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The Role of Information War in the Strengthening of Stereotypes about Russia in the Western Political Space[***]

Abstract

Negative perceptions of Russia as "the Other" in societies belonging to the Western political tradition have been shaped in a long historical perspective and have their own cultural and geopolitical matrix. These stereotypes mostly perceive Russia and its population through collectivism, authoritarianism and impulsiveness. Media and information policies play an indispensable role in shaping stereotypes in the modern and postmodern era. Therefore, the aim of this research is to point at the role of media discourse in supporting and forming negative stereotypes about contemporary Russia. In the introductory part of the Paper, the problem of

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stereotyping the notions of Russia and the Russians in the Western political space is contextualized, and then the case study on the empirical basis describes the role of the so-called Western media in supporting the established stereotypes in modern times. The main narratives of the information war between the European Union and the Russian Federation were used for media mediation and interpretation of events on the international scene in which the Russian Federation was the main actor during the year of sanctions (2014) and immediately afterwards (2015). We conclude that in the observed period there was a mutual deterioration of the images among the citizens of the EU and RF, while the leading media sacrificed the principle of impartiality of reporting.

Key words: stereotypes, information policy, media, European Union, Russian Federation

Introduction

One of the most significant factors that are affecting perception of any state in contemporary international relations is its image in the consciousness of audience which is, considerably, constructed by the media. However, that image is not always grounded on objective facts and their neutral presentation, but on the irrational and even negative emotional basis characterized on subjectiveness, prejudgements, aggressive affections and stereotypes. Representations of the Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin that have emerged in information policies in Western political space in the recent years are stereotypical in full sense of that word. They are all very reminiscent of the Cold War representations such as: subversive activities, resurrected imperial ambitions, plans of invasion, flexing the muscles etc (Fedorov 2014, Tomi 2001). All of the stereotypical representations about Russia have been constructed within the Western geopolitical contexts.

The aim of this research is to point at the role of media discourse and information policy in supporting and shaping stereotypes about Russia in countries belonging to the Western political tradition. The subject of research is the information policy that was conducted in the countries of the European Union and the United

States of America in the period of sanctions imposed to the Russian Federation in years 2014-2015. But, if we intend to observe current characteristic of information policies in Western political space, we must first turn our attention to their historical cultural roots and their geopolitical usage. Therefore, in the introductory part of the paper where the problem of stereotyping the notions of Russia in the Western political space is contextualized, the descriptive analysis method is used, and the case study which follows, on empirical basis, describes the role of the so-called Western media in supporting the established stereotypes in modern times. Under the notion of information policy, we mean activities in the information and security domain, which go beyond the basic functions of the media system and are oriented to comprehensive activities of creating, interpreting and distributing information. We also use the definition of a stereotype, according to which stereotypes are a special case of mental images based on over-generalized beliefs about their distinctive characteristics (Nikitina, Mohd Don & Sau Cheong 2015: 3). They are generalized because one assumes that the stereotype is true for each case that fits in the category. As etimology of the term indicates (from the Greek words "stereo" meaning "firm", "solid" and "typos" meaning "a model" or "impression") they are solid impression about someone/something that are inflexible by nature.

Short genesis of stereotyping about Russia in historical and geopolitical context

There are numerous scholarly works that have explored historical and cultural background that shaped the image of Russia in Western cultural space (Mead 1951, Beller & Beller 1999, Neumann 2001: 25–32). "An illuminating analysis of European representation of Russia from the 15th to the 20th centuries was done by Neumann (1999) who demonstrated how in the course of centuries constructing Russia as the "Other" helped forging a common European identity. Such historical perspectives on the major and ubiquitous images of a country are important because, especially in the case of Russia, the representations of the past "have sweeping contemporary salience" (Nikitina, Mohd Don & Sau Cheong 2015: 4). Martin Malia, the most distinguished scholar

on Russia history in the West during 20th century, also claimed that "in different epochs, Russia has been demonized or deified in the West, not so much because of its true role in Europe, but because of the fears and frustrations, or expectations and aspirations created in Europe by its domestic problems" (Martin 2003: 10). Edward Said has noted that power to define "the Other" also implies controlling "the Other" by fixing stereotypes about him and allowing us to keep him definable and distinguished for us, while denying "the Other" any possibility to change (Said 2000).

