring of the Media of EaP Countries and Russia

Comparison of the above-mentioned tables confirms the conclusions made earlier that in criticism and skepticism toward the EU and the West the federal Russian TV channels are more categorical, than even those media of the EaP countries that are close to them in their political direction. In the pieces on other topics, the level of support for propaganda messages by the Russian and the EaP countries' media is more or less similar. On the whole the comparison of the number of cases, in which the propaganda messages (narratives) were supported and those cases when these messages were rejected (or were transmitted neutrally), confirms the suggestion that they are widely used in propaganda purposes.

4. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF ARMENIA

About one third of the messages (105 out of 370 references) recorded in the studied Armenian media (“**Novoye Vremya**” newspaper, **Iravunk.com** and **Sputnik Armenia**) belonged to the category **M20**. “Civil society (NGOs) of [...] Armenia [...] is a ‘fifth column’ of the West”. This message was leading due to the pieces in **Iravunk.com**, online resources of the newspaper “Iravunk” (see below).

During the monitoring period, the ratification by the RA National Assembly of the Armenian-Russian Agreement on creation of joint air defense system in the framework of united security in the Caucasus region was one of the most important media topics. The coverage of the ratification and civic protests against it was centered around the issue of whether the Agreement would benefit the security of Armenia and Mountainous Karabagh. Within this context, the message **M22**. “The delivery of the weaponry to the participants of Karabagh conflict by Russia is a measure to maintain a balance of forces. If Russia did not supply it, someone else would do it with worse consequences for safety” emerged. In 28 pieces of the studied media, this message was articulated 64 times. In 49 cases it received the support of the authors, and in 15 cases, on the contrary, the authors noted that Russia cannot be trusted, since, “based on its own interests, it will be deciding whether or not to protect the air space of Armenia”. At the same time in relevant pieces in “**Novoye Vremya**” arguments were brought quite intensively both for and against the united air defense system, while **Sputnik Armenia** mostly restricted itself to dry information. **M22** was supported mostly by “**Iravunk**”, which consistently advanced the idea that close cooperation with Russia did not have an alternative.

In all 29 references (in 14 pieces) to **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end” this message was supported by the authors, and coincided with the position of the media themselves. This position was especially strongly accentuated in the context of the Brexit.

A note in the satirical column “Panjuni’s Corner” of the “**Iravunk**” newspaper (June 29, 2016) was named “Rat’s Approach”, consisted of one sentence “The English rats were the first ones to leave the sinking EU” and was accompanied by the cartoon:



M19. “The future wellbeing of [...] Armenia [...] is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]” was recorded 22 times in 13 pieces of the studied media and received the support from both the authors of the relevant statements, and from the media themselves. In two cases (“*Novoye Vremya*”, June 7, 2016) a different point of view was presented: particularly the Chairman of the party “Free Democrats”, MP Khachatur Kokobelyan argued that “having entered the EAEU, we are gradually losing our international investments. That is why we urgently need to terminate our membership in the EAEU”. In the same piece of “**Novoye Vremya**” another MP (from the ruling Republican Party of Armenia) Artashes Geghamyan opposes Kokobelyan, arguing that “Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia did not join the EAEU and now in these countries ‘blood flows’”.

In 14 materials (19 times) **M37.** “Turkey supports terrorists in the Syrian conflict (they do not lead a real fight against them)” was articulated. On this topic, mostly statements of representatives of the Syrian government were quoted. A number of pieces contained negative attitude to Turkey already in the headlines: “Turks Are Coordinating the Strikes of Islamists Against the Armenian Quarters of Aleppo”; “Erdogan Is in a Fortress Under Siege. Turkey Is Close to Collapse”; “Bashar Asad Called the Turkish Leader a Scoundrel”; “Aleppo Will Become a Graveyard for Erdogan’s Regime: Asad”.

Internet site of the newspaper “**Iravunk**” was in sharp contrast to “*Novoye Vremya*” and Sputnik Armenia in terms of intensity of transmitting propaganda messages. It had 73.2% (271 out of 370) of references to these messages of the three studied Armenian media. “**Iravunk**” distinguished itself also by high support of ideas, expressed in messages (in overwhelming cases the journalists of “Iravunk” themselves were the authors of propaganda messages). An undisputed leader in “**Iravunk**” was **M20.** “Civil society [...] of Armenia [...] is a ‘fifth column’ of the West”. It was in this media that it was articulated 105 times, supported by the authors in 104 cases. In all the 30 pieces, where this message was articulated, it reflected the position of the media and was transmitted by the journalists of “Iravunk” 101 times.

A specific characteristic of “**Iravunk**” was the presence of several messages in one piece. In the piece “How the Westernizers Are Looking for a Calf Under a Bull”, published on June 14, 2016, five messages were transmitted. Apart from **M20**, it was **M7.** “Modern Western values are decadent [...]”, **M25.** “Anti-Russian movement in Armenia is prepaid by the West”, **M30.** “The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia” and **M35.** “Putin is the best, he is the core of Russian statehood. The main goal of the West is to remove Vladimir Putin”.

Unlike “Iravunk”, “**Novoye Vremya**” newspaper, referring to the messages selected for the study, presented different attitudes to them. This, first of all, refers to the message, which was most often articulated on its pages - **M22.** “The delivery of the weaponry to the participants of Karabagh conflict by Russia is a measure to maintain a balance of forces. If Russia did not supply it, someone else would do it with worse consequences for safety”. In 8 pieces it was encountered 22 times, in 13 cases it was supported by its authors, in 9 cases it was rejected. At the same time, the position of the newspaper itself, in most cases, was neutral. However, on such a topic as **M37.** “Turkey supports terrorists in the Syrian conflict [...]” (the second most repeated message in this media) “**Novoye Vremya**” was quite categorical: out of 10 cases, when the message was articulated, it was rejected only once; and in 6 of 7 pieces, where **M37** was recorded, it corresponded to the position of the newspaper (in one piece the position was neutral).

Of the three studied Armenian media **Sputnik Armenia** proved to be the most moderate in spreading propaganda messages: in 17 pieces the messages selected for the current study were recorded 34 times. The message that was most frequently repeated was **M19**. “The future wellbeing of [...] Armenia [...] is possible only in an alliance with Russia (under the EAEU)”. In the majority of cases, this message was transmitted in the context of economic benefits, which Armenia would receive from membership in the EAEU.

Most frequently, it was the representatives of the media that became authors/carriers of propaganda messages in Armenian media studied - 221 times (203 times - Armenian, 9 times - Russian and 9 times - other foreign journalists). The following group was politicians (54 times, including 50 times - national, 4 times - foreign, among which there was no Russian politician). It was only on **Sputnik Armenia** that media representatives neither were in the majority as authors of the messages, nor acted in that role in any cases. Overall, **Sputnik Armenia** appeared the only media in all the countries studied, where journalists were not the authors of the messages.

5. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF AZERBAIJAN

50.5% of the cumulative frequency of all messages, encountered in the studied two Azerbaijani media ("**Novoye Vremya**" newspaper and **Sputnik Azerbaijan**), fell to four messages: **M32**. "NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to Russia's security"; **M41**. "Russia stands up from its knees". Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West"; **M3**. "European Union, its institutions and policies (the Schengen Agreement, Neighborhood policy, social policy, security, etc.) are coming to an end" and **M44**. "Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia's foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance ". In the overwhelming majority of cases, these messages were supported by their authors and corresponded to the position of the media. Even in those cases, where the media did not support these messages explicitly, the support was shown through headlines, frequent repetition, other methods of influencing the public opinion, as well as through lack of coverage of the alternative position.

