Displacement and Disinformation: How Russia is Instrumentalizing Migration and Disinformation as a Foreign Policy Tool against the European Union.

Table of Contents

Abstract

This thesis investigates Russia's strategic use of coercive migration and disinformation as a foreign policy tools against the European Union. Through a longitudinal content analysis of disinformation articles from the EUvsDisinfo database, the study aims to determine whether a coherent strategy is behind both phenomena. The analysis reveals a significant correlation between instances of coercive migration and disinformation, particularly evident in the Belarusian border crisis. The findings support the hypothesis that these phenomena occur in a timely and contextual relation, indicating a deliberate effort to destabilize and exert pressure on neighboring EU countries. The study also identifies key strategic narratives employed by Russia, including portraying itself as a victim of Western aggression and emphasizing the lack of sovereignty among Western nations. Major Russian media outlets, such as Sputnik and RT, play a crucial role in disseminating disinformation, targeting both domestic and international audiences. Despite limitations, this research provides valuable insights into the strategic use of migration and disinformation by state actors, highlighting the need for robust countermeasures to protect the European Union's integrity and stability. Future research should continue exploring the evolving strategies of state actors in information warfare to ensure that democratic institutions remain vigilant and prepared to counter these sophisticated threats.

1. Introduction

Global migration has become a topic of growing international relevance over the past decades. Not only in Europe but all over the world are countries experiencing a massive influx of migrants seeking shelter from war or political prosecution or simply to pursue a better life for them and their families. With more and more wars globally, an increase in global poverty and an ever-worsening climate crisis, leaving vast stretches of land inhabitable, more and more people take off to look for a better life elsewhere. The climate crisis alone has the potential to produce up to 1 billion refugees by 2050, as predicted by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP, 2020). Even though a majority of the displaced is expected to migrate within their own countries or to the neighboring states, a massive increase in migration movements all over the world can be expected with the potential to further destabilize political regimes, especially in liberal democracies. However, the problem is worsened by actors viciously exploiting the human tragedy for their own gain to force political concessions from their target states by instrumentalizing migration. Even though this is not a new phenomenon, it is only found recently in academic literature.

Another worrying trend leading to further destabilization are the widespread disinformation campaigns employed by various state actors against Western democracies, often pointing to the same culprit. Take for instance the Russian interference in the 2016 US elections, where Russia attempted to alter the outcome by employing a multifaceted strategy comprised of data-driven targeting of US voters to further sow division within the American public by spreading fake news on social media (Kim, 2018), or the more recent case of the Russian information warfare against Ukraine following the invasion in 2022, aimed at corroding the Western support for the struggling nation. However, largely unnoticed by the West, these attempts did not start then but instead were ongoing for more than a decade, as Russia attempted to interfere in Ukraine's elections as early as 2014 by altering the technical results of the election, a plot that was only uncovered 40 minutes before the election results were published on national television (Hanson, et al., 2019). But not only is Russia interfering in far-reaching geopolitical events, even the recent bed bug crisis in Paris was largely exacerbated by Russian disinformation, possibly trying to depict Paris as unsanitary ahead of the 2024 Paris Olympics (Le Monde, 2024), further undermining the

assumption that the West is still largely unaware of the scope of the Russian disinformation campaign.

While both topics separately are increasingly gaining scientific attention, the connection between both remains scarce. Even though a connection is established in theory by various scholars, comprehensive research empirically connecting both is yet to be found, thus constituting a research gap. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether Russia is implementing a coherent strategy in its use of coercive migration and its dissemination of disinformation. To this end, a case study centered on Russia will be conducted, incorporating a longitudinal content analysis of Russian disinformation sourced from the EUvsDisinfo database. Further it will be assessed, whether any prevailing outlets, languages and contents emerge within the sample, as this will provide further insights into how a potential coherent strategy might manifest.

The scientific and societal relevance of this research is multifaceted. First of all, it helps to understand geopolitical power dynamics employed by Russia and thus informs about security challenges faced by the European Union. Moreover, it can inform policy makers in developing more effective strategies to contain, counteract, and improve resilience to Russian influence operations in order to protect European interests. It further helps by potentially uncovering tactics and narratives employed by Russia in its disinformation efforts. Overall, this research can help to promote European security and stability by addressing challenges posed by external actors seeking to undermine the cohesion and integrity of the European Union.

2. Background

a. Russia

The use of coercive migration has a long history in Russia's strategic thinking, dating back to the Soviet Union's concept of active measures, which involved exerting influence on other countries (Wojnowski, 2022). As early as the 1970s, the USSR allowed 5250 former convicts to emigrate to the United States, most of whom settled in Brighton Beach, NY, and later pursued a career in organized crime. A few years later, Soviet intelligence services organized a mass exodus of Cubans to the United States following the same approach, though on a much larger scale, as 124.000 migrants

arrived in Miami by late September 1980, ultimately forcing concessions from the United States (Wojnowski, 2022). Russia is in no way inferior in its attempts of coercive migration, with means ranging from directly causing migration movements through military operations, as seen in Syria in 2015, and the redirection of existing migratory flows, as employed against Finland in 2016 and 2023. In January and February 2016, Russian authorities facilitated the arrival of almost 1000 migrants at the northern border between Russia and Finland, predominantly from Afghanistan and the Middle East. Albeit this number comprised only 2% of all migrants Finland received that year, Finland's defense Minister feared the arrival of up to a million migrants from the territory of Russia during 2016 (Szymański, et al., 2016). The crisis was ultimately halted by a biliteral agreement, forcing Finland to abandon a policy of limiting bilateral contacts with Russia following its invasion of Crimea in 2014 (Szymański, et al., 2016). In July 2023, migration from the Russian territory picked up once again, as apllications gradually rose from less than one per day to more than 1300 between August and December alone, which led to the complete closure of the border in December 2023 (Reuters, 2024). The sudden influx of migrants, most of them originating from the Middle East, was seen as a retaliation for Finland's accession to NATO in April 2023, altering the country's decade-long neutrality following the Russiana full-scale invasion of Ukraine (The Guardian, 2023).

b. Belarus

Similar attempts are evident with Belarus, ever since Alexander Lukashenko threatened the EU with a "flood of migrants" in 2002 and 2004. In July 2021, however, after months of gradually increasing tensions and testing of the border security of the targeted countries, his threats became reality. Belarusian authorities started to bring irregular migrants to the border with Lithuania, Poland, and Latvia, forcing them to enter the EU via what Frontex calls the *Eastern Borders Route*, a route that is historically less frequented than other migration routes into the EU. While Lithuania received an average of 500 asylum application per year prior to July 2021, it reported 4200 migrants until mid-September alone, Poland more than 7000 and Latvia more than 1000, thus constituting a major shock for these countries (Fakhry, et al., 2022)., Preceding the increase in migration, Belarus was said to have organized special flights from several locations in the Middle East, such as Baghdad, Beirut, and Dubai. using its state-owned carrier, Belavia, with the objective to bring migrants to the Belarusian

capital, from where they would be sent to the border with Poland and the Baltic States. Most of these migrants were reported to be from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria (BBC, 2021). Even though Lukashenko did not voice any political demands, it was seen as an attempt to deter EU sanctions following the forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 and the abduction of opposition journalist Roman Protasevich in late May 2021. Further, and perhaps more worrying, he could have prepared for future Russian coercive migration attempts by testing the EU's border defences, a concern that proved to be true considering the latest attempt of coercive migration in 2023 (Fakhry, et al., 2022). Until today the border crisis is not formally resolved, although migration figures have returned to pre-crisis levels (FRONTEX, 2024).

3. Theoretical Framework

While both the weaponization of migration and disinformation campaigns employed against other states are not new tactics, the scientific literature exploring both phenomena remains scarce and especially the connection between both is rarely found in literature. Early scholarly works primarily addressed the root causes of mass migration, with little attention paid to deliberately created movements as a foreign policy. Among the first to establish such a notion are Michael Teitelbaum (1984) and Myron Weiner's (1992) works on historical examples of governments causing mass migrations to gain political advantage.

a. Linking Migration and Disinformation

Building on the work of Weiner and Teitelbaum, Kelly M. Greenhill in her book 'Weapons of Mass Migration' introduces the concept of "strategically engineered migration" as the "creation and exploitation of such crises as means to political and military ends" (Greenhill, 2010, p. 14). She then introduces different variants of strategically engineered migration. In addition to disposessive, exportive, and militarized engineered migration, she establishes the term "coercive engineered migration" (CEM), which refers to "those cross-border population movements that are deliberately created or manipulated in order to induce political, military and/or economic concessions from a target state or states."

Greenhill (2010) further elaborates on various mechanisms coercers employ, such as power-base erosion, creation of unrest, and weakening of the political regime, all aimed at influencing the behavior of a target state leadership by manipulating public opinion and attitudes. In each case, coercive migration works through inflicting punishment on the target state, either by capacity swamping or political agitating, as Greenhill (2010) states. While the first refers to overcoming the physical ability of target states to accept migrant flows and hence is rarely used against developed nations, the latter is commonly employed against such and engages "a form of norms-enhanced, political blackmail" (Greenhill, 2010, p. 124), which exacerbates the heterogeneity of political and social interests within societies, as migration inflows provoke diverse and divisive responses within the societies (cf. Greenhill, 2010, Putnam, 1988).

Noteworthy, as Greenhill (2010a) points out, is that especially liberal democracies are frequently and most successfully targeted with CEM, with the United States and European democracies being the prevailing target of such. This is due to what Greenhill calls "hypocrisy costs", that occur "when there exists a real (or perceived) disparity between a professed commitment to liberal values, […] and demonstrated state actions that contravene such a commitment." (Greenhill, 2010a, p. 132). This, as Greenhill (2010a) notes, is embarrassing for governments which they try to prevent by decreasing the disparity or even concede to the challengers demands to make the disparity disappear altogether. Pressure is further increased by the mobilization of pro- and anti-refugee movements within the targeted country, thus making the "coercers […] effectively engage with the (often unintentional) assistance of the pro-refugee/migrant camp" (Greenhill, 2010a, p. 133).

Another framework, offered by Nathan D. Steger (2017), introduces what he calls "weaponized migration, [which] occurs, when a challenging state or non-state actor exploits human migration […] to achieve political, military, and/or economic objectives." (p. 6). He builds on and extends Greenhill's work not only by including non-state actors in his typology, but also by developing three more variants of strategically engineered migration. Added to the existing framework are strategically engineered migration for economic, fifth column and propaganda/political reasons (Steger, 2017). While the first two refer to strategies outside of this case study's scope, the latter is highly relevant to consider. As claimed by Steger (2017), migration engineered for propaganda / political

reasons "leverages migration to increase political legitimacy, to decrease an adversary's political clout, or to justify future actions." (p.7). Particularly interesting for the case study at hand is the fact that challengers usually "incorporate migration-related propaganda into [its] operations" (p. 7). This strategy, according to Steger (2017), is often applied when a challenger seeks to make a situation look worse than it is. It is important to note, however, that these variants are not exclusive but rather can be employed by the same actor all together (Steger, 2017).

b. Defining Disinformation

Now that a theoretical link between coercive migration and disinformation has been established, it is important to examine the concept of disinformation more closely, especially from a Russian perspective. Ever since the 2016 US presidential election was widely influenced by a Russian disinformation campaign, the topic has gained significant academic attention. Previously, however, there were only a few isolated analyses of disinformation, which did not build on each other and therefore did not form a comprehensive body of literature on the subject (Freelon & Wells, 2020).

