

Tackling Russian Propaganda through Investigating Russian Influence in the Media Sector

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Media sector

Statistical classification of economic activities (NACE rev2):

- ✓ 4762: Retail sale of newspapers and stationery in specialized stores;
- ✓ 5813: Publishing of newspapers;
- ✓ 5814: Publishing of journals and periodicals;
- ✓ 5819: Other publishing activities
- ✓ 5911: Motion picture, video and television program production activities;
- ✓ 5912: Motion picture, video and television program post-production activities;
- ✓ 5913: Motion picture, video and television program distribution activities;
- ✓ 6010: Radio broadcasting;
- ✓ 6020: Television programming and broadcasting activities;
- ✓ 6312: Web portals;
- ✓ 6391: News agency activities;
- ✓ 6399: Other information service activities not elsewhere classified

Assessing Russian influence in the media sector

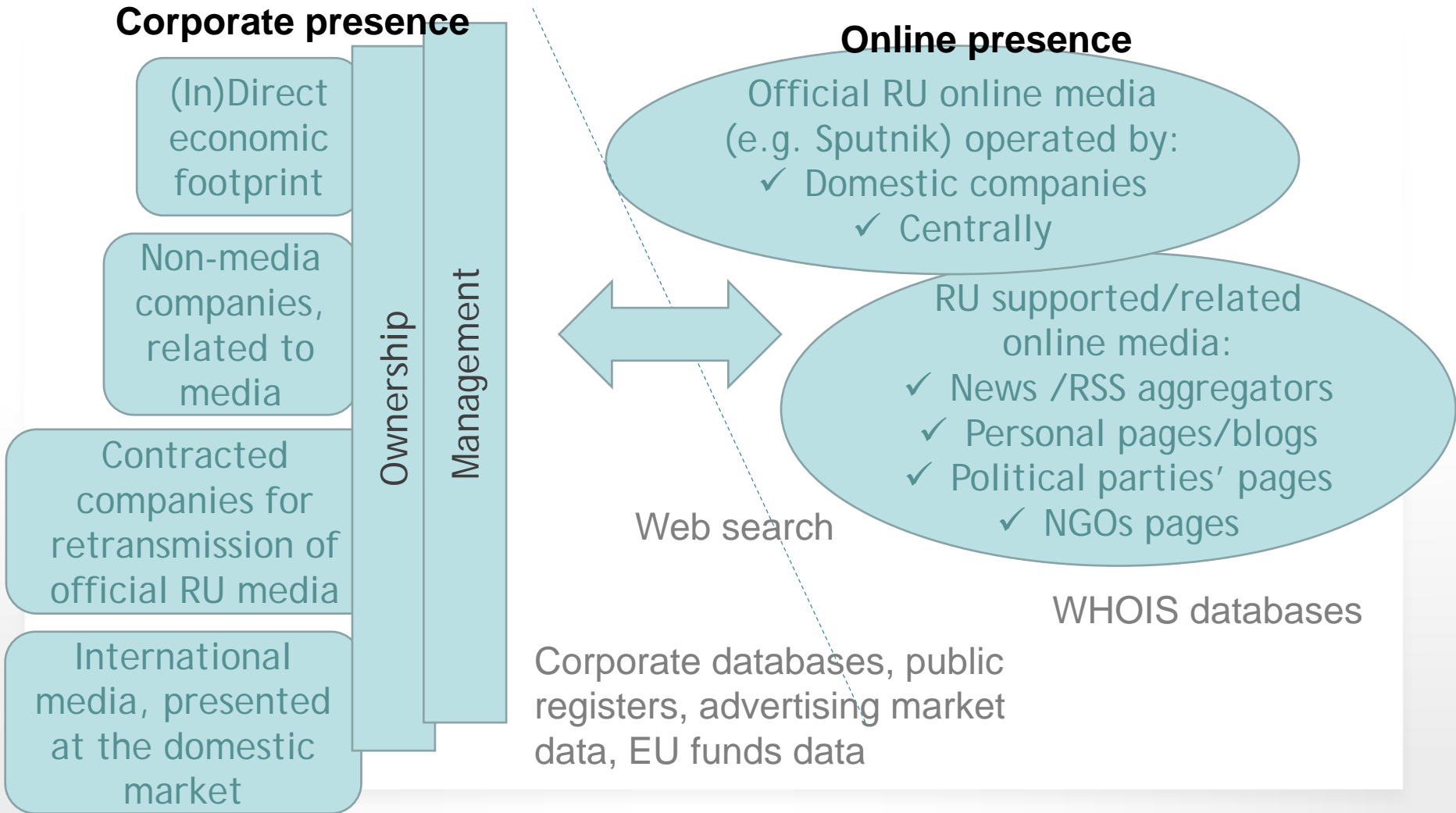
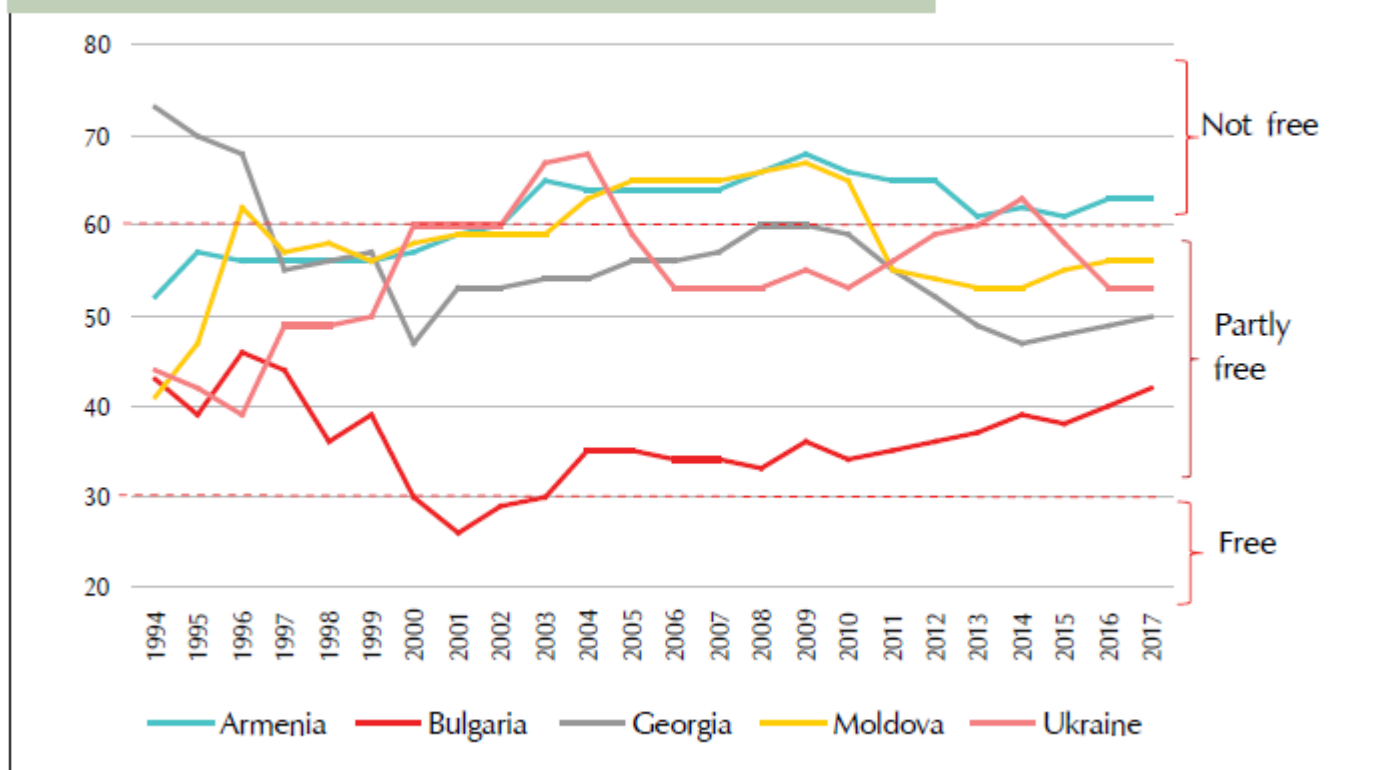