In a generalized form the main propaganda thesis of the studied Azerbaijani media can be formulated roughly in the following way: "NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to the security of Russia, which is rising from its knees and is progressing despite sanctions of the West, and together with other countries of the Eurasian space is creating a new vector of geopolitical processes and an alternative to the European Union, while the EU and its institutions will soon come to an end."

Most commonly, the authors/carriers of the messages were representatives of the media - in 108 cases (in 67 cases - Azerbaijani, in 38 cases - Russian, in 3 cases - other foreign journalists). They are followed by experts - in 50 cases (in 45 cases - Russian and in 5 cases - other foreign experts) and politicians - in 24 cases (of which 6 - Russian and 18 - other foreign politicians). It should be noted specifically that local journalists and media were quite active as authors of the propaganda messages. This, first of all, refers to the staff of the newspaper "**Novoye Vremya**". While in **Sputnik Azerbaijan** the authors of these messages were, as a rule, Russian journalists and experts, in "**Novoye Vremya**", in more than 60% of the total number of the authors/carriers of the messages, the newspaper's staff played that role.

Both studied Azerbaijani media frequently used headlines that included messages related to the studied topics. For example: "NATO? We Don't Need It!" ("**Novoye Vremya**", June 7, 2016); "SCO [Ed. Note: Shanghai Cooperation Organization] Can Suggest an Alternative to the World" ("**Novoye Vremya**", June 24, 2016); "Sanctions as a Myth, or How Russia Can Survive in any Conditions" (**Sputnik Azerbaijan**, June 17, 2016).

A typical example of such associative headlines was in a piece of **Sputnik Azerbaijan** on June 24, 2016, on Brexit: "London to Brussels: Who Are You, Get Out, Goodbye" (playing on Meyhana Internet meme, a local meme, with a meaning roughly similar to the popular Internet meme "Go Home, You Are Drunk"):



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Another interesting observation: in spite of the active anti-Turkish propaganda by Russia, during the monitoring period, the latter did not find a reflection in any of the studied media. However, in other cases the foreign political aspects of the studied Russian and Azerbaijani media coincided. The close relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan played its role.

The messages in the majority of the studied materials of **Sputnik Azerbaijan** was related to Russia, its relations with the West. Only two of them are directly related to Azerbaijan: **M19**. “The future wellbeing of [...] Azerbaijan [...] is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]” (3 cases) and **M24**. “Defrost of Karabagh conflict is a consequence of the implementation of the West’s interests” (1 case). In this media there has not been recorded any direct mentioning of Belarus, Georgia and Moldova.

In **Sputnik Azerbaijan**, the messages articulated by the Russian President Vladimir Putin, stated that the aim of the USA was to weaken the EU and to create obstacles for its rapprochement with Russia (**M2**), and two times the message that in spite of all the sanctions of the West, Russia continues to progress (**M41**) was encountered. The messages, articulated by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, stated that Ukraine is responsible for failure to implement the Minsk agreements (**M16**), that deployment of NATO forces in Eastern Europe is a direct threat to the security of Russia (**M32**), and that the West is trying to widen its geopolitical presence on the post-Soviet space in order to weaken Russia (**M30**).

In “**Novoye Vremya**” 20 messages of the studied list were encountered. They were repeated 98 times in total. The most frequently repeated ones, **M3** (15 times), **M32** (12), **M36** (12), **M8** (9) and **M10** (9), were directly aimed against the EU, focusing on the fake nature and hypocrisy of the Western democracy, and anti-Russian policies of the EU and USA.

There were four materials aiming to create a negative image of Ukraine, which contained the following messages: **M12**. “Ukraine is a failed state. It is an artificial entity created on the territories of Russia, Poland, Hungary (and so forth). Sooner or later it will collapse as a single independent state”; **M14**. “Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovych governance”; **M16**. “Ukraine is responsible for the failure to comply the Minsk agreements” and **M43**. “Nadezhda Savchenko is a pseudo-politician, radical. She is dangerous for Russia and Ukraine”. Aggregate frequency of repetition of these messages is 9. At the same time, Armenia in the context of the Karabagh conflict was mentioned only in one piece, containing **M24**. “Defrost of Karabagh conflict is a consequence of the implementation of the West’s interests”. As in the **Sputnik**

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Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova were not mentioned at all in the studied pieces of the “**Novoye Vremya**”.

Only in 4 cases the attitude of “**Novoye Vremya**” to the messages selected for the current research was neutral. These were short quotes of the Press Secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov, philanthropist George Soros, European Parliament deputy Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, as well as the data of a sociological poll, which were not commented, were not intensified by repetitions or other means. In all other cases, the newspaper supported the content of the messages.

The messages in “**Novoye Vremya**”, in which the author was Russian President Vladimir Putin, stated that NATO forces deployment in Eastern Europe is a direct threat to Russia’s security (**M32**, repeated 6 times) and once that the West needs to recognize the sphere of influence of Russia (**M33**).

6. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF BELARUS

The obvious “leader” among the messages in the studied media of Belarus (**ONT** and **STV** TV channels, **Sputnik Belarus**) was **M19** in the following format: “The future wellbeing of [...] Belarus [...] is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]”. It was the most commonly articulated message both on **TV channels** and on **Sputnik Belarus** (though not with such an “overwhelming” frequency). In fact, the studied media consistently advanced a worldview, in which the idea of brotherhood with Russia was represented as something self-evident, self-explanatory. While rare reports on European topics were designed to stress the benefits of the Belarusian-Russian vector of development against the background of the EU that is going through global upheaval. All the 126 references to **M19** were unequivocally supported by their authors: in most cases these were staff of the national media (60), the President of Belarus (21) and in 5 cases - the President of Russia, as well as other representatives of Belarusian and Russian governments (27).

All the media studied were characterized by rare references to other messages selected for the current monitoring. At the same time, narratives outside of the studied list were often repeated, which contained elements of propaganda and were oriented specifically to the Belarusian audience. For example, on the Internet site of **Sputnik Belarus** there were radio programmes with participation of famous cultural figures of the Soviet times (actors, film directors, musicians, etc.), which emphasized that “culture of Belarus is inextricably linked to the Soviet culture and continues its traditions”.

It was events in Belarus that constituted the most part of the content of **Sputnik Belarus**, even though a certain number of pieces were devoted to Russian or Russian-Belarusian topics, much less to world events. At the same time in some news Vladimir Putin was mentioned more frequently than Alexander Lukashenko, while Russian government representatives have been mentioned much more frequently than their Belarusian counterparts. Thus, in **Sputnik Belarus** Vladimir Putin became the author of the messages 29 times, while the President of Belarus - 11 times, representatives of Russian government - 28 times, of Belarusian government - 4 times.

More than 60% of the studied pieces of that media contained two or more messages. Thus, in an analytical article published on June 27, 2016 “EU Is Falling Apart, Eurasia Is Integrating” already the headlines contained two messages: **M3**. “European Union [...] is coming to an end” and **M44**. “Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia’s foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance”.