The academic focus had previously been on propaganda and misinformation, concepts closely related to disinformation, thus making it necessary to distinguish between these terms. While propaganda refers to the "expression of opinion or action by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence opinions or actions of other individuals or groups with reference to predetermined ends" (Cantril, 1938), misinformation, on the other hand is described as "deceptive messages that potentially cause harm without the disseminator's knowledge" (Freelon & Wells, 2020, p. 145).

To understand what sets disinformation apart from these concepts, it is useful to consider the definition provided by the European Commission's High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation (2018), which note, that disinformation "includes all forms of false, inaccurate or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit." (p. 5), thus combining elements of deception with the potential for, as well as the intent to harm.

Another definition is provided by Freelon & Wells (2020), who state that disinformation "refers to the creation or dissemination of information that is misleading or false with

the intention of manipulating a particular audience." While this definition is less comprehensive, it is important to note that both definitions emphasize the common element of intent, which distinguishes disinformation from propaganda and misinformation, as these may be disseminated without any intent to cause harm.

c. Russia's Approach to Information Warfare

Now that the concept of disinformation is understood, it is worth considering the Russian rationale behind their disinformation tactics. Therefore, policy documents of the Russian government are analyzed and perceptions of government officials are presented. It is important to note, however, that the inclusion of these documents does not imply endorsement or agreement, nor do they reflect the author's views. Rather, they are presented to enable a balanced and objective examination of the current case.

The concept of disinformation has a long history in Russian strategic thinking, with the term "disinformation" being an anglicization of the Russian term "dezinformatsiya," dating back to at least 1955 (Freelon & Wells, 2020).

For Russia, disinformation is part of a wider strategy of information warfare, understood as the

> "confrontation between two or more states in the information space for damaging the information systems, processes and resources, which are of critical importance, and other structures, to undermining the political, economic and social system, and massive brainwashing of the population for destabilizing the society and the state, and also forcing the state to make decisions in the interests of the confronting party." (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 2011).

As Franke (2015) notes, this understanding is frankly broad, as it incorporates "the entire range from cyber tools to influence." (p. 15).

Further insights are provided by the "Strategy for the national security of the Russian Federation up to 2020", cited by Franke (2015), which presents the Russian view of a world, in which "the threats to the industrialized and developing world, their socio-economic development, and their democratic institutions are growing", information is

elevated to a tool to "pre-empt or reduce the threat of destructive actions from an attacking state." (p. 11).

Russia acknowledges, that other countries are ahead in their information warfare capabilities, which Russia perceives as a threat and tries to counteract by "developing a common humanitarian and information and telecommunications environment in the Commonwealth of Independent States and its neighbouring regions", and "a system of spiritual and patriotic education of Russian citizens." (Franke, 2015, p. 12).

An important distinction to information warfare employed by other states, however, is that Russia perceives its operations as a "continuous activity, regardless of the state of relations with any government" (Waltzman, 2017, p.4), which indicates that Russia perceives information warfare "as an endless state […] that is non-reliant on any *casus belli*, but instead is a pillar of a long-term power strategy." (Bechis, 2021, p. 119) The West, on the other hand, views information warfare merely as an activity undertaken when faced with hostilities, thus indicating a fundamental difference in the perception of information warfare between Russia and the Western States (Bechis, 2021).

Another, no less worrying perspective is provided by the former Russian Chief of the General Staff, Valerij Gerasimov in an oft-cited article on the future of hybrid warfare, in which he points out that it will see a combination of kinetic and non-kinetic forces in close coordination (Gerasimov, 2016). While the former refers to "the motion of materialistic bodies and the forces and energy associated therewith", the latter aims to "influence a target audience through electronic or print media, computer network operations, [and] electronic warfare […]" (Richter, 2009, p. 104). As Gerasimov further points out, future warfare will be undeclared, taking place both in the physical as well as the information space, increasingly blurring the lines between military and civil domains. Information technology is seen as a force multiplier, compensating for deficiencies in the physical arena (Splidsboel Hansen, 2017). The article was often refered to as the "Gerasimov Doctrine", which Splidsboel Hansen (2017) points out, is misleading, since it is not an official doctrine but rather depicts "the world which […] Russia is confronting and has to prepare for." (p. 9). As he further asserts, "their [Russias] point of departure is, almost without exception, that Russia is the victim of hybrid warfare waged against it by the West" (p. 10), designed intentionally to weaken

Russia through economic, cultral or environmental policyies. The Russian repsonse is controlled chaos, unleashed by Russia with the aim "to cause and feed instability, to weaken the social fabric within a society and to complicate and undermine decision-making." (Splidsboel Hansen, 2017, p. 10)

It thus becomes clear that Russia's disinformation campaign is based on three core assumptions: It is part of an information war, fought by employing tools ranging from offensive cyberattacks to subtle disinformation campaigns. It is continously being employed against sovereign states, without the need to declare war and in disregard of the current state of affairs. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Russia assumes that it is already at war with the West, albeit below the threshold of military confrontation, with the goal of driving society apart and disrupting political decisions. As Freelon & Wells (2020) note, "Disinformation messages […] are munitions in campaigns of information warfare, non-lethal weapons intended to subdue adversaries rather than reason with them." (p. 146)

d. Means of Dissemination

Once this is understood it is necessary to look at the very nature of these disinformation campaigns, specifically its contents and dissemination mechanisms. As Guisti & Piras (2021) points out, Russian disinformation is not a response to isolated events but rather part of a continuous flow of information, brought forward through both official and unofficial channels. These channels include a combination of media actors, mainly RT, formerly Russia Today, Sputnik and Russia's Internet Research Agency (IRA), Russian intelligence services, such as GRU, FSB, and SVR, as well as troll factories and hackers, (Robbins, 2020), thus supporting the full spectrum of information warfare mentioned above. Major relevance in disseminating Russian disinformation is attributed to the state-controlled media outlets RT and Sputnik, since these publish in various languages and reach a broad, international audience. While the former broadcasts news in 6 languages, among which are English, Arabic, Spanish and Russian, the latter does so in 34 languages, notably excluding Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish. Even though broadcasting in these languages began in 2015, "the services were discontinued in 2016, presumably as the costs exceeded the benefits, that is, the effect on the target populations was unsatisfactory." (Splidsboel Hansen, 2017, p. 23) In accordance with the various dissemination languages,

disinformation targets various audiences, as identified by the Microsoft Threat Analysis Center (2022): (1) the domestic Russian audience, (2) audiences within the targeted country, (3) the Russian diaspora in former Soviet republics, and (4) audiences in Western Europe and the United States.

e. Classification of Disinformation

To better understand how these narratives are brought forward, a classification of disinformation is required. Therefore, a comprehensive framework, offered by Wardle (2017), is employed, which identifies seven types of misinformation and disinformation: (1) satire or parody, which has the potential to fool without the intention to cause harm, (2) misleading content, used to frame an issue or individual, (3) imposter content, which impersonates genuine sources, (4) fabricated content, which is completely made up and intended to cause harm, (5) false connection, when headlines do not support the content, (6) false context, when facts are combined with false contextual information, and (7) manipulated content, altering genuine information or imagery.

In an attempt to simplify Wardle's framework, Splidsboel Hansen (2017) notes that disinformation in the Russian media landscape is a result of the absence of critical, independent journalism. This, as he points out, can be seen in three distinct ways:

First and foremost, stories are produced which are "known to be untrue or even deliberately fabricated" (p. 21), thus referring to the dimension of fabricated content of Wardle's framework.

Secondly, it can be recognized "through omitted facts or untold stories which, if viewed by the standard of traditional editorial guidelines, would definitely have been considered newsworthy". (p. 21). Facts and stories of a reality that does not exist in Putin's Russia, such as the lack of reporting on the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014 (Splidsboel Hansen, 2017).

Lastly, Splidsboel Hansen refers to one-sided reporting, which is so biased as to disqualify it by the standards of independent journalism. This does not necessarily involve spreading untruths, "but it is done less to inform than to leave the news consumer with a certain set of emotions and, ultimately, with certain political preferences." (p. 21). Again, a reference can be drawn to Wardle's framework, implying the use of both misleading content and false context.

f. Strategic Narratives

To understand the content of Russia's disinformation campaign, it has to be analyzed against the background of the Russian government's strategic narratives, as proposed by a 2015 report of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (Lange-Ionatamišvili, 2015). These narratives serve to endow "factual claims with meaning and emotional significance by embedding them within a larger coherent […] structure." (Levinger, 2018, pp. 125-126) Strategic narratives are utilized by political actors to articulate their position on specific issues and shape perceptions and actions of both national and international audiences. However, the utilization of strategic narratives is not exclusive to Russian disinformation, as they are employed by all major actors in the international system (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, & Roselle, 2013).

As Khaldarova & Pantti (2016) work out, Russia utilizes these narratives in their disinformation campaigns with the "purpose of supporting already constructed identity claims, rather than reporting on events." (p. 5) Although such narratives depend on the content and context of disinformation, a set of overarching meta-narratives are found repeatedly in literature regarding the topic.

In accordance with the Russian belief that the west is waging a hybrid war against Russia, a common narrative found in Russian disinformation is that Russia is a victim of the West, both locked in a centuries-old conflict (Snigyr, 2024).

Another Russian narrative claims that sovereignty within the West is concentrated in the United States, with the liberal world order being solely beneficial to the USA. European Nations allegedly lack sovereignty, as their political alignment with the USA prevents them from pursuing strategic goals on their own (Snigyr, 2024).

Furthermore, in its pursuit of global dominance, the West is alleged to curtail the progress of other countries, especially those under authoritarian rule. These state's decision autonomy is denied, while democracy is imposed using means of sanctions, coups and revolutions (Snigyr, 2024).

The conflict between Russia and the West is further characterized as a conflict of values, having an irreconcilable and existential nature, with Western liberal values allegedly standing against traditional (illiberal) values (Snigyr, 2024).

Lastly, "Russia as the leader of a non-liberal world" portrays the challenge posed by the West and its dominance as a mission for Russia — to protect its interests and establish a fair world order (Snigyr, 2024).

g. Hypotheses

Following these theoretical considerations, a set of hypotheses was developed to guide the research. To assess whether Russia is employing a coherent strategy in its utilization of coercive migration and disinformation, H_0 seeks to investigate the main assumption of this study, whereas H_1 – H_4 seek to further elaborate the potential interconnection of both phenomena by analyzing the content and dissemination mechanisms of Russian disinformation. To assume a coherent strategy, the following assumptions must be taken into consideration:

H_0: A correlation between coercive migration and disinformation is anticipated under the assumption, that both occur in a timely and contextual relation, as proposed by Greenhill and Steger.

H_1: Consistent with Greenhill's notion of "hypocrisy costs", the disinformation is expected to emphasize the disparity between the commitment to liberal values and the treatment of migrants by the targeted states.

H_2: In line with Steger's prediction, the disinformation is further expected to exaggerate the perceived threat of migration movements by inflating the numbers and playing on the fear of the receiving population.

H_3: According to Robbins, Splidsboel Hansen and the Microsoft Threat Analysis Centre, the disinformation is expected to be disseminated predominantly by Sputnik and Russia Today in various languages and regions, targeting both domestic and international audiences.

H₄: Claims about the events are further expected to be supported by a set of overarching narratives, including but not limited to the narratives pointed out by Sniygr.