The emergence of Russia under Muscovy rulers in the 15th century as strong political entity that is growing and getting much more powerful coupled with the increased cultural distance between it and the rest of the Europe. That gap was enlarged mostly due to Russia`s reliance on Byzantine cultural and political traditions (imperial idea of "Third Rome") and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, while the western part of Europe went on its modern, secular and expansionist path that led to their first global colonial adventure. The solitary non-western political entity that not only successfully resisted western colonialism but even became stronger and larger in the early modern period was Russian Empire inhabited mostly by Slavic peoples (that were also white Europeans but with different cultural background and habits than the western part of the Europe). Both similarities and differences contributed to the construction of stereotypical images of Russian "the Other" that was both feared and understated, envied and glorified. "On the positive side, Russia's geographical and a perceived cultural proximity to various Oriental political entities raised hopes among some European visionaries that the country could become a 'conduit' for European enlightenment or, as Leibnitz imagined, "a bridge between Europe and China" (Groh cited in Neumann 1999). Such views promoted the representation of Russia as an apprentice or "a learner in the European state system" and this metaphor is still very much in use in the present discourses on Russia (Neumann 1999: 76) Parallel to the serene and unthreatening "apprentice" image of Russia there has existed a more menacing image of the country as "the barbarian at the gate" (Neumann 1999: 77). The ideas of Russia's inherent expansionist nature can be traced back to the 16th century. Thus, in a letter written by a Hubertus Langeutusin 1558, Muscovy was singled out among all the European political entities

as the principality most likely to grow and expand (Groh cited in Neumann 1999). These perceptions grew even stronger during the Northern War between Russia and Sweden (1700–1721) and the representations of Russia in contemporary literary sources grew even more menacing (Neumann 1999). In 19th century, Britain became one of the major geopolitical rivals of the Russian Empire. The result of these past hostilities between the two nations has been enduring. As Lieven (2000/2001: 26) argued, "intellectual basis for, and even the specific phraseology, of Russophobia was put forward in Britain in the nineteenth century" (Nikitina, Mohd Don & Sau Cheong 2015: 5). Most of these negative stereotypes were simply taken over in the twentieth century during the Cold War and placed in the war between ideologies and their geopolitical representatives: anti-communist West, led by United States, and communist East, lead by Russia's successor, Soviet Union. Old geopolitical representations created during the 19th century imperial contest between Great Britain as leading "sea power" that constantly tries to prevent expansion of Russia as leading "continental power" to the rims of the oceans were reconstructed into Cold War circumstances and laid basic for US "strategy of containment" (Gaddis, 1982). Recent resurrection of Russia's power into Euroasian Heartland gave birth to those old cultural and geopolitical images of Russian imperial expansionism.

Negative stereotypes about the Russia and Russians are based on three assumptions: that Russians are collectivists (and they tend to oscillate between unconscious fears of isolation and loneliness and an absence of feelings of individuality; that Russians depend on authority (the submit to firm imposed on them from above, and merge themselves willingly with an idealized figure or leader; and that Russians are impulsive and emotional (they tend to oscillate suddenly and unpredictably from one attitude to its contrary, especially from violence to gentleness, from excessive activity to passivity, from orgiastic indulgence to ascetic abstemiousness).

All of those stereotypical images of Russians are once again empowered by contrasting images of EU (or West as whole, compact structure) and Russia as completely different entities in contemporary international relations. Russia sees itself as sovereign Westphalian state with classical, realistic approach to world pol-

itics, while EU auto-perception is based on images of idealistic, normative supranational structure with (post)modern mission that, declaratively, despises every kind of real-politics or geopolitical approach (Simionov 2014: 231-241). EU sees Russia as re-born expansionist power, while Russia thinks that he is just returning to it previous, classical geopolitical role of "central balanser" in multipolar world order that just tries to protect itself and its interests from foreign interference (Gajić 2017: 261-277). On the other hand, EU perceive itself as idealistic and pluralistic community without any true geopolitical expansionist aspirations, while Russia considers it as Atlantists (US and NATO) bridgehead that systematically tries to conduct geostrategy of Russia's encirclement and weakening which main goal is not only to prevent any new Eurasian continental integration but, to bring Russia to the brink of its deconstruction in the longer period of time. These different approached clashed in Ukraine which West perceives as an area of its normative mission opened for integration and future EU enlargement, while Russia (based on its historical memory) considers it as a strategically important zone for its own protection and, therefore, part of its interest sphere.