The photo below accompanied a June 24, 2016 article in **Sputnik Belarus** devoted to the results of the referendum in Great Britain, called “Brexit: Great Britain Leaves the EU”. In addition, even though this article was purely informative and did not contain any messages from the studied list, the photo itself, symbolizing the goodbye kiss, is a typical illustration of the Brexit coverage:



© REUTERS Hannibal Hanschke

On the whole, during the studied period pieces on Ukrainian topics in **Sputnik Belarus** were not many (for the most part they were related to Minsk agreements), but all of them concluded with the following phrases: “The authorities of Ukraine in April 2014 started a military operation against self-proclaimed LNR and DNR, which declared independence after the coup d’état in Ukraine in February 2014. According to the latest UN data, more than nine thousand people became the victims of the conflict. The issue of resolution of the situation in Donbas is being discussed, also during the meetings of the Minsk Contact Group, which has already adopted three documents since September 2014, which regulate steps aimed at de-escalation of the conflict. However, shootouts continue even though ceasefire agreements have been signed.”

A peculiarity of the graphic structure of **Sputnik Belarus** has to be noted. Though it seems that in general the news was presented in a balanced way, the reader of any news article could see below the links to another Internet site, with much more radical headlines (“Ukraine Is Doomed to Self-Destruction”, “Lavrov Showed the NATO Secretary General His Place”).

On **STV** TV channel out of 44 messages, included in the studied list, only five were recorded. 88 of 151 references to these messages were related to **M19**. “The future wellbeing of [...] Belarus [...] is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]”, 34 references to **M21**. “Belarusians [...] are the same Russians, it is impossible to divide these nations [...]” and 25 references to **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end”. The first two of these messages received an unequivocal support of both the authors and the TV channel itself (respectively, in 13 and 11 pieces). In addition, **M3** was supported by the authors in 18 cases (4 times it was rejected and 3 times it was articulated neutrally).

Of 151 references of **STV** to messages, 79 times the authors were the journalists of the TV channel, 20 times - the President of Belarus and 26 times - representatives of the Russian authorities. Both the anchors and the authors of TV materials on this media are working in the format of explicitly programming the audience: they themselves give expert evaluations, themselves voice opinions, and themselves make conclusions.

On **ONT** TV channel a relatively low number of messages from the list was recorded: 82 references. To a certain extent it was conditioned by the fact that the period of monitoring coincided with a number of events in Belarus, which do not imply wide presence of Russian propaganda in the media sphere. In particular, these were the negotiations of the Belarusian government with the Bank of People’s Republic of China and with IMF, the 5th

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Pan-Belarusian People's Assembly, denomination, the Day of Independence of the Republic of Belarus on July 3.

Nevertheless, the message, which was most frequently voiced by the studied media, **M19**. "The future wellbeing of [...] Belarus is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]" was the leading one also on **ONT**- 28 references. 10 times was articulated **M11**. "Sanctions of the West against Russia are unfair [...]" and 7 times - **M21**. "Belarusians [...] are the same Russians, it is impossible to divide these nations [...]". All three, in most cases, were supported by both the authors and the media itself.

News content of **ONT** refrained from focusing on Ukrainian topics and even more rarely referred to events and problems of other Eastern Partnership countries, as well as Turkey and Syria, which were in the center of attention of world media.

7. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF GEORGIA

Of the messages selected for the current monitoring, most frequently the studied Georgian media ("**Obieqtivi**" TV channel and **Sputnik Georgia**) repeated **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end" - 41 times, **M27**. "There is pressure (repressions) in Georgia on genuinely patriotic circles, which are eager to protect national identity and resist infusion of alien (Western) values" - 10 times, **M32**. "NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to Russia's security" - 8 times and **M30**. "The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia" - 7 times.

In almost all cases, these messages were supported both by their authors and by the media themselves. On the whole, most often, the authors of the messages were media representatives: in 54 cases (including 51 times - Georgian journalists, 2 times - Russian journalists and 1 time - another foreign journalist). Politicians articulated these messages 29 times (13 times - Georgian politicians, 8 times - Russian and 8 times - other foreign politicians), experts- 26 times (in 14 cases - Georgian, and in 12 cases - Russian).

Of 119 references to messages in the two studied Georgian media 36 fell on the part of **Sputnik Georgia**. They were recorded in 27 pieces. On the TV channel "**Obieqtivi**" the pieces that contained selected messages were in a considerable lower quantity (11), but the messages were aired much more intensively - 83 times. At the same time, in both media outlets, the authors/carriers supported the ideas contained in the messages. However, the position of the media themselves was significantly different. While in **Sputnik Georgia** neutral attitude of the media itself prevailed, in "**Obieqtivi**" the overwhelming majority of the messages reflected the position of the TV channel.

"**Obieqtivi**" TV channel is practically the media platform of the Alliance of Georgia's Patriots (APG) and was often used by party bodies in order to present their ideas to potential voters (it was during the monitoring period that the parliamentary campaign for 2016 elections started). The political credo of APG and "**Obieqtivi**" was the criticism of the United National Movement, which held power in Georgia in 2003-2012, as well as the anti-Western narrative. It is not surprising that in overwhelming majority of cases (42.2 % of all references to messages) **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end" was articulated on this channel.

"**Obieqtivi**" often resorts to nationalist ideas to influence the part of society that dislikes both the current and the former governments' attitude towards the country's foreign policy vector. Based on observation throughout four weeks of the monitoring, one can conclude that the viewers, who telephoned the TV channel's studios during discussion programmes, were in the most cases people of retirement age, who saw in the closeness of the country to the West a threat for "traditional national values" and felt nostalgia for the Soviet Union. The peculiarity of this media is personified spreading of ideas.

One of the main protagonists on the channel is Valeri Kvaratskhelia, a well-known pro-Russian journalist and politician, who anchors his own programme "Golden Section" on "**Obieqtivi**". Not long before the election, he led the Georgian Socialist Party and used his airtime on TV for political interests. Here is one of his texts: "About two years ago we crossed European boundaries breaking them with the "Shalakho" dance and singing "Suliko". Yes, spirit of "Shalakho" hung in the air for two years. Now we may only perform it in Avlabar, as the EU currently exists merely in the form of an organization. The EU has

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been for us, Georgians, the Promised Land, and was presented to us, as something so desired and cherished, just as were NATO and the US. It is not at all hard to predict the consequences of EU losing its bricks: the EU is doomed to collapse, and the second stage of that process will entail the break-up of NATO, and the third stage, in a little longer perspective, may very well mark the beginning of the same development unfolding in the US" (*"Golden Section"*, June 25, 2016).

Altogether through the monitoring period in Kvaratskhelia's programmes anti-Western/anti-European messages were quite often articulated. He also regarded Georgian civil society (NGOs, civic activists) as the "fifth column" of the West (**M20**).

Another presenter, being the "face" of "**Obieqtivi**", is Bondo Mdzinarashvili, who, compared to Valeri Kvaratskhelia, does not demonstrate sympathy towards Russian leadership, yet stresses that Georgia needs "a national government" independent of Washington, Brussels and Moscow. For another "**Obieqtivi**" presenter, Nino Ratishvili, the deferment of the decision on visa-free travel with the EU for Georgian citizens became an argument to promote frustration, distrust vis-à-vis Europe. In many of her programmes the guests were stating, that EU had deceived Georgia, and would never change its attitude towards the country.

Sputnik Georgia paid less attention to anti-Western propaganda, opting to publish materials aimed at the popularization of Russia. The media often posted positive and nostalgic stories on mixed Russian-Georgian families and famous couples. It constantly highlighted cultural and sports events taking place in Georgia with the participation of Russians and vice-versa. Quite often there were feature stories concerning World War II, as well as news about Georgian Orthodox Church, also symbolizing amenities between the two nations.