4. Methodology

a. Research Design

To verify hypotheses H_0 through H_4, this study utilizes a longitudinal content analysis embedded within a single case study on Russia. The analysis focuses on examining disinformation targeting Finland, Poland, and the Baltic States from 2015 to the present day. According to Ridder (2020), "case studies scientifically investigate into a real-life phenomenon" (p. 84) and are most suitable when the studied behavior cannot be manipulated as well as examine a contemporary set of events (Yin, 2018). Since Russia's use of fake news is a variable outside of any researchers control and the events range from 2015 until today, a case study seems to be the most appropriate method to answer the research question. Moreover, as this study attempts to follow trends in Russian disinformation over the course of 9 years, a longitudinal approach will be utilized, as it allows the researcher to study the same case with multiple observations. This enables the researcher to "cover trends over an elongated period of time, following a developmental course of interest." (Yin, 2018, p. 5)

b. Case Selection

Russia was chosen as the subject of this case study due to its well documented engagement in information warfare tactics as well as its ongoing efforts to utilize migration against the European Union. By focusing on Russia, this study aims to examine the strategy employed by state actors to exploit migration-related vulnerabilities and influence public discourse, thereby contributing to a better understanding of the complexities surrounding contemporary migration challenges. The research period is ranging from 2015 until March 2024, both for empirical reasons as well as for the availability of data. Since the onset of the so-called migration crisis in 2015, the issue of migration has become highly polarized within the European Union, which led Russia to strategically use migration as a tool to exert pressure on the EU in multiple instances. Additionally, the EUvsDisinfo database, which serves as the primary data source for this study, began collecting data on Russian information

warfare activities only in the last quarter of 2015. The period of this study is thus situated at a cross-section of data availability and empirical relevance.

To justify the inclusion of Belarus within the scope of this case study, a taxonomy developed by Fakhry, et al. (2022) is applied, as it differentiates between different type of actors engaged in coercive migration, most importantly the *strong state* and the *proxy state.* The strong state "seeks to gain immediate or gradual relative advantage or a change in international order by degrading the [country's] capacity to act, sometimes by directing migration through a proxy." (p. 13). It further incorporates migration into longer-running influence operations and is regularly involved in military campaigns that cause the surge of migrants. A typical strong state within this taxonomy is Russia (Fakhry, et al., 2022). In proximity to the strong state exists the *proxy state,* which usually is located near the EU but have stronger ties with non-EU powers, such as Russia. Since their legitimate means of relation-building to the EU are hindered by the patron state, they use migration to either gain attention of the EU or fight back if they feel that the EU is punishing them on behalf of the patron state, however, without voicing any political demands. Usually, the proxy state experienced a crisis that made it dependent on the strong state, hence a *proxy*. According to Fakhry, et al. (2022), a typical proxy state is Belarus. Situated between Russia and the EU, the country experienced country-wide protests following the re-election of Alexander Lukashenko in 2020, who could only stay in power due to the assistance of Russia, critically limiting his freedom of maneuver in the aftermath. Accordingly, Lukashenko did not voice any political demands, nor did he try to pursue a deal with the EU to stop the migration movements (Fakhry, et al., 2022). Belarus can therefore be viewed as a proxy for Russia. Excluding Belarus from this study would thus inadequately address Russia's role in the migration crisis at the Belarusian border.

c. Data Collection

Consecutively, a longitudinal content analysis of Russian disinformation was employed, using data collected through the EUvsDisinfo database. It was initiated in 2015 by the European Union following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and a subsequent increase in disinformation. The database continuously gathers disinformation from sources associated with the Kremlin's disinformation network and publishes a rebuttal alongside a summary of the original content. At present, the

database includes 16.859 cases of Russian disinformation and thus represents the most comprehensive collection of Russian disinformation to date. Given that this case study seeks to investigate the correlation of coercive migration and disinformation regarding Finland, Poland, and the Baltic States, a purposive sample was drawn from the database. Such is often applied in case study research and aims to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon in question rather than to provide statistical generalization (Ridder, 2020). Therefore, the database entries were pre-filtered using the name of each country and the tag 'migration' (e.g. Finland; migration, Poland; migration). Doing so presented the researcher with a sample of 258 cases, of which 94 relate to Poland, 8 to Finland, 60 to Latvia, and 108 to Lithuania. The sample size was further reduced during the analysis to exclude cases that are not relevant to this study. This is to create a sample that is sufficiently clear to limit practical and research complexities while ensuring sufficient variability and providing significant results.

d. Data Analysis

To analyze the sample, a longitudinal content analysis was conducted using atlas.ti, following an abductive coding approach. Abductive coding enables to "[move] between empirical data and theoretical concepts to let one illuminate and contribute to the other", with the purpose of identifying "new facets and nuances with regard to meaning and structure in the various ways of experiencing the phenomenon." (Limberg, 2008, p. 613). The abductive approach differs from a purely inductive approach in that the observed phenomenon doesn't inherently provide an explanation (induction) and isn't merely a new instance of a pre-existing general rule (deduction). Instead, it combines elements of both methods. Empirical observations are considered anomalous, novel, or surprising only in relation to what is already theoretically established or anticipated by existing theories, which thus serve as a benchmark for identifying unexpected empirical observations. The process of abductive coding is thus twofold, comprised of an initial theory-based coding approach followed by inductively generating codes derived from the empirical findings (Vila-Henninger, et al., 2024). As this research combines elements of both theory testing and generation to examine whether a coherent strategy exists behind coercive migration and disinformation – not only by establishing a timely correlation but also by integrating different theoretical approaches with empirical findings – an abductive coding approach is most suitable.

Subsequently, a set of categories was developed from theory to assess a possible correlation between coercive migration and disinformation. As both are anticipated to occur in a timely relation, the targeted country and date of publication of each article was coded. The date was simplified in month/year, while context clues were considered to identify the country targeted by the article. To account for the above-mentioned publication languages and dissemination channels of Russian disinformation, the outlet, language, and country/region, in which the article was discussed in, was coded as such. Furthermore, 2 distinct codes were applied to classify the degree of disinformation: FALSE STATEMENT and DISTORTION OF TRUTH. Whereas the former is an outright untruth, factually incorrect or fabricated, the latter involves intentionally altering, misrepresenting, or manipulating facts to change its meaning or context. This classification accounts for the various dimensions of disinformation proposed by Wardle (2017), while reducing scattering and increasing significance, as proposed by Splidsboel Hansen (2017).

During the coding process, a third category of disinformation was established deductively; claims about events that are hardly refutable but do not provide any proof whatsoever, coded as UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM. Moreover, various articles did not indicate which country was targeted, but all referred to the border crisis with Belarus, coded as COUNTRY TARGETED: GENERIC. Further, 16 codes were developed deductively to capture prevailing content and narratives that emerged while coding, found in the comprehensive coding scheme provided in the appendix.

Finally, the findings were discussed against the background of the provided theory and juxtaposed with episodes of coercive migration to verify whether a coherent strategy can be assumed. The results are then presented using descriptive statistics.

e. Limitations

However, as with any research, it is crucial to consider possible limitations of the chosen research design to ensure transparency, validity, and reliability of the research. Several shortcomings might occur due to time and resource constrains, given that only one researcher was responsible for this study.

If a second researcher was tasked with this study, the intercoder-reliability perhaps would have been more significant, thus increasing the validity of the results. Furthermore, as a purposive sample was collected, a sampling bias might occur, leading to the exclusion of certain cases from the sample, again possibly impacting the validity, as well as the generalizability of the results. Further, the limited availability of data on Russian disinformation complicates data triangulation, lowering the reliability of the findings. Even though various alternative databases on Russian disinformation exist, such as stopfake.org or the database of the International Fact Checking Network, none of them provides such an accessible and comprehensive database as EUvsDisinfo. Further, its keyword search function, required to pre-filter the sample, is yet to be found. Although several studies employ a discourse analysis of Russian disinformation, disseminated via news outlets and social media channels, it is mostly done by monitoring the activities of certain personas over multiple publishing websites, as performed by the threat research group Insikt (2020). Such extensive research, however, was not feasible within the given time frame and considering the resources available. Moreover, limitations in terms of data accuracy and reliability of the EUvsDisinfo database might occur, as the criteria used to identify disinformation sources and cases remains rather vague. However, since the database is a flagship project of the European Union, a high degree of reliability can be assumed. Lastly, a generalizability of the results is perhaps not possible due to the limited sample size, suggesting that the results may provide valuable insights into the present case, but are potentially inapplicable to other cases.

It can thus be said that various limitations need to be considered when interpreting the findings, as they may impact the overall validity, reliability, and generalizability of the results, requiring caution in applicating the findings to broader contexts.

5. Analysis

a. Findings

To assess whether Russia is indeed employing a coherent strategy in its use of coercive migration and disinformation, the analysis begins with an examination of code frequency, with each code supported by a pertinent quote, followed by a structured discussion addressing hypotheses H_0 to H_4.

aa. Country Targeted

Before focusing on the frequency of codes, it should be noted that the keyword search of the EUvsDisinfo database initially resulted in 8 articles on Finland, 94 on Poland, 60 on Latvia and 108 on Lithuania, comprising an initial sample of 270 articles. However, as emerged during the analysis, numerous articles were found to be irrelevant for this study, as some did not show any relation to migration whatsoever, while others targeted countries outside of this study's scope, thus justifying their exclusion from the sample. The sample was ultimately reduced to 100 articles, of which 47 targeted Poland, 14 Lithuania, 10 Finland. No article specifically targeted Latvia, while 2 articles targeted the Baltic States in general, which were merged with those targeting Lithuania to increase significance, leading to 16 articles on Lithuania & the Baltic States. Lastly, 31 articles were coded as GENERIC. However, 4 articles targeted both Poland and Lithuania, constituting to 104 identified targets, whereas the sample only holds 100 articles.
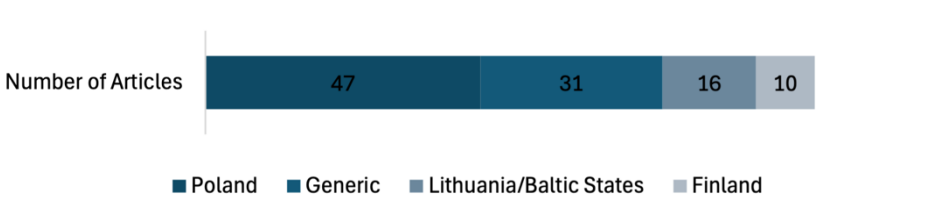
Figure 1: Countries targeted.

bb. Date of Publication

Looking at the articles targeting Finland, two approximate periods emerged in which disinformation was disseminated. The first article targeting Finland was published in

November 2015, followed by another one in January 2016. 1 article was further published February 2018, and 7 in November 2023.

A similar trend is visible among the articles targeting Poland, Lithuania, the Baltic States and GENERIC, as all but 2 articles were published between July 2021 and March 2022., 46, and thus the majority of articles, were published in November 2021, with Poland being most frequently targeted among those. Only 2 articles were published outside of this period, 1 in October 2015 targeting GENERIC, and 1 in November 2023 targeting Poland.

cc. Article Language

The sample contains a total of 12 different languages, with Russian being most prominent as it was featured in 37 articles. 33 articles were published in Polish, 10 in Lithuanian, 5 in Arabic, 4 each in German, Hungarian, and Spanish, 3 in Georgian, 2 in French, and 1 each in Bulgarian, Italian, and Swedish. 2 articles in the sample did not mention the language they were published in.