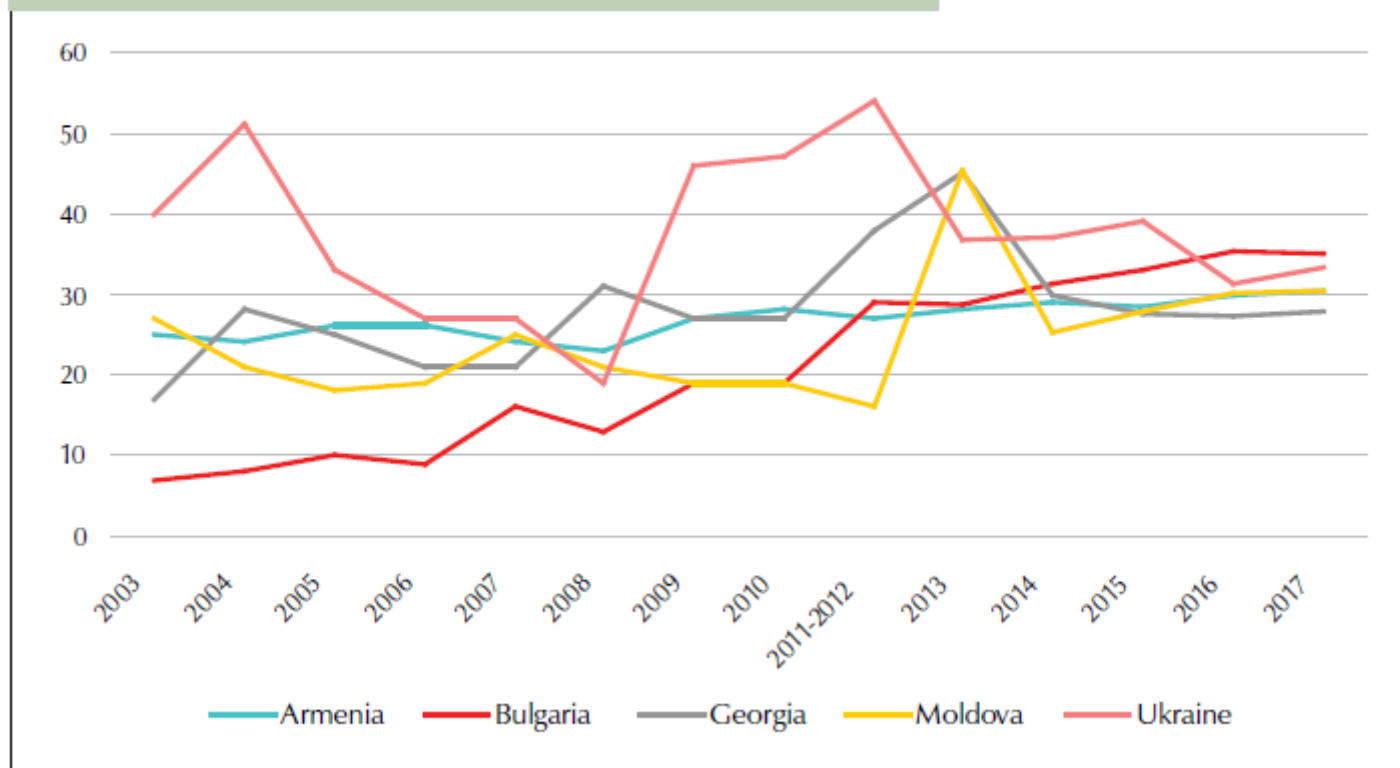
FIGURE 1. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS RANKING FOR FIVE BLACK SEA COUNTRIES (1994 – 2017)



Source: *Freedom of the Press, Freedom House.*

Source: Russian Influence in the Media Sectors of the Black Sea Countries. Tools, Narratives and Policy Options for Building Resilience. CSD, 2018

FIGURE 2. WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX FOR FIVE BLACK SEA COUNTRIES (2003 – 2017)