Case study: EU information policy vis-à-vis the RF in 2014-2015

The following pages will be describe main narratives in the so called information warfare between the European Union and the Russian Federation, used to mediate and interpret developments on the international scene and involving the Russian Federation as their main actor, during the year of introducing the sanctions and immediately after. This research stems from a comparative analysis of empirical data and assessments given in two reference documents released at roughly the same time. The first one was prepared by the Moscow-based Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (РИСИ 2016) for the state information security service. The second is a consultative-analytical document commissioned by the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs and prepared by the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris (EU ISS 2016) on whose basis the European Parliament adopted a resolution on propaganda from Russia in November 2016 (EP Resolution 2016).

After several months of Euro-maydan demonstrations culminating with the resignation of Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine in February 2014, the Kremlin intensified the campaign with the rise of Ukraine's conflict. According to the official thesis of Russia, West is the most responsible for this crisis, due to the rejection of the Yanukovych government to sign an agreement on closer integration with the EU. On the other side, after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the European Union successively imposed sanctions against certain corporations, business transactions and citizens of the Russian Federation. In analyzing the information policy of EU states towards the RF in the period of instituting sanctions in 2014, Russian sources used the "Aggression Index" (AI)[1] indicator to measure the so-called hostility rating of a state's media system and find that, in the majority of European countries, this indicator was unusually high for Russian topics in the year of introducing sanctions against Russia. Namely, the average value of this index in the monitored countries (also including some non-European states, as well as those who did not join the sanctions) was 1.59. German and US media stood out with the highest AI scores, far surpassing the level of this index typical for the period before the outbreak of the civil war in Ukraine (just above 2) (РИСИ 2016: 26, 16). States were not equal by the size of media coverage of Russian topics and the level of demonstrated negative tonality. Most stories on Russia in the course of 2014 and 2015 were featured in German, American, British, French and Swiss media, but in terms of their value orientation, British, French and Swiss media demonstrated more moderation (Table 1). In a few countries, it is possible to note a neutral and positive information policy towards the RF. In the period of introducing sanctions, among the European countries which held a neutral position were the media in Italy, Norway, Finland, Belarus and Armenia, as well as in Turkey, while positive tones predominated in the media systems of non-European states: India, Syria and Cuba.

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[1]   The Agression Index (AI) is the ratio of positively vs. negatively worded articles on a topic. Countries in which the score is one neutral to five negative articles indicates that a country is waging information warfare. The so-called hostility rating marks the ranking on the list of countries by the degree of the assessed security threat of their information-political activity.

Table 1: Russia in foreign media, ratings of states.

	2014.		2015.	
	... according to the Aggression Index	... according to the extent of media coverage	... according to the Aggression Index	... according to the extent of media coverage
1.	Germany	Germany	Czech Republic	Germany
2.	USA	USA	Ukraine	France
3.	Czech Republic	G. Britain	Poland	G. Britain
4.	Austria	France	Sweden	USA
5.	Poland	Switzerland	Austria	Switzerland

Source: РИСИ 2016. The table was created by the authors.