Furthermore, of the 47 articles targeting Poland, 26 are published in Polish, 12 in Russian, 4 in Lithuanian, 3 in Arabic, 2 in French and 1 each in German and Georgian. Of the 10 articles targeting Finland, 0 are written in Finish, but 4 are in Russian and 1 each in French, Georgian, Swedish and German. Of the 16 articles targeting Lithuania and/or the Baltic States, 8 are written in Lithuanian, 10 in Russian, 2 in Polish, and 1 each in Arabic and Spanish. Of the 31 articles coded as GENERIC, 12 are in Russian, 5 in Polish, 4 in Hungarian, 3 in Spanish, 2 each in Arabic and German and 1 each in Bulgarian, Georgian, and Italian.
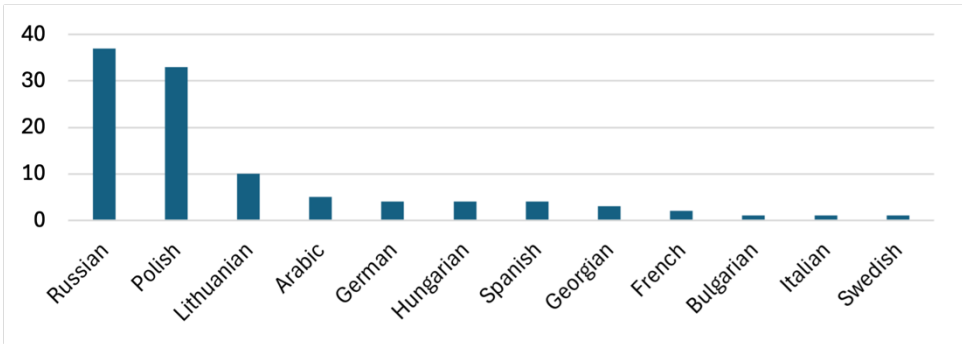
Figure 2: Article Language.

dd. Publishing Outlet

A broad range of dissemination channels is evident within the sample, as 56 different outlets were coded. However, only 3 outlets published more than 3 articles, thus constituting a relevant culmination. Most prominently featured are various Sputnik channels, including the respective regional outlets such as sputnik.lt and pl.sputniknews.com, as well as the news agency's radio station and Twitter channel, accounting for 64 articles. 11 articles were published through RT, and 7 through the domestic news outlet RIA.
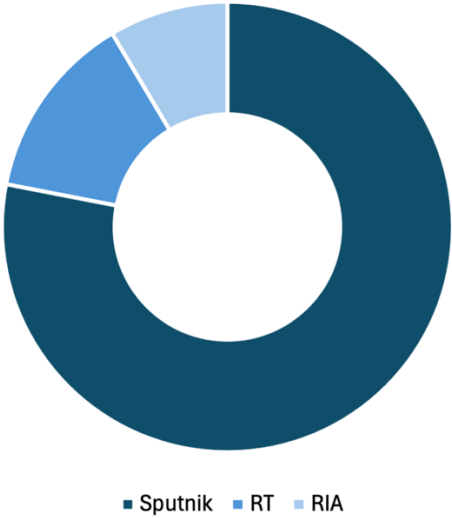
Figure 3: Dominant publishing outlets.

ee. Countries/Regions Discussed

Furthermore, the articles of the sample were discussed in, respectively reached, a total of 14 countries and regions. Prevailing in the sample were the 87 articles discussed in Belarus, 59 in Poland, 56 in the EU, 33 in the Baltic States, 29 in Russia, 18 in the Middle East, and 15 in the United States, thus displaying a widespread dissemination of Russian disinformation, as illustrated in the figure below.
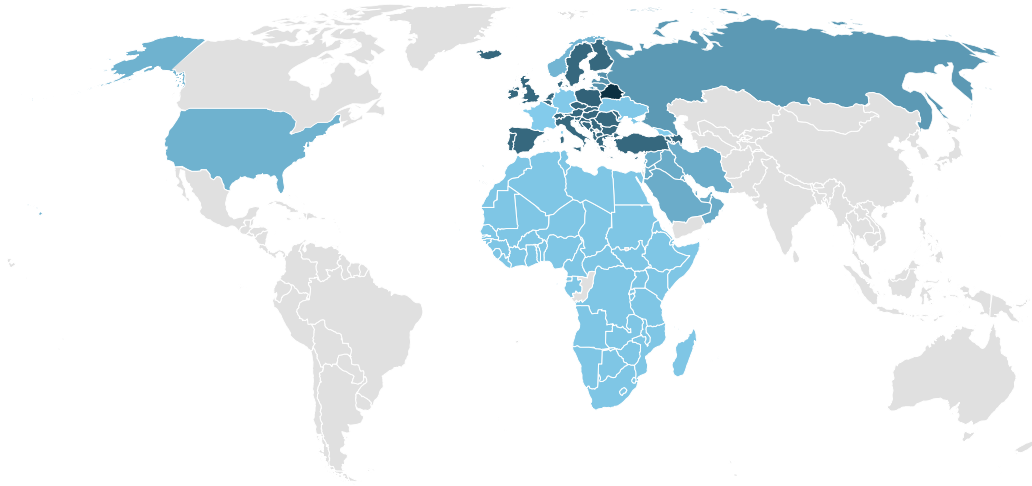
Figure 4: Global dissemination of disinformation in the sample.

ff. Prevailing Contents

As for the prevailing contents it is evident, that a set of reoccurring themes appear in the sample, as visualized at the end of this paragraph. The sample contains 61 articles that shift the blame for the migration crisis away from Russia and/or Belarus. Of these, 12 do not provide any further details about who might be responsible for the migration crisis, such as in:

> "The flow of illegal immigrants to Europe is increasing from all directions, which has been happening for a long time, and Belarus in this regard is no exception. Of course, there is no intentional action by Minsk here; illegal immigration routes have been around for years." (DISINFO: Minsk is not intentionally sending migrants to the EU, 2021)

In 9 articles, the country targeted by coercive migration is held responsible for the crisis, either by artificially inflating it, or for the movement of migrants themselves, such as in:

> "The border crisis [with Belarus] was manually created by the ruling team of Kaczyński, Duda and Morawiecki. The first goal of this crisis is the consolidation of the PiS electorate in a situation of the falling party ratings and recent protests.

The second goal in the inspiration of the border crisis is to underline the importance of Poland as a Western and American outpost in Eastern Europe." (DISINFO: Poland inspired the border crisis with Belarus in order to fight the Nord Stream 2, 2021)

In 11 articles, the country targeted by coercive migration is held indirectly responsible for the migration crisis at their border, either by imposing sanctions on Russia and/or Belarus, by neglecting their border, or by refusing to engage in bilateral cooperation between the respective authorities, such as in:

"Poland could stop in a very simple way the influx of migrants coming from the Belarus side. Poland could implement existing agreements and perhaps signs new ones on cooperation between border services. Poland could also resume normal and neighbourly political dialogue with Minsk." (DISINFO: Polish Defense Minister tries to exert psychological and propaganda influence on the Poles, 2021)

In 17 articles, blame for the migration crisis is shifted towards the European Union by accusing it of causing movements of refugees through military interventions in the middle east (6 cases), by imposing sanctions and other "hostile" acts on Russia and Belarus (6 cases), by migration-friendly policies (2 cases), or by utilizing migrants against Belarus itself (2 cases), such as in:

"What is happening now at the [Belarusian-Polish] border is not the fault of Belarus, but the result of the reckless policy of the European Union, related to the destruction of sovereignty in a number of countries, and the fact that they [the EU] have invited refugees and declared readiness to accommodate them." (DISINFO: What is happening at the Belarusian-Polish border is the fault of the EU not Belarus, 2021)

In 12 articles, the USA, or subsequently NATO, is blamed for causing the migration crisis due to its military interventions in the middle east, which is expressed, such as in:

"It is wrong to accuse Belarus of the migrant crisis on the Eastern border of the EU. The responsibility for it, first of all, should take the US. It is because of the US military interventions and bombings that millions of people were forced to seek asylum abroad." (DISINFO: West should not accuse Belarus of the migrant crisis but start a dialogue with Minsk, 2021).

10 articles do not shift the blame to a specific country or organization but rather blame *the West* for causing the migration crisis through military or other types of interventions (8 cases), or by fabricating it altogether (2 cases), such as in:

"The migration crisis is the fault of the West, it was not Belarus or Russia that caused the problems that lead migrants to go to Europe." (DISINFO: The migration crisis is the fault of the West, 2021)

6 articles, exclusively targeting Finland, shift the blame for the border closure towards Finland (4 cases), or USA/NATO (2 cases), such as in:

"In this global world, closing a border is frowned upon. Except when it comes to Russia, the enemy. This border must be established and be airtight. Finland has joined NATO, relations with Russia are no longer permitted." (DISINFO: Finland organised the migration crisis as a pretext for closing borders after joining NATO, 2021)

Another reoccurring theme is the negligence of migrants at the border, mentioned in 25 articles. Furthermore, 17 articles point towards a misconduct of border guards or authorities in their treatment of migrants, such as in:

"A pregnant refugee has miscarried after a Polish serviceman kicked her in the belly several times on the Belarusian border. Her son said he saw an elderly Polish law enforcer with one star on his epaulettes do it. The woman later started

bleeding and miscarried." (DISINFO: Migrant woman miscarries after being beaten up by Polish law enforcer, 2021)

18 articles mention some form "War of the West", allegedly fought against Russia and Belarus, such as in:

"The United States wants to start a war using Poland, the Baltic states, Ukraine and the migration crisis on the border with Belarus. The US wants to get closer to Moscow, so it will have to cut off the Belarusian "balcony". The migration crisis on the border between Belarus and the European Union is used as a pretext." (DISINFO: The USA wants to use the migration crisis to unleash a war, 2021)

Another 18 articles mention hostile acts against Russia and Belarus, most notably sanctions and an incitement of coups, such as in:

"Poland is also directly involved in the regime change operation developed outside Belarus. The best proof for this claim is the Polish statements denying the legitimacy of Lukashenka's rule and the recognition of Tsikhanouskaya as legitimate power." (DISINFO: Poland is directly involved in the operation aimed at the regime change in Belarus, 2021)

13 articles praise Russia or Belarus for their good and rule-based behavior, their alleged willingness to talk, or their good treatment of migrants, such as in: "For many months, Warsaw has been receiving public signals from the leading Belarusian and Russian politicians about their readiness for dialogue." (DISINFO: Minsk and Moscow are fully open to a civilised dialogue with Warsaw, 2021)
9 articles depict the affected country as a puppet state with a lack of sovereignty, such as in:

"The influx of refugees from the Middle East was an official cause for the closure of the Russia-Finland border crossings, but in reality, Finland was seeking a pretext. The closure of crossings is a violation of rules. The Finnish government is acting under Washington's orders." (DISINFO: Finland's sealing of Russia border is illegal and ordered by the US, 2023)

7 articles attest hypocrisy to the West, such as in:

> "What we are seeing now is a manifestation of double standards and hypocrisy of Brussels, which gives carte blanche to Lithuania and Poland for practically any measures against migrants, just to complicate the life of Belarus." (DISINFO: EU applies double standards on migration issues to pressure Minsk , 2021)

6 articles attempt to downplay the scope of the migration crisis, such as in:

> "Poland did not declare an emergency state in a situation of floods and the pandemic. However, the state of emergency was declared after the appearance of 32 refugees on the Belarusian-Polish border." (DISINFO: Poland declared a state of emergency after the appearance of 32 refugees on its border, 2021)

Only 1 article mentions some form of misconduct of migrants, such as in:

> "Refugees have come to Finland with the aim to stay and enjoy the privileges and honey in Europe forever. They will resist the expelling attempt by all means, both within the law and outside it." (DISINFO: In Finland, refugees will resist expelling attempts by all means, both within the law and outside it, 2018)
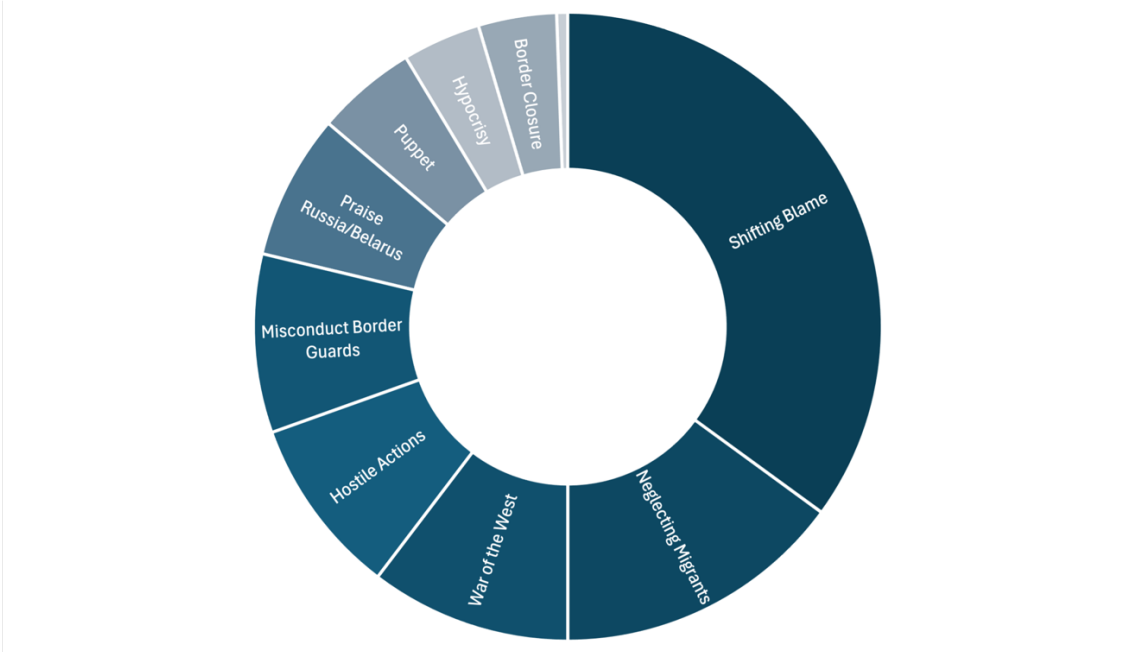
Figure 5: Prevailing contents.

gg. Degree of Disinformation

By applying the classification of disinformation to the sample, it becomes evident that 53 articles of the sample contain factually incorrect or fabricated content. A drastic example is the reoccurring theme of border guards deliberately killing migrants at the border, such as in:

> "During the migration crisis, Poland killed hundreds and even thousands of illegal migrants. Polish border guards are crueller than Medieval barbarians. They are hunting people." (DISINFO: Polish border guards killed thousands of illegal migrants, 2022)

Another 43 articles contain intentionally altered, misrepresented or manipulated information, such as in:

> "Lithuania is pushing illegal migrants to Belarus. Lithuanian officers are using force against refugees and refuse to provide medical assistance to them. Many migrants forced to cross the border of Belarus are injured. One migrant already died on the Lithuania-Belarusian border." (DISINFO: Lithuanian officers injure migrants and push them illegally across the border with Belarus, 2021)

In 4 articles, claims are made about events that are hardly refutable, without providing any proof. This was coded as "Unsubstantiated Claim", such as in:

> "Belarusian border guards detained three groups of illegal migrants, citizens of Iraq, and sent them back from Lithuania to Belarus. Migrants told that in Lithuania the officers of Lithuanian State Border Guard Service pressured them to lie about bribing Belarusian border guards for assistance to cross the border illegally. Lithuanian officers have beaten migrants. After the inquest, they brought migrants to the border with Belarus and forced them to cross it at gunpoint." (DISINFO: Lithuanian Border Guard Service officers beat migrants and forced them to return to Belarus, 2021)

b. Discussion

Now that an overview of prevailing codes was established, a discussion of the results against the afore developed hypotheses is required.

H_0: Following the framework proposed by Greenhill and Steger, a correlation between coercive migration and disinformation is anticipated under the assumption, that both occur in a timely and contextual relation.

To assess whether a correlation between instances of coercive migration, employed by Russia and Belarus, and a corresponding disinformation campaign exists, it is necessary to compare episodes of increased migration movements with the publication dates of the articles in the sample. As pointed out before, Russia employed coercive migration against Finland in two periods between 2015 and 2024. In January and February 2016, Russian authorities facilitated the arrival of almost 1000 migrants to the Finish-Russian border, followed by another attempt between July and December 2023, during which more than 1300 migrants arrived at the Finish border.

The publication dates of the articles targeting Finland occur roughly in the same periods, with 1 article published in November 2015 and February 2016 each and 7 articles published in November 2023, thus at the height of the more recent border crisis. Only one outlier was present in the sample, an article published in February 2018, indicating no relation whatsoever to instances of coercive migration. The article published in November 2015, thus before migration at the Finish-Russian border picked up, presents Russia as "the law abiding neighbour, whereas the EU member states' handling of the refugee flows is a mess." (DISINFO: It is not the border between Norway and Russia that..., 2015). As this indicates a contextual relation to the border crisis, the article likely aims to prepare the ground for the consecutive inflow of migrants through Russia by setting an early narrative.

Overall, the data on Finland points to an only moderate correlation between migration and disinformation, despite the temporal and contextual connection. This perhaps is due to the fact that Russia was still in the testing phase for its future hybrid operations, as neither had frequently been utilized before, therefore initially lacking a coherent strategy. This is further supported by the assessment that disinformation on the Finish population was deemed insufficient, followed by Sputnik's discontinuation of

publications in the Scandinavian languages in 2016. This indicates a general tendency not to target Scandinavian countries with disinformation campaigns for now, which also explains the relatively low number of articles even during the more recent border crisis.

As for Belarus, the data draws a clearer picture, as dates and scope of coercive migration and disinformation strongly coincide. While increased migration from Belarus to Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia was reported between April and December 2021, with the crisis reaching its peak in July, the articles of the sample were published between July 2021 and March 2022. Only two outliers are present in the sample, published in October 2015 and November 2023. While the first seems to be published in the context of the European migration crisis in 2015, the second appears to be unrelated to current migration events. However, since the crisis on the border with Belarus has not been formally resolved to date, a general connection to coercive migration cannot be ruled out.

As 91% of the sample contains disinformation referring to the border crisis with Belarus, the results are more significant and indicate a clear correlation between coercive migration and disinformation. Given that Belarus is expected to serve as a testing ground for future coercive migration attempts by Russia, and considering the scope of the operation, it can be assumed that the border crisis with Belarus provides a far more accurate picture of how Russia is instrumentalizing migration and disinformation as a foreign policy tool against the European Union.

What appears to be striking in this regard is the exclusion of articles targeting Latvia, as well as the comparably low migration figures reported in Latvia. Further research as to why Latvia seems to be an exception is needed to provide a plausible explanation for this.

Apart from that, H_0 can be confirmed, as both cases point towards a correlation between coercive migration and disinformation, which is further stressed by the figures below.
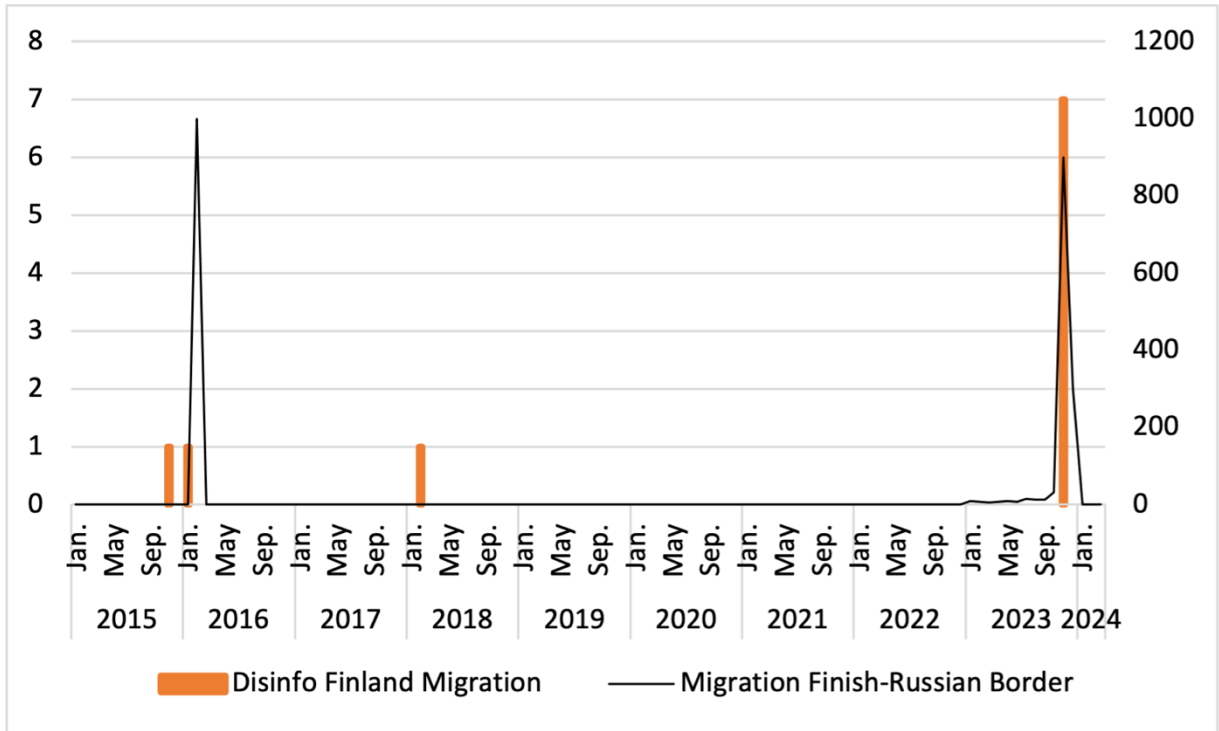
Figure 6: Migration – Disinformation Finland 2015-2024
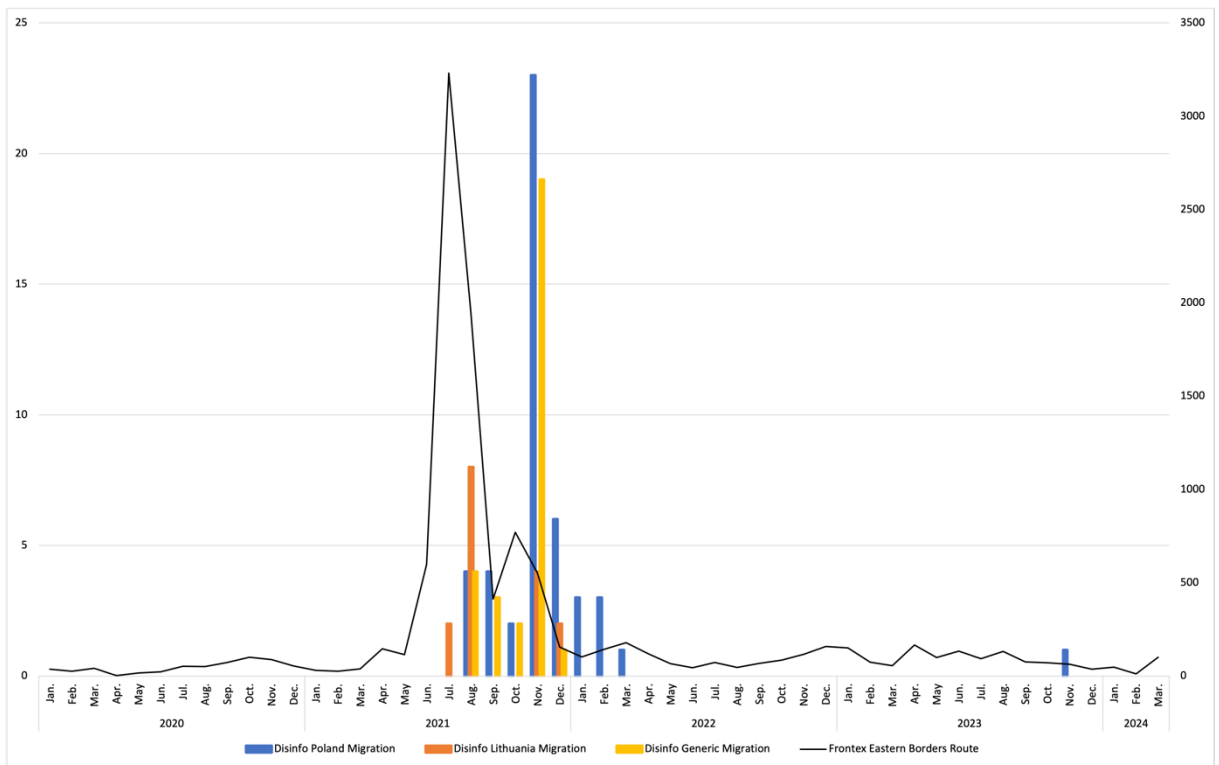
Figure 7: Migration – Disinformation Poland, Lithuania, GENERIC 2020-2024