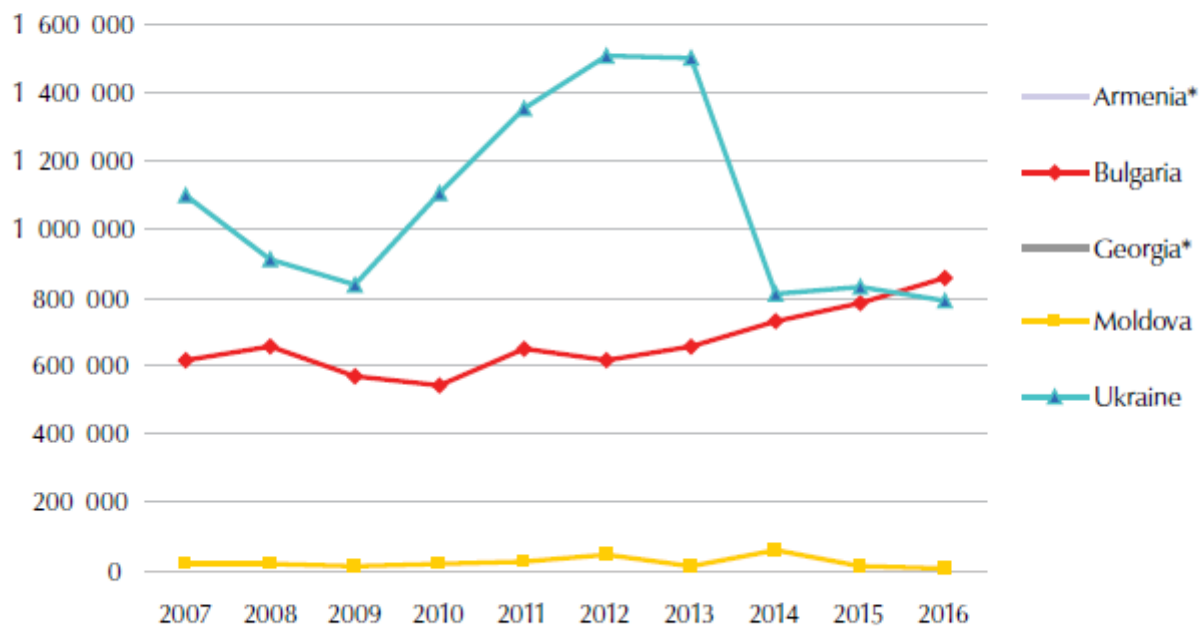
Source: World Press Freedom Index, Reporters without Borders

Source: Russian Influence in the Media Sectors of the Black Sea Countries. Tools, Narratives and Policy Options for Building Resilience. CSD, 2018