Most often in this media (6 times) the message **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end" was voiced. Though in **Sputnik Georgia** it was voiced with different meanings, however, the whole point remained in its circulation, spreading the idea of the futility of the EU concept.

It is possible to claim that both studied Georgian media promoted the perception that the European Union is doomed to break-up, and that it does no longer make sense for Georgia to persist on its path of integration with Europe. In addition, the election results in Georgia have shown to a certain extent the stronger influence of that narrative on the voters, compared to calls on rapprochement with Russia. As in other EaP countries, the main reason for skepticism toward the EU were the results of the referendum of Great Britain's exit from the EU.



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It is important to note the reference of **Sputnik Georgia** to the group of messages related to the Syrian crisis: **M37**. "Turkey supports terrorists in the Syrian conflict (they do not lead a real fight against them)", **M38**. "The West supports terrorists in the Syrian conflict (they do not lead a real fight against them)" and **M40**. "Only Russia is using military force in Syria by the invitation of the legitimate authorities of this country and therefore acts lawfully and effectively". From the way this topic was addressed it could be concluded that the reason behind increased usage of the mentioned messages during the monitoring period was not the wish to understand the truth, but rather the tension between Russia and Turkey after the downed military plane (in November 2015) and its interpretation, corresponding to the coverage of this topic by the Russian media.

8. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF MOLDOVA

The number of materials in the studied Moldovan media (**NTV Moldova** TV channel, **Omega.md** and **Sputnik Moldova**) carrying propaganda messages was not high - 57 in total during the monitoring period. The most widely disseminated message, **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end" appeared 42 times. Being connected to Brexit, it was presented in many cases as a start of EU disintegration.

M32. "NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to Russia's security" appeared 24 times, mostly in **Sputnik Moldova** (22 references).

The third in top were the messages this or that way related to Russia: **M19**. "The future wellbeing of [...] Moldova is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]" and **M30**. "The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia"-appeared 14 times each. **M19** was recorded mostly in news reports and TV shows of **NTV Moldova** (13 times). In most cases, both their authors and the media they appeared in supported those messages.

Among the studied Moldovan media **NTV Moldova** was the one that had disseminated the most messages. 21 pieces of that TV channel contained messages selected for this research. **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end" was recorded here 20 times, and in 17 cases the authors supported it. The authors of the message were mostly experts (6 -Moldovan, 1 - Russian and 2 - other foreign experts), they were followed by politicians (4 times), media representatives (3), heads of states and representatives of official international institutions (2 each).

Another message persistently promoted by **NTV Moldova** was **M19**. "The future wellbeing of [...] Moldova is possible only in an alliance with Russia [...]". It was recorded 13 times in 9 pieces. Authors of these messages were mostly experts (1 -Moldovan and 5 -Russian) and journalists (6 Moldovan).In 12 out of 13 cases the authors of the message were supportive to it.

M19 appeared most frequently in the "MegaFon" talk show, where Russia was referred as a model to be followed by Moldova. The dominant idea was that Moldova could not survive economically without Russia, and that Russia was the best place for art and culture people from Moldova to promote themselves. Those ideas were in line with the agenda of the Socialist Party whose candidate won presidential elections in November 2016. The owner of **NTV Moldova** is an MP from the same party and the anchor of "MegaFon" talk show is Iurie Rosca, who was formulating questions during the show so that the answers were in the party's interests in the approaching pre-election campaign. Thus, it could be stated that the TV channel contributed to the success of the Socialists in the elections.

The Internet resource **Omega** (www.omg.md) referred to the messages selected for this research only in 11 materials. Most repeated messages were related to Brexit as well as to the criticism of the West extending its geopolitical presence in the post-Soviet space and trying to weaken the positions of Russia (**M3** and **M30** - recorded 8 times each).

Thus, in the news report, “The Current US Administration Is Disappointed with the Referendum Results in Great Britain” (*Omega*, June 24, 2016), a suggestive image presenting the UK and EU flags with BREXIT stamped on them was inserted:



Though in the majority of cases, **Omega** referred to **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end” in the context of the British referendum (as was also the case in other studied media), it does not mean that this attitude to EU was simply a reflection of the current events. Skepticism toward the future of EU, judging from the results of the monitoring, is a persistent element of propaganda, in which certain media are involved in one way or another.

M30. “The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia” was voiced 8 times in 4 pieces of **Omega**, and was supported in all cases by both the authors and the media itself (with the exception of one neutral). This can be explained by the fact that this message appeared mostly in editorials, where the opinion of the journalists was bluntly expressed. Here are fragments of these editorials: “[...] Confrontation of the USA and the West in general with Russia is for a long time. The conflict includes all directions, EU and NATO are taking part in it, their new allies are Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, and there is no end in sight. USA and EU do not recognize the interests of Russia on the post-Soviet space [...]” (“*Moldova-Russia: Once There Was Love Without Happiness...*”, June 16, 2016); “The USA, boasting of their commitment to democratic values and human rights inside their country, are resorting to hard pressure abroad in order to advance their strategic, geopolitical interests, the most important of which is the global domination of one super-power, America” (“*Chubashenko: Nuland Became a Good Mama from State Department for Moldovan Sadist from GBC*”, June 7, 2016).

Sputnik Moldova publishes reports in Russian and Romanian. The content in Russian is produced in Chisinau, as well as in other countries, while the content in Romanian is produced either in Chisinau or in Bucharest. Therefore, the content in two languages differs to a certain extent. Only five messages from the list selected for the research were recorded in this media. They appeared in 25 materials.

The most frequent message was **M32**. “NATO deployment of its troops in Eastern Europe and Baltic States poses a direct threat to Russia's security”- 22 times, in 17 cases the attitude of the authors towards the message was positive. The Presidents of Russia and Romania were quoted twice each on this issue, expressing opposite positions.

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14 times the message **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end “was recorded and 9 times - **M11**. “Sanctions of the West against Russia are unfair, imposed on EU by the United States and they harm, first of all, Europeans”.

It is worth noting that some materials regarding specific issues included links and pictures with headline son similar issues. Thus, for instance, if a reader were interested in reading a news report on NATO issue, after opening it he/she would have possibility to see other reports, published earlier. For instance, the material “Expert from Federal Republic of Germany: Moldova Can Stop the NATO Enlargement to the East” (*June 15, 2016*) also contained links to three more pieces: “Widen and Deepen: NATO, from Bush’s Promises to Antimissile Defense in Romania” and “Russian Expert on Problems of Antimissile Defense in Romania” (*both published on June 2, 2016*), as well as “Antimissile Base in Romania: a Lion Hiding Under the Guise of a Sheep” (*May 31, 2016*). Thus, the audience was consistently provided with the same approach towards the issue.

One of the most quoted authors was Mihail Mocan, a military expert, head of the Union of Afghanistan War Veterans in Moldova. His position can be described through the following quote: “It is obvious that NATO is trying to encircle Russia. However, the leadership of the Alliance and the USA constantly claim that nothing of the kind is happening. I think Russia has a reason for serious concern.”