H$_1$: Consistent with Greenhill's notion of "hypocrisy costs", the disinformation is assumed to highlight the disparity between commitment and actions of the targeted states.

As Greenhill notes, coercive migration is particularly successful with liberal democracies due to the increase in migration-related hypocrisy costs, which occur when a state's commitments to liberal values and its actions diverge. Examining the contents of the sample, it becomes evident that numerous articles aim to amplify this disparity, with claims of negligence toward migrants being among the most prominent, appearing in 25% of the sample. Another reoccurring theme appears to be the accusation of misconduct of the targeted country's border guards, present in 17% of the sample. The claim that the West is acting hypocrite further occurs in 7% of the sample. Even though these codes were not exclusively applied to the sample and therefore might be found overlapping, a clear tendency to increase hypocrisy costs is evident. However, to fully assess the extent to which this is true, it is necessary to consider the languages of the articles in question. Since hypocrisy costs can only be increased among the targeted population, the relationship between content and article language needs to be examined. Interestingly, all three beforementioned codes appear to be found most dominantly in articles published in Russian. While the claim of negligence of migrants appears in 25 articles, of which 13 are in Russian, 4 in Polish, and 7 in Lithuanian, the accusation of misconduct of border guards is mentioned in 17 articles, of which 10 are published in Russian, and 3 each in Polish and Lithuanian. The hypocrisy of the West is further mentioned in 7 articles, of which 6 are in Russian, 0 in Polish and 1 in both Russian and Lithuanian. This, at best, indicates only a limited intention to increase hypocrisy costs within the target states, thus falsifying H$_1$.

H$_2$: In line with Steger's prediction, the disinformation is expected to exaggerate the perceived threat of migration movements by inflating the numbers and playing on the fear of the receiving population.

Another common theme anticipated in the sample is the exaggeration of the perceived threat of migration movements, as suggested by Steger. This approach is especially prevalent when coercive migration is supported by disinformation, aiming to make the target population perceive the situation worse than it is. This further aligns with the views of former Russian Chief of the General Staff Valerij Gerasimov, who regards information warfare as a force multiplier for operations in the physical arena. Notably,

however, the codes in the sample indicating such exaggeration of perceived threats are the least prevalent. While only one article mentions any form of misbehavior by migrants, six articles even attempt to downplay the scope of migration, thus directly contradicting Steger's prediction. Moreover, the articles that aim to downplay the extent of migration movements are predominantly published in Polish, with only one article in Russian, thus strongly contradicting the assumption of an exaggeration of threats among the target population.

H$_3$: According to Robbins, Splidsboel Hansen and the Microsoft Threat Analysis Centre, the disinformation is further expected to be disseminated predominantly by Sputnik and Russia Today in various languages and regions, targeting both domestic and international audiences.

As anticipated, the sample exhibits a diverse range of dissemination channels, with 56 distinct outlets identified. Among these, 76% published only 1 article, while 17% published 2 or 3. Only 3 outlets exhibit a relevant culmination within the sample, with Sputnik emerging as the predominant outlet, publishing 64% of the articles, followed by RT, publishing 11%, and RIA, publishing 7% of the articles. However, it is the case that Sputnik emerged from RIA in 2013, whose services were initially supposed to be discontinued but later continued to publish domestic news under RIA Novosti. Thus, a total of 71% of all published articles are attributed to Sputnik, which can be attributed to its 34 publication languages, enabling a further reach, especially among international audiences. This is further supported by the publication languages per outlet, as Sputnik's publications feature 9 languages, most prominent Polish (28), Russian (15), and Lithuanian (10), whereas RT features just 4, being German, Russian, Spanish, and Arabic. Articles published by RIA Novosti, in line with their domestic orientation, feature Russian exclusively.

Other dissemination channels mentioned by Robbins include the Internet Research Agency and various intelligence agencies. However, as these operate predominantly on social media, their dissemination mechanisms differ from the semi-journalistic publications present in the sample and thus cannot be found within the scope of this research.

Overall, a wide array of publication languages is present in the sample, as 12 distinct languages are featured. By matching those with the predicted target audiences, it becomes evident, that domestic and international audiences are equally targeted with disinformation, as the sample features Russian (37%), Polish (33%) and Lithuanian (10%) as the prevailing publication languages. This distribution roughly corresponds to the countries targeted, as 47% of the sample target Poland, while Lithuania is targeted by 14% of article in the sample.

This claim is further supported by considering the publishing language per country targeted, as the trend seems to continue, with only Poland being targeted with more articles in the country's own language (55%) than in Russian (25%). Of the articles targeting Lithuania and the Baltic States, 62% are written in Russian and 50% in Lithuanian. Furthermore, most articles coded as generic are published in Russian (38%), followed by Polish (16%) and Hungarian (12%).

Not surprising, no article is published in Finish, albeit 10% of the sample is composed of articles targeting Finland, which is due to the discontinuation of publications in the Scandinavian languages in 2016. Of the 10 articles targeting Finland, 40% are written in Russian with no other relevant culmination, thus again aligning with the expected target audience. Moreover, none of the articles are published in Latvian, indicating once again that the country is excluded of the present disinformation campaign, albeit being targeted with coercive migration, although to a lesser extent than its neighbors. Again, further research is required to identify possible causes for this.

As for the countries and regions the articles were discussed in, a clear tendency is evident that a majority of articles reached their designated audience. Most prominently mentioned are Belarus and Russia, followed by countries of the European Union, with Poland and the Baltic States constituting a major share. Interestingly, countries of the Middle East and the United States account for another relevant share, albeit having no relation to the border crisis. However, considering the reoccurring shift of blame to the United States and the Middle Eastern origins of most of the migrants involved, it becomes evident that the dispersion of disinformation is not random but rather carefully orchestrated, even in countries and regions outside of the directly affected countries.

In conclusion the data points towards a clear verification of H$_3$, as Russian disinformation, primarily disseminated by Sputnik and RT, is precisely targeted at both domestic and international audiences, both in its language and its reach.

H$_4$: Attempts of coercive migration are expected to be supported by a set of strategic narratives found in the sample, including but not limited to the narratives pointed out by Sniygr.

Lastly, to assess whether strategic narratives are to be found in the sample, a careful consideration of the coded contents is required. The narrative of Russia as a victim of the West, locked in a centuries-old conflict, is in fact present in the sample, as 18 articles accuse the West of preparing or waging a war against Russia and Belarus, coded as WAR OF THE WEST.

The claim of a lack of sovereignty of Western countries is also found in the sample, as 9 articles accuse the targeted country of being a puppet state, acting under Washington's orders.

Furthermore, 18 articles accuse the West of hostile actions against Russia and Belarus, including the imposing of sanctions and the orchestration of coups and revolutions, thus referring to the narrative that the West is in pursuit of global dominance, curtailing the progress of other nations while imposing punishment on authoritarian regimes.

Interestingly, no article seems to directly point towards a conflict of values between Russia and the West, nor is Russia displayed as the leader of a non-liberal world. However, as strategic narratives serve as an overarching structure to support already made identity claims, they might appear in the form of value-based allusions within the sample. The conflict of values could therefore manifest itself in allegations about the hypocrisy of the West, the neglect of migrants at the border or the misconduct of border officials. Consecutively, the narrative of Russia as the leader of a non-liberal world might materialize in the alleged rule-based conduct of Russia and Belarus. That said, the use of strategic narratives in disinformation appears to be dependent on the context and therefore does not always correspond to the narratives used in another context.

Therefore, only vague assumptions can be made, so that further research seems necessary here.

What further seems striking, is that the most prominent theme of the sample does not occur in relation to any of the expected narratives, but rather formulates a narrative on its own. As pointed out before, a majority of articles attempt to shift the blame for the migration crisis, predominately to the USA or the European Union, or by exculpating Belarus and Russia. Albeit this narrative utilizes pre-existing identity claims of the "evil West" and "noble Russia and Belarus", it appears to be specially tailored to be used exclusively in the context of coercive migration, thus indicating once again a correlation between the utilization of coercive migration and disinformation.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights several relevant insights into Russia's utilization of disinformation and coercive migration. As it was proven, instances of coercive migration and disinformation appeared together in three observed periods, thus confirming the main assumption of this study. However, such claims cannot be made without two remarks. First, and probably most significant, it is necessary to mention the total absence of articles targeting, as well as the relatively low migration figures reported by Latvia. Albeit finding an explanation for this is outside of the study's scope, thus requiring further research, the result of the research partly contradicts itself, until proven otherwise. In this regard, a triangulation of data would have been helpful to gather additional data on Latvia to prove, or respectively disprove the case. Secondly, and perhaps less significant since an explanation was provided outside of this theory's scope, is the limited number of articles targeting Finland, as two out of the three periods examined in this study took place at the Finish border. Evidently, however, Russia used its first ever attempt of coercive migration against Finland in 2016 as a testing ground for its newly developed strategy, and then quickly lost interest, as can be seen by the discontinuation of broadcasting in the Scandinavian languages. The most recent attempt, however, displayed a correlation between migration and disinformation, albeit to a lesser extent than the operations aimed at Poland and the Baltic States in 2021.

Nevertheless, all three periods in question indicate a clear tendency towards a timely and contextual correlation between migration and disinformation, thus confirming the underlying assumption of the main research question, suggesting that Russia is indeed employing a coherent strategy in its use of coercive migration and the dissemination of disinformation. However, to make a final assessment, further elaborations are required.