Corporate presence

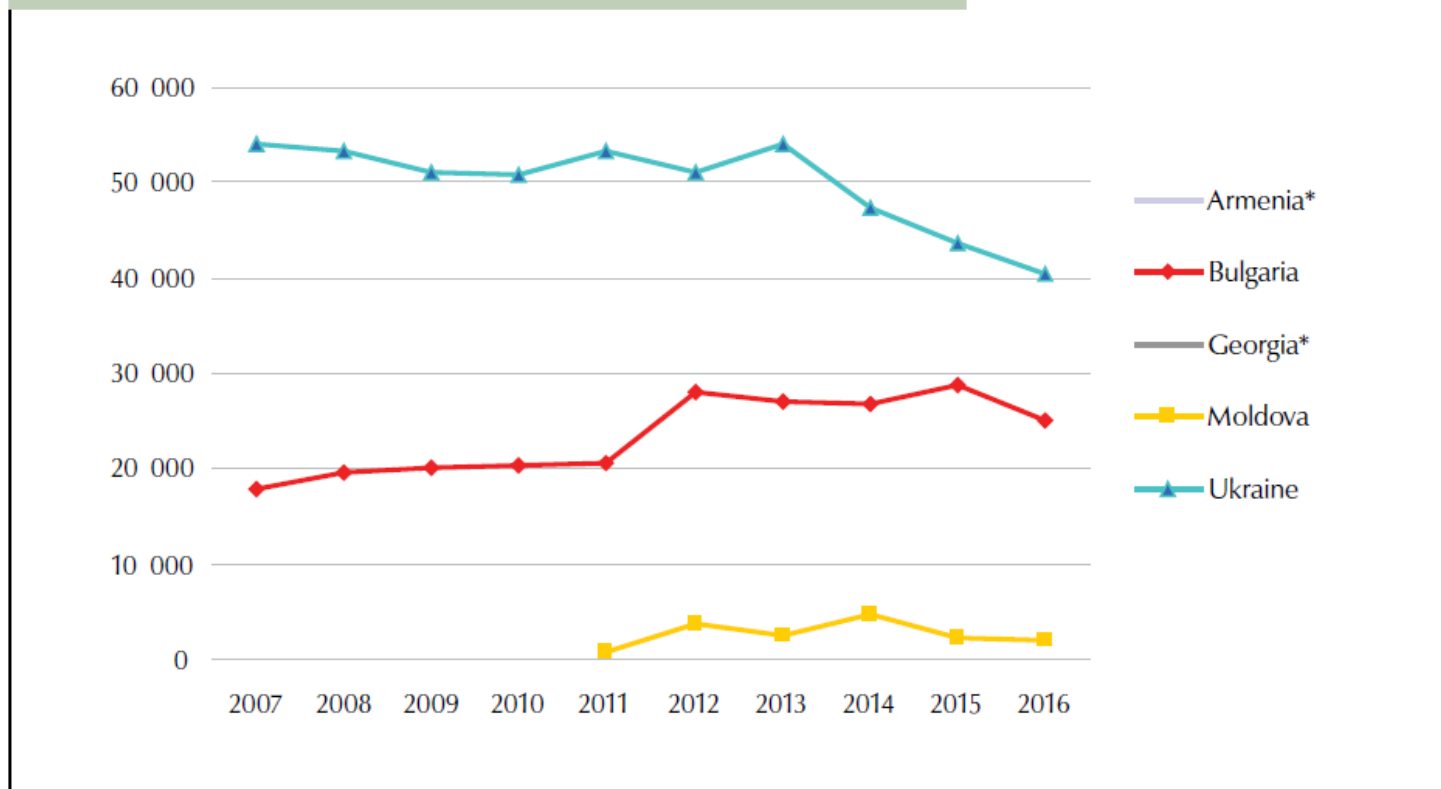
- ✓ Direct and indirect economic footprint in the media sector:
 - Companies with RU ultimate beneficial owner (min 50.01%)
 - Subsidiaries and shareholders (25% at first level and min. 50.1% at further levels)
- ✓ Non-media companies related to media
 - Companies with significant exposure to the Russian market
 - Companies, (in)formally owned / controlled by economic and political actors, affiliated with Russian politics and business
- ✓ Companies contracted for retransmission of official RU media
- ✓ International media, presented at the domestic market
 - Domestic companies for content creation

FIGURE 3. ANNUAL TURNOVER OF THE COMPANIES IN THE MEDIA SECTORS OF BULGARIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE (THOUSANDS EUR)



Source: Russian Influence in the Media Sectors of the Black Sea Countries. Tools, Narratives and Policy Options for Building Resilience. CSD, 2018

FIGURE 4. ANNUAL AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN THE MEDIA SECTORS OF BULGARIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE



Source: Russian Influence in the Media Sectors of the Black Sea Countries. Tools, Narratives and Policy Options for Building Resilience. CSD, 2018