When it comes to the EU, most features devoted to Russian topics during the time were published in German media. They also showed the largest disproportion between negatively and neutrally worded features (AI), and according to RISS sources, the most biased reporting among them in 2014 was noted in "Der Spiegel", and in 2015 in "Deutche Welle" (Chart 1). During 2014, German media on the average featured one neutral article per 7.5 negative ones. They focused on the issue of Ukraine, with economy and investment climate in Russia following far behind. At the same time, the most reported Russian topic in the French media was also Ukrainian crisis, but the "Mistral" helicopter carrier affair received huge publicity, too. In 2015, the reporting tone in the French media became overall more favorable, so AI dropped below 2. Media monitoring in the UK showed no particularly intense reaction to the events in the Ukraine and Crimea by the British press on the whole, so the overall picture was balanced to moderately negative, with the exception of the "Financial Times", which published no less than 86 negative articles for each positive one in reporting on Russian topics. In Poland, Russian topics were covered scarcely and negatively: four negative articles to one neutral, while the most active media to address Russian topics was the paper "Gazeta Wyborcza". The highest AI score was noted for the internet wPolityce.pl, which surged drastically in 2015 (up to 14) (РИСИ 2016: 47).

Chart 1: Print media ranking by AI, 2014
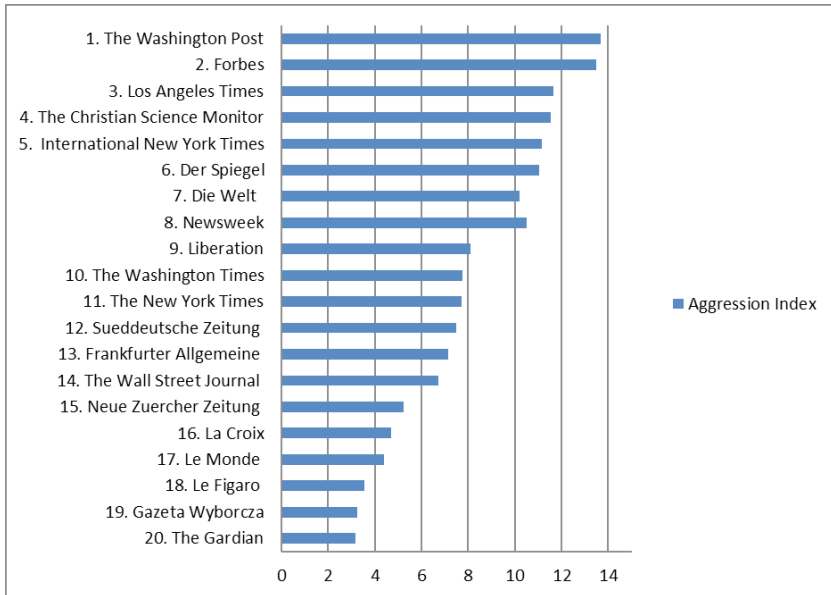
Source: РИСИ 2016. The chart was created by the author.

For comparison, the US media have individually achieved the largest disproportion between the number of neutral and negatively intonated contributions in 2014, which is expressed in the Russian interpretation by the index of aggressiveness: on average, one negative article comes in six negative ones. The greatest number of articles with Russian`s themes were published in "Wall Street Journal", then in "Washington Post" and "New York Times", with a significantly high IA (Chart 1). In these media, the Ukrainian theme took a much larger media space than the second-placed theme - and these are Russian-American relations. The Crimea problem was represented on the 3rd place, while the Olympic Games in Sochi gained much publicity with the topic of corruption during the construction of the Olympic objects. These themes were exploited more than the actual sanctions (РИСИ 2016: 16, 28–47).

It is interesting that in 2015, in nearly all EU countries, a significant drop in negative news on Russia is noted, so the infor-

mation warfare abated or was completely neutralised. AI scores for the media in Germany (as well as the US) returned to their average levels from the period before the outbreak of the civil war in Ukraine (РИСИ 2016: 16), while the ranking of this country by the media "hostility rating" dropped the first to the seventh position. However, in Eastern European countries, bordering with the RF, the AI values rose considerably by comparison to 2014: in Georgia, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Sweden and other northern states - Norway, Denmark and Finland - thus demonstrating the media shift in these countries from neutral to a moderately negative zone. A slight AI increase in Moldova (up to 0.42) maintained this country in the neutral status, while in Belarus and Armenia, the tone of media rhetoric is more distinctly inclined toward moderate-negative. Regarding the circumstances in the world's media the slight increase in IA was recorded in Lebanon, Iraq, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Canada and Japan, with their IA values remaining below the global average of "hostility" and predominantly neutral, with the exception of Japan (РИСИ 2016: 7, 16).