As the results of this study did not indicate an increase of hypocrisy costs, nor the exaggeration of the perceived threat, H_1 & H_2 were falsified, which is surprising given the detailed terminology and the expected applicability to the case. The assumption that either the framework does not fit the case or that the empirical findings contradict the framework seem obvious, but one needs to recall that both frameworks did not exclusively refer to Russian tactics but rather provided alternate variants of how state actors might utilize migration, thus entailing various actors who might behave entirely different depending on their motives, aims, and the circumstances. Even within the sample a divergence occurs, as Latvia was spared from a disinformation campaign altogether, Finland was only moderately targeted, whereas Poland and Lithuania were targeted with full the force of both coercive migration and disinformation by Russia. Since only Russia knows the true rationale behind its tactics, one can only assume the motives, aims, and circumstances under which the country acts, making its actions hardly predictable. While learning about these rationales requires testing of various hypotheses, some might disprove the expectations, while not contradicting the general applicability of other approaches, thus not indicating any divergence from the main assumption of this research. However, as both frameworks did not offer alternative explanations as to why and when coercive migration and disinformation might appear together, the falsification of H_1 & H_2 might very well indicate a knowledge gap, which this study is only partially able to fill, thus suggesting the need for further research.

What appears to be more relevant in this regard is the expected dissemination of Russian disinformation, as well as the appearance of certain strategic narratives in such, since both are derived from theory directly aimed at capturing Russia's actions, thus tailored to the Russian approach. A first indication of the existence of a coherent strategy is the seemingly orchestrated publication of articles by two major outlets, Sputnik and RT, with RIA Novosti responsible for the domestic dissemination of

disinformation. This is further supported by the precise targeting of the predicted audiences, featuring roughly the same distribution of languages per country targeted and the overall appearance of languages in the sample. Even the exclusion of Finland was correctly predicted by the theoretical framework, again underlining the relevance of H_3 & H_4 over H_1 & H_2. Only the exclusion of Latvia seems to be unsupported by theory, not to say that it is not featured in theory at all. As the initial sample, obtained through the database's keyword search, featured a good amount of articles targeting Latvia, no attention was paid to theoretical assumptions as to why Latvia is not featured within the sample. Only during the coding process it emerged that Latvia is not targeted with disinformation altogether, at least within this sample. As this seems to be the major anomaly of this study, further research is strongly recommended. The existence of a coherent strategy is further reinforced by the global reach of the disinformation, with seemingly little scattering loss among the countries and regions reached by the articles, as most of the relevant culminations are within areas that are related to the migration movements in one way or another.

The final argument in support of the main assumption of this study is provided by the confirmation of H_4, as the sample did not only contain pre-existing narratives, which alone would be enough to assume a coherent strategy, but rather presents a seemingly new narrative of blaming the West for the migration movements, while maintaining consistency with the theoretical considerations of pre-existing identity claims. However, as these are only early assumptions, based on a relatively small sample, with only three examined instances, further research is required to account for this newly emerged narrative.

Consecutively, it is safe to say, that Russia is in fact employing a coherent strategy, comprised of coercive migration and a consecutive information warfare. The relevance of this research can therefore not be overstated, as Russia appears to be only in the early stages of its efforts to destabilize the European Union, with a broad range of its information and hybrid warfare capabilities not even employed yet, and to a lesser extent understand by the West. Russia, allegedly under attack by the West, seems not to refrain to use them, especially considering the growing tensions over the Ukraine war. This study thus provides an outlook on what the West, and especially the European Union, might need to embrace for, while at the same time attributing to its

resilience to future actions by strengthening surveillance and early warning systems to detect spikes in disinformation that may signal upcoming coercive migration attempts as well as to develop coordinated responses addressing both migration control and counter-disinformation measures, ensuring a holistic approach to future hybrid threats.

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8. Appendix

Declaration of Authenticity

I declare that I completed the Bachelor thesis independently and used only these materials that are listed. All materials used, from published as well as unpublished sources, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, are duly reported. Furthermore, I declare that the Bachelor thesis, or any abridgment of it, was not used for any other degree seeking purpose.

Münster, 03.07.2024
_____

Place, Time

_____

Signature

Final Coding Scheme

Final Coding Scheme

Code-group	Subcode
Article Language	Arabic
	Bulgarian
	French
	Georgian
	German
	Hungarian
	Italian
	Lithuanian
	Polish
	Russian
	Spanish
	Swedish
Content	Blame: Country targeted (2)
	Blame: Country targeted (indirect)
	Blame: EU
	Blame: USA/NATO
	Blame: West
	Border closure
	Downplay scope
	Hostile Actions
	Hypocrisy
	Misconduct Border Guards
	Misconduct Migrants
	Neglecting migrants
	Praise Belarus/Russia
	Puppet State
	Shifting blame
	War of the West
Country Targeted	BALT/LIT
	FIN
	GENERIC
	POL
Country/Region Discusse	Africa
	Baltic states
	Belarus
	France
	Georgia
	Germany
	Middle East
	Northern Europe
	Norway
	Poland
	Russia
	Southern Europe
	Ukraine
	US
Date Baltic States	2021.08.
	2021.11.

Date Finland	2015.11.
	2016.01.
	2018.02.
	2023.11.
Date Generic	2015.10.
	2021.08.
	2021.09.
	2021.10.
	2021.11.
	2021.12.
Date Lithuania	2021.07.
	2021.08.
	2021.11.
	2021.12.
Date Poland	2021.08.
	2021.09.
	2021.10.
	2021.11.
	2021.12.
	2022.01.
	2022.02.
	2023.16.
	2023.12.
Degree of Disinformation	Distortion of Truth
	False Statement
	Framing
	Unsubstantiated Claim
Outlet	3lnar.com
	addiyar.com
	akhbarak.net
	alalam.ir
	alhashmiahnews.net
	ar.abna24.com
	bahrainhub.net
	baltnews.lt
	belvpo.com
	bwabtk.com
	daralmaref.com
	darelhilal.com
	de.news-front.info
	gazeta.ru
	Georgia First NEWS
	geworld.ge
	hidfo.ru
	imhoclub.by
	iraqakhbar.com
	iz.ru
	Klyoum.com
	lebanon24.com
	lomazoma.com

m.elsaanews.com
mayadeeniraqya.com
misrday.com
mn2ol.com
nabd.com
News Press
obzor.lt
odysee.com
oroszhirek.hu
pakistanpoint.com
palestine.shafaqna.com
pl.rubaltic.ru
ravda-pl.com
radiovesti.ru
regnum.ru
RIA
Ritm Evrazii
Rossiya 1
RT
russiepolitics.blogspot.com
sb.by
Sputnik
t.me
tass.ru
tsargrad.tv
twnews.co.uk
urdupoint.com
vesti.ru
vz.ru
watananews.com
yapolitic.ru
Новости на Первом Канале (Channel One News)

📄 1 Disinfo: Finland closes borders with Russia - rallies started in Helsinki.pdf

Kodes:
● Content: Border closure ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 2 Disinfo: Finland organised the migration crisis as a pretext for closing borders after joining NATO.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: French ○ Article Language: Georgian ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Border closure ○ Content: Downplay scope ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Georgia First NEWS ○ Outlet: odysee.com ○ Outlet: russiepolitics.blogspot.com ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 3 Disinfo: Finland shuts Russia border crossings as revenge for lost wars.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Border closure ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Parlamentskaya Gazeta

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 4 Disinfo: Finland's sealing of Russia border is illegal and ordered by the US.pdf

Kodes:
● Content: Border closure ● Content: Puppet State ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: yapolitic.ru

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 5 Disinfo: In Finland, refugees will resist expelling attempts by all means, both within the law and o.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Migrants ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Date Finland: 2018.02. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Unsubstantiated Claim ○ Outlet: News Press

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 6 Disinfo: It is not the border between Norway and Russia that....pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Swedish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Finland: 2015.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 7 Disinfo: Mass anti-refugee protest in Helsinki.pdf

Kodes:
● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Date Finland: 2016.01. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 8 Disinfo: Russia had nothing to do with the migration crisis on the Finnish border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: German ● Content: Border closure ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 10 Disinfo: Washington has made Finland Russia's quarrelsome neighbour.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Border closure ● Content: Puppet State ● Country Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○

Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation:
Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: vz.ru

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 11 Disinfo: Western bombs cause refugee surge on Russia-Finland border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country
Targeted: FIN ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern
Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Norway ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○
Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Finland: 2023.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation:
Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: t.me

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 12 Disinfo: A sea of unknown migrants' graves is located at the Polish border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Arabic ○ Article Language: Lithuanian ● Content: Misconduct Border
Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed:
Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of
Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: 3lnar.com ○ Outlet: addiyar.com ○ Outlet:
akhbarak.net ○ Outlet: alalam.ir ○ Outlet: alhashmiahnews.net ○ Outlet: ar.abna24.com ○
Outlet: bahrainhub.net ○ Outlet: bwabtk.com ○ Outlet: daralmaref.com ○ Outlet:
iraqakhbar.com ○ Outlet: lebanon24.com ○ Outlet: lomazoma.com ○ Outlet: nabd.com ○ Outlet:
pakistanpoint.com ○ Outlet: Sputnik ○ Outlet: twnews.co.uk ○ Outlet: urdupoint.com ○ Outlet:
watananews.com

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 13 Disinfo: Accusations against Belarus for its role in migration crisis are false.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Hungarian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content:
Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○
Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of
Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: oroszhirek.hu

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 14 Disinfo: Anglo-Saxons provoked Belarus-Polish border situation to impose martial law in the West.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: German ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: POL ○
Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland:
2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: de.news-front.info

Gruppen:
   Query

📰 15 Disinfo: Belarus is the only party assisting the migrants at the Polish border.pdf

Kodes:
   ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Country Targeted: POL ○
Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○
Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation:
Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Новости на Первом Канале (Channel One News)

Gruppen:
   Query

📰 16 Disinfo: Belarus stopped protecting the border with Poland because of hostile Polish actions.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country
Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○
Date Poland: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
   Query

📰 17 Disinfo: Belarus-EU migration crisis caused by the West's Middle East policy.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content:
Hypocrisy ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region
Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region
Discussed: Russia ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of
Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
   Query

📰 18 Disinfo: Brussels blamed Minsk for the migration crisis, but the West is the only responsible.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Italian ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country
Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed:

Belarus   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland   ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2)   ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth   ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

📄 19 Disinfo: Colour revolutions provoked by the US and NATO created migration crisis.pdf

Kodes:
　○ Article Language: Russian   ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO   ● Content: Hostile Actions   ● Content: Shifting blame   ● Country Targeted: GENERIC   ○ Country/Region Discussed: US   ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2)   ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth   ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

📄 20 Disinfo: EU applies double standards on migration issues to pressure Minsk.pdf

Kodes:
　○ Article Language: Russian   ○ Content: Downplay scope   ● Content: Hypocrisy   ● Country Targeted: GENERIC   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe   ○ Date Generic: 2021.08. (2)   ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth   ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

📄 21 Disinfo: Europe is guilty of the situation on the Belarusian-Polish border; wants to shift blame.pdf

Kodes:
　○ Article Language: Lithuanian   ○ Article Language: Russian   ● Content: Blame: EU   ● Content: Shifting blame   ● Country Targeted: POL   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia   ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2)   ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth   ○ Outlet: regnum.ru   ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

📄 22 Disinfo: Europe is trying to blame Belarus for the migration crisis; the West declared war on Belaru.pdf