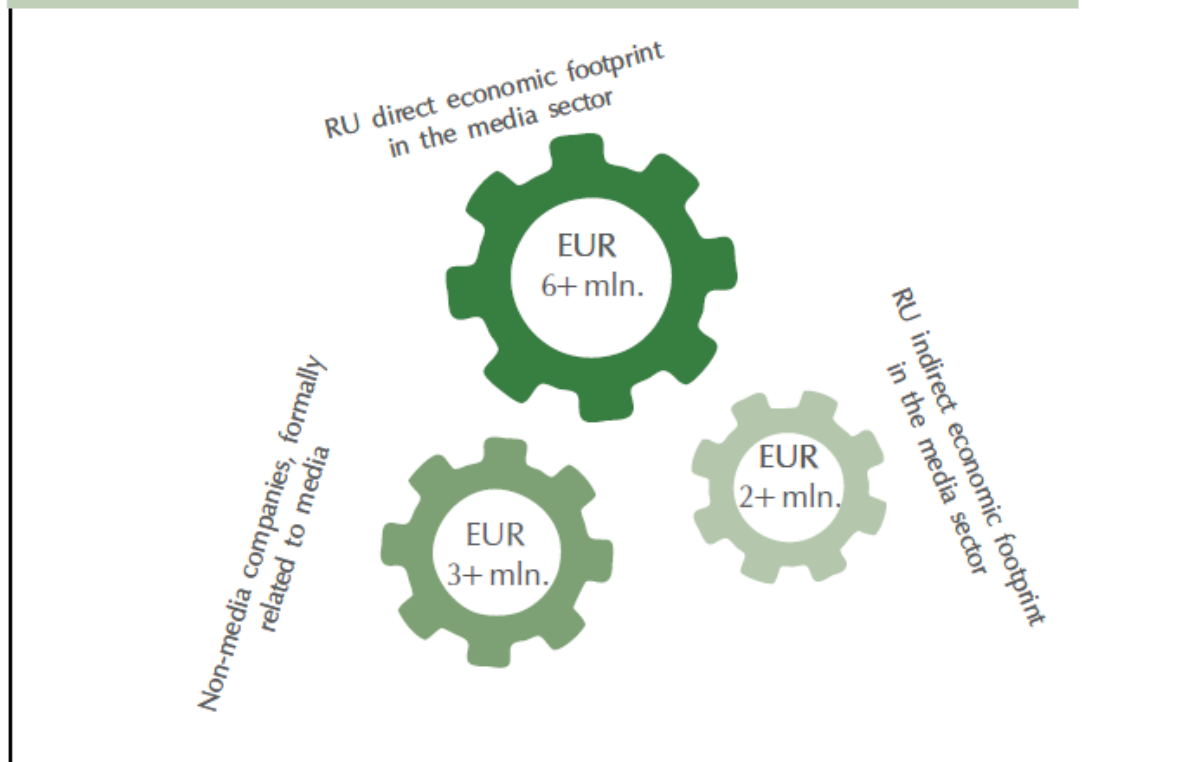
Russian economic influence in the media

Small ...

or

not ?

FIGURE 6: RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN THE BULGARIAN MEDIA SECTOR



Source: Russian Influence in the Media Sectors of the Black Sea Countries. Tools, Narratives and Policy Options for Building Resilience. CSD, 2018

Online presence

- ✓ Official RU online media (e.g. Sputnik) operated by:
 - Domestic companies
 - Centrally
- ✓ RU supported/related online media:
 - News /RSS aggregators
 - Personal pages/blogs
 - Political parties' pages
 - NGOs pages

Tools for Russian influence in media (1)

- ✓ Media ownership is only one and less used tools;
- ✓ Engaging larger community of content creators and providers - RSS aggregator sites, small and medium online news platforms, independent journalists, individual bloggers and social-media opinion-makers, internet trolls;
- ✓ Formally-related non-media companies, influencing media decision-making and agenda-setting through (in)formal links, PR and marketing budgets, topics-setting, business/political relations with external stakeholders;

Tools for Russian influence in media (2)

- ✓ Related sectors - RU economic footprint in the country:
 - Energy
 - Telecommunications
 - Information services
 - Real estate
 - Banking and financing

- ✓ Political backup:
 - Party initiatives / official positions
 - Representation of selected RU-related national/international projects
 - Representation of selected RU-related activities/events (culture, science and education, sport, international policy)

Information sources

- ✓ Corporate databases
 - Proprietary (e.g. Orbis, Lexis Nexus) and open (e.g. opencorporates.com)
- ✓ Public registers (commercial/business registers, media sector registers, etc.)
 - E.g. European e-Justice Portal - EU members business registers
- ✓ Specialized information sources (incl. companies registers, land and courts registers, etc., and documents databases)
 - E.g. investigativedashboard.org by OCCRP, mapukrainianpep.org
- ✓ Advertising market data
- ✓ EU funds data
- ✓ News and other online sources

How to ...

- ✓ Prepare list of corporate presence regarding legal and physical persons, incl. not-for-profit organisations:
 - Ownership
 - Management
- ✓ Duplicate check in different sources
- ✓ Trace links combining official databases and online information sources
- ✓ Look at “headquarters” and “branches”
- ✓ Insider’s information

Thank you!?

Share your experience ...

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