Another commonly quoted author Alexander Rahr, a German political analyst, expressed a similar position: “After the statements of the Russian President Vladimir Putin regarding Romania and the American antimissile defense system in this country, it became obvious that Moldova’s neighboring country can become a target at any moment” (*“Expert from Federal Republic of Germany: Moldova Can Stop the NATO Enlargement to the East”, June 15, 2016*). Author of an identical statement was also Rostislav Ischenko, a columnist of Sputnik: “In the end of May and in June 2016 there were plenty of NATO military drills close to Russian borders [...]. General aim of these drills is the creation on the Western border of NATO (from Romania to Poland and the Baltic region) of a military grouping able to resist ‘Russian aggression’” (*“NATO Activity: Bluff or Provocation?”, June 21, 2016*).

Thus, it is possible to state that this media, paying specific attention to the topic of NATO, has been persistently trying to discredit the advancement of that organization to the post-Soviet space.

The same can be said about the message **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end”, which in the same one-sided key was voiced during the monitoring by Russian political analyst Igor Nikolaichuk, German political analyst Alexander Rahr, leader of the Russian communists Gennadi Zyuganov, leader of the Socialist Party of Moldova Igor Dodon, elected several months later the President of the country. And only in one case the opposing opinion was articulated (by the leader of the Democratic Party of Moldova Marian Lupu): “EU is a solid historical reality, it remains the only viable way of peace and prosperity in the European countries. Those, who are happy about Brexit and speculate on that topic, demanding to leave the road to Europe, are irresponsible and are working against the interests of our country” (*“Lupu About Brexit: Those, Who Are Happy About It, Are Working Against the Interests of Our Country”, June 24, 2016*).

9. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF UKRAINE

As expected, out of the six EaP countries it was in the studied Ukrainian media (**Inter** TV channel, “**Vesti**” newspaper and **Strana.ua**) that the selected messages were the most frequent. At the same time, the leading messages were the ones referring to this country specifically.

During the monitoring period the most frequent (389) were the references to message **M14**. “Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovych governance”, which in the majority of cases (320) was supported by the authors (rejected 64 times and 5 times voiced neutrally). The media themselves largely aired this message with a positive attitude to it. The authors of the message in the majority of cases were representatives of the Ukrainian media (197 times), followed by representatives of Ukrainian local authorities (58) and Ukrainian experts (50). In general, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the authors of the transmitted messages were Ukrainian journalists, experts and politicians. In addition, significantly more often than others, it were the representatives of the national media that were playing that role. Russian authors of various categories transmitted these messages only in 1.1% of the total number of the carriers of messages.

Another leader in terms of frequency of references, even though significantly lagging behind **M14**, was **M18**. “Europe does not need Ukraine” - 85 times (in 57 cases it was supported by the authors, but at the same time was rejected quite often, 28 times). The position of the media with regard to that message differed in various cases, even though it was supportive more often than not (25 cases of support, 6 cases of negative attitude and 16 cases of neutral attitude). A roughly similar picture was observed with regard to other messages directly related to Ukraine. As for **M15**. “The inclusion of Crimea into Russia is a legitimate act of self-determination”, it was not supported in any cases by media and was either rejected or transmitted neutrally, even though the media selected for this study were the ones prone to disseminating Russian propaganda narratives.

Among other messages, the most frequent one (total second place) was **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end”: 117 references (supported by the authors in more than two thirds of cases). In more than half of the cases (69 times), representatives of Ukrainian media themselves referred to this message.

In the course of the monitoring in the newspaper “**Vesti**” 157 references to messages from the selected list were recorded. In the overwhelming majority of cases, their authors/carriers supported them: 138 times. 8 times the speakers disagreed with them, and 11 times the authors had a neutral position. The position of the newspaper itself was in most cases neutral - 50 times, and supporting in 31 cases.

Majority of the pieces in the newspaper referred to events in Ukraine, and, accordingly, the majority of the recorded messages were directly related to this country. Most frequent one was **M14**. “Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovych governance”. Almost every issue of the newspaper contained an article or a note about corruption or incompetence of the Ukrainian authorities. Only in rare publications there was a comparison with the level of corruption under the rule of Viktor Yanukovych, the stress was put on today’s problems.

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The second in terms of the frequency of references in the “**Vesti**” was **M12**. “Ukraine is a failed state. It is an artificial entity created on the territories of Russia, Poland, Hungary (and so forth). Sooner or later it will collapse as a single independent state”. Even though the wording “failed state” was not used directly, its meaning was transmitted in the context. The respective articles told about the difficult economic situation in Ukraine and a possible fiasco.

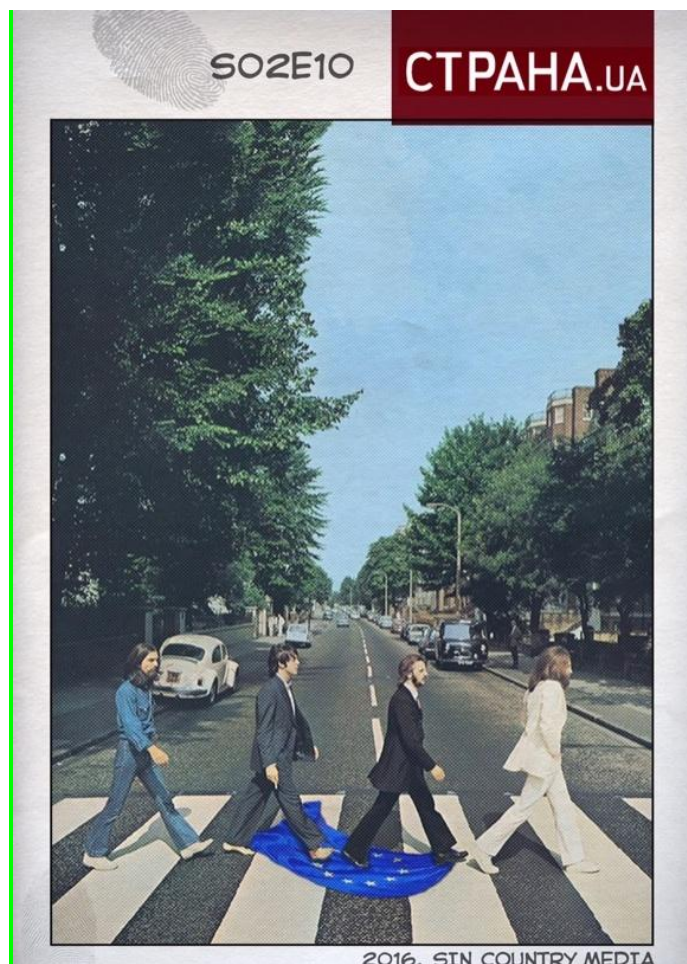
Publications containing **M13**. “The governance in Ukraine is captured by radical nationalists[...]” were typical for the newspaper. This message was consistently supported by the authors who claimed that “the radicals” are doing “whatever they want”, with the connivance of authorities or in cooperation with them. For example, in an article by people’s deputy Vadim Novinsky, the following phrase is present: “Today, when the entire media sphere is aimed at promoting war, when the spirit of hatred and intolerance is in the air, it is enough to give the political command ‘attack!’ in order to start a grandiose bloodbath in this country, which would throw us back to the most tragic pages of medieval history. Crowds of people in camouflage are idly wandering around the country, looking to find adventure and to let out their passionaries’ energy” (“*Vadim Novinsky. Challenges to Orthodoxy, Challenges to Ukraine*”, “*Vesti*”, June 22, 2016).

Mostly frequently, the authors of the messages in the newspaper “**Vesti**” were Ukrainian experts (54 times) and Ukrainian journalists (42). Quite often the “*Vesti*” staff asked commentary from representatives of government of Yanukovich’s times, which in the framework of the current study were included in the category “others” (altogether 28 authors of messages from this category were recorded).