Germany was replaced by the Czech Republic in the top position by the media "hostility rating". The media sphere in that country is polarized in values related to Russian topics: one segment of the media is strongly pro-Russian, while the other is anti-Russian, so the AI value seems high as neutral media reports are minimized (РИСИ 2016: 9-10).

In the course of 2015, the agenda shift and a gradual decline in average AI scores of the media in West European countries is attributed to the relative stabilization of the situation in Ukraine and the launch of cooperation between Russia and the West in the fight against terrorism (РИСИ 2016: 15-20). Reportings in the first quarter were marked the topics: Debaltzevo Cauldron, meeting in Minsk on the situation in Ukraine, murder of Russian Liberal and opposition Boris Nemtsov; in the second quarter, the greatest informational significance for the European media were events: the Victory Day celebration, the creation of a "black list" for certain European politicians by the RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the expansion of EU sanctions against Russia, and the third quarter began with Russia's engagement in the military operations in Syria, when the focus of media interest completely shifted from Ukraine

to Russian missile strikes on terrorist camps in Syria. Topics of significant informational importance at this stage were also the fall of the Russian passenger plane over the Sinai Peninsula, the doping scandal of Russian athletes and the collapse of the Russian Su-24 bomber by Turkey. In the media systems with the highest AI scores in 2015, most space was devoted to the role of Russia in the political and military crisis in Ukraine and to economic sanctions, followed by a proportionally smaller share of reports dealing with the topics of Russian political and military alliance in Syria (Chart 2). It is interesting that virtually all European agendas devote their attention Russian-Turkish relations in an equivalent percentage as to Russian-American relations.

Chart 2: The distribution of Russian topics in countries with the highest "hostility rating", 2015.
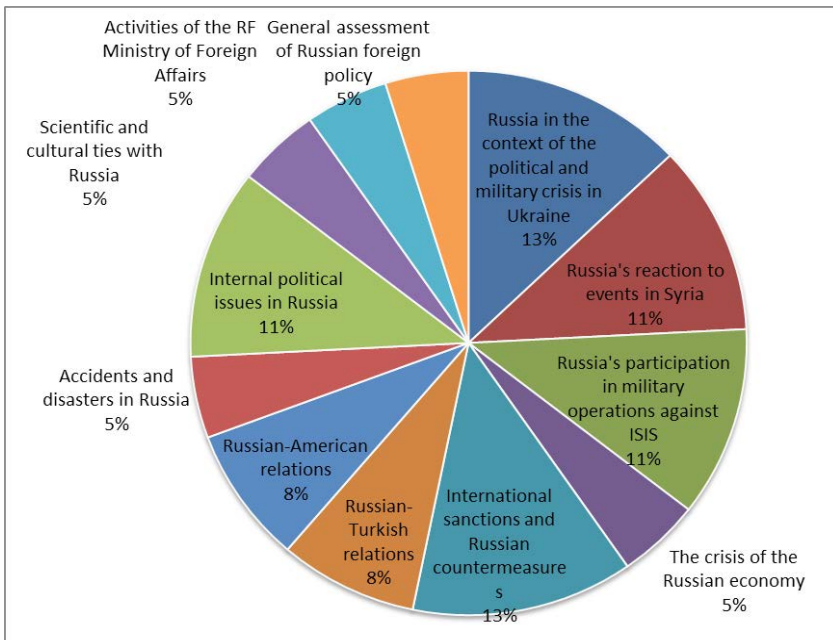
Source: РИСИ 2016. The chart was created by the author.

When the topics of international sanctions against Russia and Russian countermeasures in reporting in 2015, the highest number of reports about the sanctions was released by the media in Germany and France followed by Italy, and the AI score was the lowest in Italy (therefore, the least biased) while the highest was in Poland (not counting the US). It is interesting that in Great Britain, the topic of sanctions was not among the top 10 on the media agenda, which was also the case in the countries with the low AI – Turkey and India. Generally speaking, given that the total average index in that year was 2.2, we can see that almost all countries (except Italy and Sweden) had the higher-than-average or even extremely high AI score on this topic, which may point to the sustained continuity of some kind of propaganda activity, despite the creation of a more balanced general picture.