Kodes:
　○ Article Language: Georgian   ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia   ● Content: Shifting blame   ● Content: War of the West   ● Country Targeted: GENERIC   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland   ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia   ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2)   ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement   ○ Outlet: geworld.ge

▣ 23 Disinfo: Europe uses the situation with migrants to create a provocation against Lukashenka.pdf

Kodes:
  ○ Article Language: Georgian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Poland: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: geworld.ge

▣ 24 Disinfo: Everyone has forgotten about Poland's role in Kristallnacht.pdf

Kodes:
  ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Hypocrisy ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.10. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: vesti.ru

▣ 25 Disinfo: Fake news about the Belarusian border crisis is part of the Western hybrid war.pdf

Kodes:
  ○ Article Language: Spanish ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Hypocrisy ● Content: Shifting blame ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RT

▣ 26 Disinfo: If Polish colour revolution in Belarus fails, the EU will cut subsidies to Warsaw.pdf

Kodes:
  ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Puppet State ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Georgia ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Ukraine ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: imhoclub.by

📄 27 Disinfo: Lithuania and Poland should end their mockery of the migrants.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.12. (2) ○ Date Poland: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 28 Disinfo: Migrant woman miscarries after being beaten up by Polish law enforcer.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.10. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Unsubstantiated Claim ○ Outlet: RIA

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 29 Disinfo: Migrants on Polish border came to Belarus via a visa-free regime.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: tass.ru

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 30 Disinfo: Migrants on Polish border were able to enter Belarus thanks to the visa-free regime.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Africa ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: gazeta.ru ○ Outlet: iz.ru ○ Outlet: regnum.ru ○ Outlet: RIA ○ Outlet: RT ○ Outlet: tass.ru

Gruppen:
📄 Query

31 Disinfo: Migration crisis on the Polish border is a result of American actions in the Middle East.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Poland: 2022.01. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

32 Disinfo: Minsk and Moscow are fully open to a civilised dialogue with Warsaw.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

33 Disinfo: NATO sent troops to protect the Polish border from migrants.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Arabic ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Puppet State ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Germany ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.11. (2) ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
Query

34 Disinfo: No evidence to support the claim that Minsk is pushing refugees toward the EU.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Arabic ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Generic: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: darelhilal.com ○ Outlet: Klyoum.com ○ Outlet: m.elsaanews.com ○ Outlet: misrday.com ○ Outlet: mn2ol.com ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

35 Disinfo: Poland aggravates border situation to distract attention from domestic problems.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ○ Content: Downplay scope ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

36 Disinfo: Poland and the Baltic states are provoking NATO for war with Russia and Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Shifting blame ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Baltic States: 2021.11. (2) ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

37 Disinfo: Poland artificially escalates the situation on the Belarusian border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ○ Content: Downplay scope ● Content: Shifting blame ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2022.01. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

38 Disinfo: Poland blasts poison on migrants.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: radiovesti.ru ○ Outlet: Rossiya 1

Gruppen:
Query

39 Disinfo: Poland declared a state of emergency after the appearance of 32 refugees on its border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ○ Content: Downplay scope ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

40 Disinfo: Poland does not respond to diplomatic initiatives of Belarus to solve the migration crisis.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

41 Disinfo: Poland does not respond to the readiness of Minsk to solve the border conflict.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: France ○ Country/Region Discussed: Germany ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

42 Disinfo: Poland inspired the border crisis with Belarus in order to fight the Nord Stream 2.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

43 Disinfo: Poland is directly involved in the operation aimed at the regime change in Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Poland: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

44 Disinfo: Poland is getting ready to annex Western Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: belvpo.com

Gruppen:
Query

45 Disinfo: Poland is to blame for deteriorated relations with Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2023.11.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: pravda-pl.com

Gruppen:
Query

46 Disinfo: Poland may conduct provocations at the border using military force against women and childr.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

47 Disinfo: Poland must negotiate with Belarus without any pre-conditions as Minsk never violated inter.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

48 Disinfo: Poland needs to restore balance in relations with Belarus to solve migration crisis.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

49 Disinfo: Poland should stop its anti-Belarusian propaganda and start talks with Lukashenka.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

50 Disinfo: Poland spreads false information about the migration crisis in order to cover its crimes.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

51 Disinfo: Poland uses the situation on Belarusian border to underline "threat from the East".pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Poland: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

52 Disinfo: Poland wants to drag the EU into a conflict with Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

53 Disinfo: Polish border guards killed thousands of illegal migrants.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2022.02. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: baltnews.lt

Gruppen:
Query

54 Disinfo: Polish border guards shot about 20 migrants per day on Belarus border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2022.02. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RIA

Gruppen:
Query

55 Disinfo: Polish Defense Minister tries to exert psychological and propaganda influence on the Poles.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

56 Disinfo: Polish fence on the border with Belarus is meant to frighten Poles with a perspective of wa.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

57 Disinfo: Polish media use the imaginary concept of hybrid war to scare the Poles.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ○ Content: Downplay scope ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

58 Disinfo: Polish soldiers carried out mass executions of migrants at the Belarusian border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2022.02. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

59 Disinfo: Polish soldiers opened fire to intimidate refugees on the Belarusian border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: French ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
  Query

60 Disinfo: Polish troops killed thousand of migrants on Belarus border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2022.01. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RIA

Gruppen:
  Query

61 Disinfo: Real cause of migration crisis is American spread of "democracy" worldwide.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
  Query

62 Disinfo: The Eastern European "limitrophes" are geopolitical scum unable to protect their borders.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Puppet State ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Ukraine ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Baltic States: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: pl.rubaltic.ru

Gruppen:
  Query

63 Disinfo: The EU is sending terrorists and extremists to Belarus to destabilise the country.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Shifting blame ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Ritm Evrazii ○ Outlet: tass.ru

Gruppen:
Query

64 Disinfo: The EU is trying to flood Belarus with terrorists under the guise of refugees.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Shifting blame ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.10. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Ritm Evrazii

Gruppen:
Query

65 Disinfo: The EU organised the migrant crisis in Belarus and will continue doing so in other countrie.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RIA ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

66 Disinfo: The EU provoked the migration crisis in Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Hungarian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: oroszhirek.hu

Gruppen:
Query

67 Disinfo: The EU supported oppositional plotters, so Lukashenka stopped protecting the European borde.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Generic: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

68 Disinfo: The migrants move to the EU because Europe welcomed political refugees from Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Unsubstantiated Claim ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

69 Disinfo: The migration crisis diverts attention from "American invasion" of the....pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Hungarian ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2015.10. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: hidfo.ru

Gruppen:
📄 Query

70 Disinfo: The migration crisis is the fault of the West.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Hungarian ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: oroszhirek.hu

Gruppen:
📄 Query

71 Disinfo: The Pole's Card is a part of a hybrid war and the anti-Belarusian activities.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
  Query

72 Disinfo: The US and EU are to blame for the migration crisis at EU-Belarus border.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: German ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Africa ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
  Query

74 Disinfo: The USA wants to use the migration crisis to unleash a war.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Country/Region Discussed: Ukraine ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
  Query

75 Disinfo: The West causes wars in the Middle East and then blames Belarus for the refugee crisis.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Spanish ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Africa ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
  Query

76 Disinfo: The West is responsible for the migration crisis on EU-Belarus borders.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Africa ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2021.10. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

77 Disinfo: The West is the cause for the crisis on EU-Belarus borders.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: German ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

78 Disinfo: Thousands of migrants were killed in Poland.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2023.03.16. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

79 Disinfo: Warsaw is silent to the Minsk's appeals due to its involvement in the anti-Belarusian coup.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
　📄 Query

📄 80 Disinfo: Warsaw must call Minsk if it wants to solve the current migration crisis.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (indirect) ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 81 Disinfo: West should not accuse Belarus of the migrant crisis but start a dialogue with Minsk.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Hypocrisy ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2021.09. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: baltnews.lt

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 82 Disinfo: What is happening at the Belarusian-Polish border is the fault of the EU not Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Arabic ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: akhbarak.net ○ Outlet: Sputnik ○ Outlet: urdupoint.com

Gruppen:
📄 Query

📄 83 Disinfo: Belarus is not waging hybrid warfare against EU.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Poland: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
📄 Query

84 Disinfo: Illegal migration from the Middle East is the work of Europeans themselves.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Blame: EU ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
◻ Query

85 Disinfo: Lithuania and Poland should end their mockery of the migrants.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ● Country Targeted: POL ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.12. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
◻ Query

86 Disinfo: Lithuania applies double standards to refugees.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Hypocrisy ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Middle East ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
◻ Query

87 Disinfo: Lithuania asks Europe for money for hybrid war with Minsk.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Country/Region Discussed: Southern Europe ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RIA ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
◻ Query

88 Disinfo: Lithuania counters the "migration aggression" with violence, murders and bullets.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: pl.rubaltic.ru

Gruppen:
Query

89 Disinfo: Lithuania neglected its border and human traffickers took advantage of it.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Spanish ● Content: Blame: Country targeted (2) ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
Query

90 Disinfo: Lithuanian Border Guard Service officers beat migrants and forced them to return to Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.07. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Unsubstantiated Claim ○ Outlet: obzor.lt ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

91 Disinfo: Lithuanian border guards left an unconscious pregnant foreign woman on Border with Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RIA

Gruppen:
Query

92 Disinfo: Lithuanian border guards use violence against migrants, including abandoning pregnant women.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
   Query

93 Disinfo: Lithuanian officers injure migrants and push them illegally across the border with Belarus.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Lithuanian ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
   Query

94 Disinfo: Migrants in Lithuania are kept in concentration camps in unsanitary conditions.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: tsargrad.tv

Gruppen:
   Query

95 Disinfo: Migration crisis can become a turning point in the EU history, its collapse is incoming.pdf

Kodes:
   ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Hypocrisy ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: imhoclub.by

Gruppen:
   Query

96 Disinfo: Minsk is not intentionally sending migrants to the EU.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Arabic ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Poland ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: mayadeeniraqya.com ○ Outlet: palestine.shafaqna.com ○ Outlet: RT

Gruppen:
Query

97 Disinfo: Nazi West treats migrants as cattle.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Bulgarian ● Content: Misconduct Border Guards ● Content: Neglecting migrants ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: sb.by

Gruppen:
Query

98 Disinfo: President of the European Commission and head of NATO visit Vilnius to instruct authorities.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Puppet State ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: Russia ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

100 Disinfo: The West plans to push thousands of illegal migrants to Belarus using force.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Polish ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Hostile Actions ● Content: Shifting blame ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.08. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

101 Disinfo: The West wants to turn Belarus into a European outcast.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: War of the West ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

102 Disinfo: There is no evidence that Belarus is responsible for the migrants' crisis in Lithuania.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Lithuanian ○ Article Language: Russian ● Content: Praise Belarus/Russia ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: BALT/LIT ○ Country/Region Discussed: Baltic states ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Date Lithuania: 2021.07. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: False Statement ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

103 Disinfo: Western media hide the real causes of the migration crisis on Belarus borders.pdf

Kodes:
○ Article Language: Spanish ● Content: Blame: USA/NATO ● Content: Blame: West ● Content: Shifting blame ● Country Targeted: GENERIC ○ Country/Region Discussed: Belarus ○ Country/Region Discussed: Northern Europe ○ Country/Region Discussed: US ○ Date Generic: 2021.11. (2) ● Degree of Disinformation: Distortion of Truth ○ Outlet: Sputnik

Gruppen:
Query

Dates of migration Belarus – Poland, Lithuania & Latvia overall