On **Strana.ua**, messages from the selected list were encountered 172 times. The majority (158) were supported by the authors. The position of the media itself was either supportive - in 87 cases, or neutral - in 58 cases. If “**Vesti**” were mostly oriented toward internal news, on **Strana.ua** a significant part of the content was devoted to international news.

This Internet site paid significant attention to Brexit and, as a consequence, the message **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end” was frequent here (29 times). This was the most popular narrative on Strana.ua and its authors supported it 27 times, and only in two cases it was rejected.

In a piece published on June 24, 2016 “Best Cartoons About Brexit: the Beatles and Mr. Bean”, the attitude to the topic was expressed in the visual genre:



From messages directly related to Ukraine, the most frequent one was **M14**. “Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovich governance” - 22 times. In all cases, the authors supported it. Of 17 pieces containing that message, in 9 cases it reflected the position of the media, and in 8 cases it was transmitted neutrally. In particular, the following interpretation of this message was typical: “An IMF representative called the issue of corruption in Ukraine ‘macro-critical’, stressing that this is an obstacle for further economic growth” (*“IMF to Ukrainian Authorities: First Actions, Then Money”*, *Strana.ua*, June 6, 2016).

It is noteworthy that **Strana.ua** was the only one from the three studied Ukrainian media, which relatively actively supported the thesis that Kyiv has not fulfilled the Minsk agreements (**M16**. “Ukraine is responsible for the failure to comply the Minsk agreements”). These pieces told about the lack of political will in Kyiv to end the conflict in Donbas.

The third in terms of frequency of references on **Strana.ua** was **M42**. “Germany, France, Israel (often Italy and other EU countries) are Russia's allies”, transmitted in the context of the West’s sanctions against Russia. This message was supported by its authors in all 18 cases, and by the media itself in 13 out of 16 pieces.

Of the three studied Ukrainian media the spectrum of messages, recorded in the pieces of the TV channel **Inter**, was the widest. Altogether, on that channel 744 references to the studied messages were recorded. In the majority of cases, the authors supported the messages (543), while in 187 cases they were rejected and in 14 cases were transmitted

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neutrally. The position of the TV channel itself regarding the messages was supportive in 208 cases, neutral in 81 cases and negative in 68 cases.

More often than others, the message **M14**. “Reforms in Ukraine have failed, the level of corruption is higher than during the Yanukovych governance” was aired: it was recorded 296 times in 111 pieces of the channel. Thus, a news piece on June 6, 2016 said that Ukrainian officials and deputies are “laundering” money in Austria. And in a report, aired on June 7, 2016, about the trial of vice-governor of Nikolayev region, who was arrested for a big bribe, it was noted: “In Ukraine they continue to take large scale bribes: nothing has changed since the times of Yanukovych, even Heroes of Ukraine are taking bribes.”

The TV channel criticized the Ukrainian authorities especially strongly for their attitude to the population of Donbas. In particular, its materials reflected the idea that official Kyiv does not need them.

As in other studied Ukrainian media, from foreign policy news the largest amount of attention was given to Brexit, and the British referendum was connected to the perspective of the break-up of the EU. **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end” became the second most frequent message in the air of **Inter**(84 times).

A certain amount of attention was paid to the topic of sanctions against Russia (**M11**. “Sanctions of the West against Russia are unfair, imposed on EU by the United States and they harm, first of all, Europeans”) - 39 references. At the same time, there was a balance of opinions between those, who supported the thesis about injustice of sanctions against Russia, and those, who justified the Western countries’ approach to sanctions.

The authors of the messages on **Inter** in most cases were Ukrainian journalists (445 out of 744). In the category “others” (39 in total) there were mostly the military. Thus, in the airtime of the TV channel, a Ukrainian military serviceman with a call sign name “Mikhalych” stated: “Ukrainian military are only responding to the provocations of the militants, they do not attack themselves, which does not contradict the Minsk agreements”, thus rejecting **M16**. “Ukraine is responsible for the failure to comply the Minsk agreements”.

The last example is another evidence that the Ukrainian media, selected for the current monitoring as presumably more prone to Russian propaganda messages, have treated these messages in a more balanced way, compared to the studied media of other EaP countries. Probably, this can be explained by substantial contradictions between Ukraine and Russia on the current historical stage. These contradictions influence the content of even those actors of the Ukrainian information process, who are not part of the mainstream on issues of foreign policy orientation, participation in integration processes, approach to internal conflicts, etc.

10. SUMMARIZED DATA ON THE STUDIED MEDIA OF RUSSIA AND EAP COUNTRIES IN GENERAL

Apart from the four messages, mentioned above as the most commonly voiced in the **Russian media (First Channel, Russia 1 and NTV TV channels)**: **M30**. “The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia”, **M3**. “EU [...] is coming to an end”, **M41**. “‘Russia stands up from its knees’. Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West” and **M44**. “Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia’s foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance”), we can highlight two more, which determined the direction of propaganda during the monitoring period: **M16**. “Ukraine is responsible for the failure to comply the Minsk agreements” - 83 references and **M7**. “Modern Western values are decadent, and only Russia preserved healthy civilizational orientations” - 81 references. These six messages together account for 733 or almost half (47.2%) of all the references to messages, included in the list for this study. All these six messages, in the overwhelming majority of cases were supported by both their authors and the media themselves. For comparison, in **six countries of the EaP** the share of these messages was 26.8% (619 references) and even though here also they were, in most cases, supported by the authors and the media, the level of support was significantly lower.

Overall, the messages related directly to Russia were aired on the studied **Russian TV channels** 302 times (19.4% of the total frequency of messages, selected for the current study). In most cases, both the authors and the media supported these messages. It is worth noting that throughout the monitoring there were no references recorded to the messages dealing with internal contradictions in Russia: **M31**. “RF parliament had to adopt laws stripping Russian civil society of financial aid from the West as the latter tried to meddle in the country’s domestic affairs through CSOs” and **M34**. “Those Russians (opposition) who criticize the country’s state administration are traitors”. That was the case, even despite the fact that in September 2016 elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation were to be held. Taking into account the fact that all federal TV channels are loyal to the government, it is possible that the Russian ruling circles simply had no need to mobilize their propaganda resources against their opponents.

In the **media of the six EaP countries**, the two above mentioned messages were also neglected. Only one time (in **Ukrainian media**) the message **M34** was aired. More often, from the messages directly related to Russia **M44**. “Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia’s foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance” appeared 67 times and **M41**. “‘Russia stands up from its knees’. Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West” appeared 45 times. Of the **six EaP countries**, the highest number of reference to **M41** was encountered in the **media of Azerbaijan**- 28 times (in **Moldovan media** it was not encountered at all). In addition, **M44** was encountered most often in **the media of Belarus**- 25 times, **Azerbaijan**- 23 times, and **Armenia**- 17 times (not a single time in the media of **Georgia** and **Moldova**). In this respect, it can be seen that there are differences in the news

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agendas between the countries that have signed the EU Association Agreements, and the other three, even though in all cases the media studied were prone to disseminating Russian narratives.