This chapter shows that images of Russia in the Western media were extremely negative and biased in the observed period. They had to have a certain impact on the formation of the European public. In the minds of EU citizens image of capricious Russia was systematically produced, which not only threatens the other's borders, but also responds inadequately, at the expense of its own citizens. In Western media, Russian hypocrisy and inconsistency are also emphasized: namely, using all potential for intensifying divisions within the EU, Russia supports anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic attitudes in Europe, while simultaneously covering up problems with its Muslim communities and hiding information about it (EU ISS 2016: 10). Public opinion surveys over the last few years show a clear deterioration of Russia's image across the EU, supporting and strengthening historical stereotypes (EU ISS 2016: 13). A significant majority of EU citizens (more than 80 percent) blamed either Russians or the pro-Russian separatists for the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

EU strategic communications against the Russian threat - Diplomatic initiatives and sanctions with which the EU responded to Russian military engagement in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea have led to the point where the citizens of the RF have drastically changed their attitudes towards the EU, from positive in early 2013 to the resolutely negative ones just one and a half years later. The dominant attitude among the Russian citizens has

become the perception that the West is hostile towards Russia, as reflected in the sanctions (55%) and information warfare (44%), while one of the prime drivers of this hostility is the perceived "desire of the West to access Russia's natural resources" (41%) (EU ISS 2016: 13–14). Several surveys done at the time showed a dramatic declining trend in EU's image, not only among Russian citizens but also in the countries of the strategically important Eastern Partnership, where polls register a drop in support to EU integrations from over 80% (in late 2013) to 61% (in mid-2015). The downturn in EU's popularity among the population of the RF, Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans was interpreted as a direct impact of the Russian propaganda activity.

The think-thank document entitled "EU strategic communications with a view to counteracting propaganda" presented to the European Parliament in 2016, identifies and juxtaposes Russian propaganda and the propaganda of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant as the main sources of threats to the European democracy and the future. It assessed that, in recent years, the EU has been hit by destabilizing messages amounting to a "coherent hostile strategic communications campaign"[2], launched and orchestrated from Moscow (EU ISS 2016: 29). Russian strategic communications, aimed at shaping people's perceptions of the EU in their interest zones, are described as complex, tailored to the target audience, effective, if not necessarily consistent (EU ISS 2016: 6). It identifies a network of media, non-governmental organizations, political parties and orthodox churches through which the so-called Russian soft power is exercised.

Researchers from the EU Institute for Security Studies assess that the crucial influence on the perception of the EU is exerted by several systematically promoted and targeted narratives of the Russian strategic communication, launched as an alarmed response to the so-called 'Colour Revolutions' in the neighbouring Georgia and Ukraine. In the focus of these narratives is the West as an aggressive and expansionist civilization, while the EU is portrayed as: a

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2)   The so-called strategic communications surpass the sphere of information policy, encompassing a broader set of measures, processes and coherent actions undertaken by relevant actors, ranging from marketing to policy and involving individuals and organisations who create and deliver information, as well as of researchers who study the interaction of media and society (Cornish, Lindley-French & Yorke 2011: 4).

hostile geopolitical project; a weak and crumbling entity, verging on collapse under the pressure of fiscal and migration crises; an unwieldy entity burdened with a wave of rapid enlargements to the east; morally decadent; threatened by the current Islamisation; a submissive partner of Washington, while the sanctions against Russia are presented as non-functional (EU ISS 2016: 8-10). According to Russia's official line, Ukrainian crisis is the West's fault, due to Yanukovych government's refusal to sign the agreement on the closer integration with the EU. The same approaches with local variations are present in the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership, where the EU prospects are compared with the collapse of the Soviet Union, which some former members had escaped from only to lose their freedom to a similar entity.

