



31 August 2021

**Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission
on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora**

I welcome everyone at this press conference.

My name is Eugene Czolij and I am President of NGO “Ukraine-2050”, a non-profit organization established in Ukraine in December 2019, Head of the Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora, and Past President of the Ukrainian World Congress.

Six years ago, on 3 November 2015, in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Benjamin Ziff stated that:

“The Kremlin sponsors these efforts [namely efforts to sow doubt, confusion and suspicion, and question even the most basic truths] with a sophisticated \$1.4 billion-a-year propaganda apparatus at home and abroad, which claims to reach 600 million people across 130 countries in 30 languages. The Russian government also funds think tanks and outside organizations in its neighboring states to help achieve its goals of promoting the Kremlin’s false narratives; portraying the West as a threat; and undermining trust in independent media as well as Western institutions and values.”

In view of this, the main challenge for the international community is to raise awareness of disinformation among the population and promote a better understanding of the dangers of relying on information without knowing its source and motives.

In Ukraine, this issue is even more relevant since Russia is, from 2014, openly conducting a hybrid aggression against Ukraine to regain control over it, and disinformation is a very important component of this hybrid aggression.

In this regard, Ukraine and its 20 million strong Ukrainian diaspora must make every effort to counter such disinformation and ensure that the international community forms its opinions and makes its decisions about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora on the basis of accurate information.

To help achieve these goals, on 25 January 2021, NGO “Ukraine-2050” launched the organizational work to deploy the Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora, which is:

- 1) monitoring the media, social networks and other information resources in various countries in the world for disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora;
- 2) analyzing the findings of this monitoring; and

- 3) taking effective measures to help counter such disinformation, including by sending requests to appropriate government authorities and administrators of media, social networks and other information resources to exclude disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora, and to block the sources of such disinformation.

On 16 May 2021, the Board of Directors of NGO “Ukraine-2050” elected the following Leadership of this Mission:

- 1) Eugene Czolij, Head of the Mission;
- 2) Myron Nayda, Executive Director of the Mission;
- 3) Roman Panchuk, Chief Analyst of the Mission; and
- 4) Peter Szytk, Director of Strategic Communications of the Mission.

The law firm Vasil Kisil & Partners is the legal advisor of the Mission.

The consultants of the Mission are the following experts: Mariana Kitsa, Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of the Lviv Polytechnic National University; Nadiia Balovsiak, Associate Professor at the School of Journalism and Communication of the Ukrainian Catholic University; Marcus Kolga, Director of DisinfoWatch and Senior Fellow at Macdonald-Laurier Institute; and Artem Laptiiev, StopFake Fact-checker.

The language consultants of the Mission are: Irene Mycak, English language; Sophie Czolij, French language; Andreas Kaprocki, German language; Jerzy Rejt, Polish language; Myron Nayda, Russian language; and Jorge Danylyszyn, Spanish language.

Our Mission has two teams, namely:

- 1) a team that monitors media, social networks and other information resources in various countries in numerous languages and generates reports on articles that disseminate disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora; and
- 2) a team that analyzes the data of the reports, draws conclusions and takes effective measures to help counter such disinformation.

As of this day, there are 166 members of the Mission from 56 countries, who are doing media monitoring on a voluntary basis since 4 June 2021 in 42 languages of the world.

The following 42 languages (in alphabetical order) are covered by the Mission:

Arabic, Austro-Bavarian, Belarusian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Crimean-Tatar, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Kazakh, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Macedonian, Maltese, Montenegrin, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Ukrainian.

The media monitors of the Mission are from the following 56 countries (in alphabetical order):

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mozambique, New Zealand, Northern Macedonia, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Ukraine.

As you may have noted, our Mission has monitors in all the G7 countries, all the 27 EU member states and 28 out of 30 NATO member states.

We are still looking for monitors from 2 NATO member states, namely Albania and Montenegro. If you know of additional potential candidates to join our Mission as monitors from any country, particularly from Albania and Montenegro, please inform us.

To better familiarize the members of our Mission with the intricacies of disinformation, we conducted two online trainings on disinformation – in Ukrainian on 27 March 2021 and in English on 15 May 2021.

Since we wish to sensitize the general public and to raise awareness on disinformation, these online trainings on disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora were recorded and can be viewed on the NGO “Ukraine-2050” YouTube channel.

The Mission's Leadership held meetings with Ukrainian fact-checking organizations - VoxUkraine and StopFake. Since VoxUkraine and StopFake are fact-checking organizations mandated by Facebook to conduct fact-checking in Ukraine, it was agreed that our Mission may provide disinformation materials for their verification to VoxUkraine and StopFake, and if it is confirmed that the Mission has found disinformation, such disinformation will be publicly marked as "fake information" on Facebook or such disinformation will be blocked.

Further steps to enhance cooperation and the capabilities of the Mission include the establishment of communication channels with The International Fact-Checking Network, which brings together fact-checking organizations from around the world. This will render possible to mark and block disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora, which is published on Facebook in different languages.

A number of talks were also held between the Leadership of the Mission and the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, as a result of which it was agreed to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the aim to form a positive image of Ukraine in the international arena and counter disinformation against Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora.

On 4 June 2021, during a press conference at this Ukraine Crisis Media Center, I announced the official launch of the Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora.

Since the official launch of the Mission on 4 June 2021, which coincided with the summer vacation period, monitors have sent more than 100 reports.

The Mission's analysts analyzed these reports and prepared a list of disinformation narratives.

During this period, our monitors revealed and our analysts summarized the following disinformation narratives, that are mainly formed by the Russian powerful and well-funded propaganda machine:

- Ukrainians and Russians are one people;
- the Ukrainian government is illegitimate and is under the external control of the United States;
- in eastern Ukraine there is an internal Ukrainian conflict;
- Kyiv is planning a military offensive on Donetsk;
- Ukraine does not comply with the Minsk agreements and violates the ceasefire regime;
- Ukraine depends on Russia and needs Russia's goodwill to exist;

- Crimea joined Russia as a result of a "democratic referendum", and the revolution of dignity is a "coup d'état";
- Ukraine is a child of the Soviet Union and was created thanks to the Soviet Union;
- the decline of the Ukrainian economy and impoverishment of the population;
- testing of vaccines against COVID-19 on the Ukrainian military by the US government led to fatal consequences;
- ban of the Russian language in the Dnipropetrovsk region;
- Kyivan Rus was historically Russian;
- Ukraine has created a "water genocide in Crimea";
- poll results indicate that the majority of Ukrainians are against the Ukrainian army and Zelensky's war in Donbas.

I sincerely thank the Leadership and all the members of the Mission for agreeing to participate in this Mission, as well as all the experts and consultants for their support of the Mission.

In closing, I wish to remind everyone that all relevant information on our Mission is available in the "Media" section of the web site of NGO "Ukraine 2050": www.ukraine-2050.org.

Eugene Czolij

Head of the Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission
on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora

The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) “Ukraine-2050” is a non-profit organization established to help implement, within one generation – by 2050 – strategies for the sustainable development of Ukraine as a fully independent, territorially integral, democratic, reformed and economically competitive European state.