The authors of the messages in **the Russian media** most often were the journalists themselves - 857 times, followed by experts (250 times, of which in 152 cases - Russian experts). At the same time, Ukrainians were the majority among the foreign expert-authors. In most cases, these were the same persons, from one programme to the other, who appeared on the air of one TV channel after the other, and who were especially frequent guests in discussion talk shows. They can be divided into two groups: those, who, as a rule, rejected negative approaches toward Ukraine and the West, and those, who supported messages from the studied list. At the same time, the statements of the experts from the first group were met with massive attacks, sarcastic reactions of other participants and talk show hosts, while the opinions of experts from the second group were received with an exaggerated attention and respect. The same picture applied also to experts from other foreign countries.

The third most widely represented group of authors was politicians (114 times), closely followed by RF President Vladimir Putin (108), actively quoted in the **Russian airtime**. 15 times his statements contained **M44**. "Russia, China, India, SCO, BRICS, EAEU are new vectors of geopolitical processes. The activation of trade, economic and investment cooperation within the framework of these alliances/unions is becoming one of the most important components of Russia's foreign economic strategy and an alternative to Euro-Atlantic alliance". This was conditioned particularly by the summit of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tashkent (June 23-24, 2016) and the visit of the RF President to China (June 25-26, 2016), where Vladimir Putin stressed the importance of the new external economic strategy for Russia.

During the monitoring period in the studied **Russian media** the group of authors marked as "others" was represented quite significantly (101 references to messages): those were Russian and foreign representatives of various professions and corporations. For example, Richard Samuel, who was presented as a "solid London lawyer", said: "The EU is a nightmare. All it does is creating problems for us, and we even have to pay for it" (**M3**, NTV, "Central Television", June 25, 2016).

In the studied **media** of both **Russia** and the **EaP countries**, a specific attention to the Ukrainian topic was recorded. Moreover, in the overwhelming number of cases, the messages containing negative approach to this country were supported by both the authors and the media themselves. Messages, related to Ukraine, were aired even more frequently than those directly related to Russia. In addition, while in the **Russian media** the advantage was not significant (307 references to Ukraine against 302 references to Russia), in the **media of EaP countries**, the ratio came to almost 6:1. The frequency of references to "Ukrainian messages" was significantly higher than the number of references to five other EaP countries: in the **Russian media** the ratio 307:48 was recorded, while in the **media of EaP countries** it came to 805:479.

11. SUMMARIZED DATA ON SPECIFIC RUSSIAN MEDIA

During the monitoring period, in the studied pieces of the TV channel **Russia 1**, 633 references to the messages were recorded. Of these, 605 times they were supported by the authors, and 24 times they were rejected (4 times voiced neutrally). As a rule, disagreement with the messages was expressed during discussion talk shows by those participants, who remained in the minority and were subject to aggressive verbal attacks by the rest of participants.

In most cases on **Russia 1**, the authors of the messages were media representatives - 278 times (in most cases Russian - 273 times), experts - 159 times (in 111 cases - Russian). These groups were followed by the Russian President Vladimir Putin (72 out of 76 in the category "first persons"). Representatives of Ukraine became the authors of the messages in pieces of the TV channel 29 times, from which in 21 cases they were Ukrainian experts.

The most frequently repeated message on **Russia 1** were **M30**. "The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia" - 99 times and **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end" - 76 times.

In general, three main topics in the air of **Russia 1** can be highlighted: hostility of foreign powers toward Russia, negative processes abroad and the strengthening of the international positions of the RF.

For example, the possible exclusion of the Russian sportsmen from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro was assessed as a political and unjust decision. The sporting event itself was represented as a vivid example of the general hostility of the West toward Russia. NATO forces deployment in Eastern Europe and the Baltic States was represented as a threat to Russians. In particular, it was intensively repeated that, instead of giving an adequate response to international terrorism, the North Atlantic block displays aggression toward Russia. In a number of cases, Vladimir Putin made such statements through the same prism the issue of sanctions against Russia were presented.

A significant number of materials on the TV channel was devoted to troubles in Europe and in USA. The referendum on Britain's exit from the EU became the main occasion for showing, how "the West decays".

Dmitri Kisilyov, the anchor of the Sunday news and analysis programme "Vesti Nedeli" (*June 26, 2016*): "Is there anybody else here? Hey! Ukraine asked entering the EU in 2030."



Screenshot/ Russia 1, "Vesti Nedeli"

Other pieces were related to the idea of Russia's wellbeing (for example, **M41**. "Russia stands up from its knees". Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West"). Many newscasts of the channel contained a "special" rubric: RF President Vladimir Putin is meeting one or another high-profile official, and the latter report on the progress of the economy, the rise of the quality of life, etc.

On the **First Channel** 95 references to the messages from the selected list were recorded, voiced in 27 pieces. The main part of these messages was aired in the programmes "Politics" and "Structure of the Moment", the lesser part in the news programme "Vremya". The majority of the messages were supported by their authors - in 72 cases. Representatives of the Russian media were most frequently the authors of the messages (32 times), followed by Russian politicians (20 times) and Russian experts (13 times).

The highest number of references received **M30**. "The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia". The occasions for the search of "the external enemy" in June 2016 were provided, in particular, by the NATO military drill on the territory of Poland, as well as the conditional disqualification of the Russian national football team at the Euro 2016.

In the issue of "Politics" talk show devoted to Brexit (*June 29, 2016*), several messages were aired: **M3**. "EU [...] is coming to an end"; **M1**. "EU policy is completely dependent on the United States"; **M6**. "Migrant crisis in Europe is a consequence of the Western actions and policies"; **M7**. "Modern Western values are decadent, and only Russia preserved healthy civilizational orientations"; **M18**. "Europe does not need Ukraine"; **M19**. "The future wellbeing of Ukraine and other EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova) is possible only in an alliance with Russia (under the EAEU)", **M30**. "The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia". This circumstance by itself tells a lot about the intensity of the influence of such programmes on the public opinion.

Of the three studied Russian TV channels, the highest number of references to the messages was recorded on **NTV**- 825; they were voiced in 205 pieces.

The overwhelming majority of these references (787) was supported by their authors. The messages were in most cases voiced by Russian journalists (529 against 10 foreign media

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representatives). The next group was experts, moreover, Ukrainian experts became authors of messages more frequently than the Russian ones (41 Ukrainian, 28 Russian and 3 experts from other countries).

In particular, the Ukrainian experts made numerous statements in the talk show “Majority” on June 10, 2016. The anchor of the show Sergey Minaev in the beginning of the programme announced its topic: “Today in this studio we shall discuss what awaits our neighbor [*Ed. Note: i.e., Ukraine*]? Another Maidan or long attempts to return to normal life”. The questions in the programme were put in such a way that Ukrainian participants, while representing the realities of their country, spoke mostly about its disadvantages.

Here are several examples from statements by Ukrainian experts voiced in that programme: “357 million hryvnia were stolen and by today no wall has been built”; “The quality of life in Ukraine is falling catastrophically”; “The new authorities are taking part in some criminal tournament: who will suggest more measures for robbing the Ukrainians under the disguise of reform”; “If we exclude from the Maidan demands everything that turned out to be a lie - non-visa regime, European salaries and pensions, new jobs, Ukraine’s membership in the EU, then we will see that for two years the Ukrainians are fighting and jumping exclusively for the devaluation of hryvnia and rising the communal tariffs”.