Numerous examples show that the above narratives of the Russian campaign gain vigorous support in some social groups across Europe, frustrated with the political and economic situation on the Old Continent, and strengthen similar orientations that have emerged within the EU itself (Makhashvili 2017; Šuplata, Nič 2016; Polyakova, Boyer 2017). It is therefore wrong to interpret the drop in the EU's popularity among the population of the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans as a direct consequence of Russian propaganda and reduce it only to this cause. In the Resolution on the propaganda from Russia adopted on the basis of the French institute report, however, this reflection is not visible, but only self-criticism regarding the EU's insufficient engagement in counter-propaganda activities. Thus, in view of curbing Russian propaganda, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in which it projected a series of strategic communication actions. The plan foresees centralization of strategic communication actors at the EU level, the defining of communication activities based on a set of common narratives and the consolidation of the budget for their implementation. In order to improve the efficiency of the EU's common strategy, the creation of a dedicated instrument under the authority of the High Representative is considered, as well as the engagemnet of analysts and other specialised individual from the public and private sector, NGO's and academia, with the relevant linguistic skills and credibility for the implementation of the strategy at regional and local level (EU ISS 2016: 30–31). The rationale is a more cost-effective and optimised use of the social

media and local community hubs, along with the "discrete and sustained" support to independent media in the regions of Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans, distributed through the services of the EU delegations and missions (EU ISS 2016: 31). Within efforts to de-construct some hostile campaigns, the use of irony and satire is also recommended, but cultural sensitivities must be borne in mind. To optimize the overall EU strategic communications capabilities, stronger reliance on the StratCom office based in the Latvian capital, Riga, is foreseen. The Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence was founded by NATO and, judging by its website, it is self-defined as a tool for the achievement of both its political and military objectives.[3] This institution entered the orbit of media interest in October 2017, when the EU High Representative confirmed that the eight EU member states, including all but one NATO member,[4] requested that the European External Action Service expand its activities in combating misinformation from the Russian Federation and to strengthen StratCom's capacity for the southern regions and the Western Balkans.

Conclusion

The information policy pursued in the EU towards the RF, in the year of introducing the sanctions due to the Russian intervention in Ukraine, was fairly homogeneous. Media presentations reflected the predominantly negative value orientation in addressing Russian topics, especially in reporting on the civil war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. These two events were identified as central in the European media agendas dedicated to Russian topics at the time, and, they were also indicated as formal reasons to punish the companies and individuals with ties to the Russian political elite by economic measures. If to that we add that the media analysis of the topic of sanctions showed a sizeable disproportion between the neutral and negative value orientation, then this correspondence points to the conclusion that European media, in reporting on Russian topics, mainly pursued the agenda of the political mainstream. Thus, dominant media articulated the priorities and interpretations

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3)   See: https://www.stratcomcoe.org/about-us
4)   Croatia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Great Britain.

of mediated information according to the matrix set by the major political actors. The shift in the media agendas of the leading EU countries towards Russia during 2015 was reflected in the monthly drop of media reports on Russian topics and notably, in the lowered percentage of the negative ones. The information policy which in 2014 lent legitimacy for the imposition of sanctions on the RF among the EU citizens, changed in 2015, in line with the needs of the emergin tactical alliances in Syria. The peak in information warfare passed in 2014 and its dynamic changed in intensity, consistent with the British mediologist Denis McQuail's thesis on the relationship between the media and society: mass communications are influenced by society as much as they influence it; the differences in the use of mass media depend on the ruling social structure, or on the characteristics of some particular system (Mek Kvejl 1976: 97).

When the question of the actual impact of the Russian campaign on the attitudes in European public opinions is raised, research and reliable data are scarce. This study pointed out that during the 2014-2015 information war between the EU and the RF, there was a mutual deterioration of their respective images among their citizens. Between EU citizens, those images are based on the historical stereotypes on Russia and Russians as aggressive, authoritarian and unpredictable. But, Russia did not come out of the war as a loser either, because its narratives reached out to the significant parts of the European intellectual and political elite, playing on the grievances within the EU. It was confirmed that the main losers in information warfare were the principles of objective and independent journalism, whose original public functions were subordinated to the security, geostrategic and military interests of states and military-political alliances.

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