Overall, the most frequently repeated message on **NTV** was **M41**. “Russia stands up from its knees’. Russia is progressing despite sanctions, machinations of the West”. It was voiced 90 times (in 88 cases supported and in 2 cases rejected by the authors). There were 70 references to **M30**. “The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence in Eurasia to weaken Russia. European Union and the US are in a conspiracy against Russia”, 68 to **M33**. “The West should respect Russia's status as “equal” partner, accepting its ‘spheres of influence”” and 65 to **M7**. “Modern Western values are decadent, and only Russia preserved healthy civilizational orientations”.

The themes of “external enemy” and “crisis abroad” dominated also on **NTV**. Here are several quotes: “Geopolitical situation and most importantly the image of Russia are such that today Russia is an irritant for the West. That is why any form of pressure is acceptable [*Ed. Note: for the West*], including in football” (“*Segodnya*” news programme, June 19, 2016); “If NATO soldiers are so afraid of a real brown bear, it is understandable how much they fear the mythical Russian bear” (talk show “*Central Television*”, June 11, 2016); “Londoners on the underground trains play Angry Birds more often than read literature. The English are not familiar with the Russian classics and do not recognize a quote from Turgenev, thinking it is a promotion for vodka, or propaganda for Brexit. Besides, they do not recognize the logo of the Penguin Books editors” (news programme “*Segodnya*”, June 7, 2016).

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. General

- More than ever propaganda is becoming one of the most important components of foreign policy, it is gaining the ability to reach mass foreign audiences without obstacles, including through the national media of target countries.
- Disinformation is not always the main tool of propaganda. The latter also includes persistent and massive dissemination of certain disputable narratives, disguised as “opinions”, which suppress any alternative evaluation or judgment. As a consequence, a large part of the audience is exposed to a certain kind of “hypnosis”, losing the ability to perceive a different point of view, as well as the ability to assess critically the information they receive.
- Current research, which focuses on themes that are open to various interpretations, shows that persistent and massive advancement of the same disputable narratives has influenced the media of several countries at once, in particular Russia and Eastern Partnership countries. At the same time the hypothesis, according to which many “traveling” messages originated in Russian media, is confirmed. Given the intensification of official Russian information policy, addressed to foreign audience, it can be regarded as the result of purposeful activity.
- Among the main targets of propaganda “messages” were the European Union (and the West as a whole), as well as the process of rapprochement of the Eastern Partnership countries with the EU. These targets proved to be quite vulnerable in post-Soviet countries, because their media provide little information about the EU and especially about each other. The only exception is Ukraine, but to a large extent the reason why events in this country are widely covered is because Ukraine is in the center of attention of the Russian media. Accordingly, this coverage is under a certain influence of the Russian media.
- The strengthening of the role of Russian propaganda within the common information space, in addition to solving immediate geopolitical objectives, contains serious challenges. Most of all, it deepens the gap of understanding between these countries, including Russia, as well as within the societies in each of them. For these countries such state of affairs is fraught with threats of external and internal instability.

2. Eastern Partnership Countries Public Service Broadcasting

- The existence of independent, vibrant and competitive media landscape is essential for providing a variety of news and views in different languages, coming from different countries but with a priority given to high quality programmes produced in national languages. The national media enjoying high level of trust and popularity in the EaP countries would serve as a good tool against the external propaganda. In this respect, the existence of truly professional public service broadcasters that would develop impartial editorial practices is one of the key issues.
- It is therefore important for the authorities in the EaP countries to strengthen mandate by public service broadcasters so that it reflects public interest and it is

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based on independence, editorial freedom and non-interference by authorities or political parties. The reporting by these broadcasters should be balanced and factual, including when covering activities of the authorities, in line with international good practice.

- All media, but predominantly the public broadcasters need to pay more attention to the accurate and wide coverage of the developments in other Eastern Partnership countries. It is in the objective interests of each EaP partner to gain as much as possible from this EU initiative. And misunderstanding, wrong perceptions among them could not provide for better efficiency of EaP, to formation of “common identity” which was always an important catalyzing factor for regional integration processes.

3. Foreign and International Media Actors

- Given the overall lack of high-quality reporting in the EaP countries, consideration should be given to supporting activities aimed at raising professional standards, including adherence to internationally recognized ethical codes and standards for balanced and objective reporting and news presentation. This should include support to already existing media outlets (both local and foreign) that provide alternative information to the one presented by main Russian channels widely spread in the Eastern Partnership region.
- Existing international and local media outlets transmitting via cable, satellite or Internet should receive more support to provide high-quality reporting in languages more accessible to viewers and listeners in the EaP countries.
- Consideration should be given to promoting a direct exchange of a high-quality content between the media in the EaP countries.
- Consideration could be given to strengthening protection of national airways against hate speech and state propaganda that breaches the law. At the same time, if applied, restrictions to the freedom of expression should not be disproportional in scope, arbitrary and politically motivated to limit the expression of alternative positions.
- Media regulators should monitor broadcasters' compliance with legislation and contractual license conditions and in case of their non-compliance they should apply appropriate sanctions. The latter should be clearly defined and should be commensurate with the gravity of the violation committed. The establishment of systematic media monitoring based on credible methodology would assist the regulators in identification of legal violations (including hate speech and propaganda) and in taking prompt and adequate corrective action.
- The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) should play a more active role in monitoring compliance by its members with the EBU's statutes, particularly promoting and developing the concept of public service media and their values such as universality, independence, excellence, diversity, accountability and innovation, as referred to in the EBU Declaration on the Core Values of the Public Service Media.

4. Professionalism and Media Literacy

- Consideration could be given to further enhancing the existing platforms and creating new ones for discussion, trainings, studies and self-reflection on the media, including in the regions, to enhance the current level of journalistic profession and to help identifying unhealthy aspects of journalism, such as propaganda. This would help journalists, managers and students to increase their professional capacity and would also improve the current level of media literacy.
- Access to various educational resources, such as books, databases, methodology, research magazines, as well as a chance to exchange experience through international media networks and journalistic associations would also help in achieving these efforts.
- The enduring monopolization of the media market by state or powerful groups has deprived the audiences in the EaP countries of an effective variety of sources of information, and has thereby weakened the guarantees of pluralism. Such undue concentration of media ownership should be prevented through appropriate measures. Instruments could be applied to improve competition, to motivate the old players to get rid of excessive concentration, and to encourage new players to invest.

5. Interaction with Russia's Media Community

- There is huge resource in Russia itself to ensure constructive approaches and mutual understanding between that country on the one hand and EaP, as well as EU countries, on the other. Respectively, enhancing dialogue and exchange with independent and responsible media professionals from Russia will contribute to alternative content in Russian media, thus decreasing influence of negative stereotypes being spread in post-Soviet information space.
- Promoting distribution in the EaP countries of the content of alternative Russian media, which is not engaged in propaganda, is of great importance to better understand the real political processes that have impact on developments in the region.
- Journalists, editors, producers and media proprietors from both Russian and EaP countries should make joint efforts to ensure that distributed information corresponds with truth and conscience. The facts should be reported without any distortions and in their respective contexts. If a flawed message is published it should be followed by a public apology or the reaction of independent professional community.

The project benefits from the support through the EaP CSF Re-granting Scheme. Within its Re-granting Scheme the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) supports projects of the EaP CSF members with a regional dimension that contribute to achieving the mission and objectives of the Forum.

The donors of the Re-granting Scheme are the European Union, National Endowment for Democracy and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The overall amount for the 2016 call for proposals is 320.000 EUR. Grants are available for CSOs from the Eastern Partnership and EU countries.

Key areas of support are democracy and human rights, economic integration, environment and energy, contacts between people, social and labour policies.