

# INFORMATION WAR MONITOR

## CENTRAL EUROPE

CEPI's monthly overview of conventional and social media discourse in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia monitors propaganda and disinformation attempts, as well as democratic responses in the on-going information war waged by Russia against the West, in order to increase awareness about this new challenge and promote fact-based discussion in Central Europe.

### MARCH 2016

- Brussels terrorist attacks
- Nadia Savchenko trial
- EU-Turkey deal on the migration crisis

The three most relevant topics elaborated on by the pro-Kremlin propaganda machine in March 2016 included the Brussels attacks, the trial of the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko and the EU-Turkey deal on cooperation in the migration crisis. These events fit in some of the main narratives of the pro-Kremlin propaganda – migration, Turkey, and Ukraine. As the events are to, a large extent, external factors from the Central European point of view, translations and adaptations of foreign – especially Western – articles and comments are often employed as propaganda tools.

#### EU-TURKEY DEAL ON THE MIGRATION CRISIS

The deal between the European Union and Turkey – sealed on March 18, 2016 – to handle the migration flow has been extensively attacked by pro-Russian sites. It should be noted that the information war tactics try to weaken, seemingly from the inside, the leading role Germany, as well as Chancellor Merkel, played in forging of the migration deal between partners by drawing upon real statements from the German political fringe.

According to German Green MP Claudia Roth, the deal pitches Greece and Turkey against each other unnecessarily by providing the upper hand to President Erdogan in the migration dispute.<sup>1</sup> Another article cites Sevim Dağdelen German MP of the pro-Russian die Linke party who rejects the agreement on the grounds that the European Union had given up its humanitarian standards by overlooking anti-democratic Turkish domestic politics, and the very way Turkey contributes to the war in the Middle-East

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/03/europat-sujthatja-a-torok-allamfo-kizamithatatlansaga/>

by supplying the Syrian rebels with weapons, letting terrorists slip through its borders, while waging its internal war on the Kurds.<sup>2</sup>

Other arguments refer to the possible new routes of migration via Italy and the alien culture presented by Islam (also represented by the Turks) which renders any political consensus unviable for the long run. For example, former President Nicholas Sarkozy characterized Turkey of being only a semi-European state which poses a major obstacle to a deeper integration with the EU.<sup>3</sup>

The conspiracy theories try to take advantage of the already existing popular fears of the accelerated Turkish accession to Europe, as well as anti-establishment sentiments against the EU and/or the USA. Turkey is charged with having a masterplan to colonize Europe with Islamists using the recent deal (picture on the left).<sup>4</sup> Another version is the EU and US plan prepared decades ago in order to destroy the overly sovereign European nations by unleashing unprecedented waves of refugees (picture on the left).<sup>5</sup> The pro-Russian propaganda continues to defame Erdogan himself by producing the most bizarre anti-Semitic conspiracy theory about the Turkish President being both of Greek Christian and Georgian Jewish origin who wishes to create "Greater Israel" as the future Sultan of Turkey (illustrative picture on the right).<sup>6</sup>



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/03/nemet-politikus-elsosorban-erdogan-okolhato-a-menekultvalsagert/>,

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/03/kivettek-az-emberi-jogokra-hivatkozast-az-eu-torokorszag-megallapodasbol/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.instory.cz/zpravy/2571-chytraci-z-bruselu-se-zase-pekne-prepocitali-vznika-nova-migracni-trasa-do-evropy.html>,

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/03/sarkozy-torokorszag-nem-teljes-erteku-europai-orszag/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/03/08/zakerny-turecky-plan-na-kolonizaci-evropy/>, [http://www.czechfreepress.cz/ladislav-](http://www.czechfreepress.cz/ladislav-kasuka/zakerny-turecky-plan-na-kolonizaci-evropy.html)

[http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/ruzne/465/zakerny\\_turecky\\_plan\\_na\\_kolonizaci\\_evropy/](http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/ruzne/465/zakerny_turecky_plan_na_kolonizaci_evropy/), [http://svobodnenoviny.eu/zakerny-](http://svobodnenoviny.eu/zakerny-turecky-plan-na-kolonizaci-evropy/)

<http://svobodnenoviny.eu/zakerny-turecky-plan-na-kolonizaci-evropy/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/03/07/s-imigranty-neprichazi-zadne-obohaceni-nybrz-jen-same-zlociny-a-sexualni-nasili/>,

<http://svobodnenoviny.eu/s-imigranty-neprichazi-zadne-obohaceni-nybrz-jen-same-zlociny-a-sexualni-nasili/>,

<http://czechfreepress.cz/ladislav-kasuka/s-imigranty-neprichazi-zadne-obohaceni-nybrz-jen-same-zlociny-a-sexualni-nasili.html>,

<http://japatriot.cz/s-imigranty-neprichazi-zadne-obohaceni-nybrz-jen-same-zlociny-a-sexualni-nasili/>,

[http://www.stalose.com/item-29064-s-imigranty-nep%C5%99ich%C3%A1z%C3%AD-%C5%BE%C3%A1dn%C3%A9-](http://www.stalose.com/item-29064-s-imigranty-nep%C5%99ich%C3%A1z%C3%AD-%C5%BE%C3%A1dn%C3%A9-obohacen%C3%AD-n)

[obohacen%C3%AD-n,](http://www.stalose.com/item-29064-s-imigranty-nep%C5%99ich%C3%A1z%C3%AD-%C5%BE%C3%A1dn%C3%A9-obohacen%C3%AD-n)

[http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/zpravy/356/s\\_imigranty\\_neprichazi\\_zadne\\_obohaceni\\_nybrz\\_jen\\_same\\_zlociny\\_a\\_sexualni\\_na](http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/zpravy/356/s_imigranty_neprichazi_zadne_obohaceni_nybrz_jen_same_zlociny_a_sexualni_na)

[sili/](http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/zpravy/356/s_imigranty_neprichazi_zadne_obohaceni_nybrz_jen_same_zlociny_a_sexualni_na)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/meghokkento-informaciok-erdogan-szarmazasarol/>

## BRUSSELS TERRORIST ATTACKS

On March 22, 2016, the terrorist attacks hit the Brussels airport and a metro station, killing at least 32 people and injuring more than three hundred others. The conspiracy sources started to question the authenticity of and responsibility for the tragedy immediately: In a recent article, the Slovak “alternative” Zem a Vek [Earth and Age] magazine essentially suggested that the Brussels attacks were an inside job.<sup>7</sup> The article, which itself heavily “borrows” from a conspiracy piece published at [globalresearch.ca](http://globalresearch.ca),<sup>8</sup> poses the question: “Were these genuine acts of terror or just another False Flag operation fabricated by the West?” It questions everything, from the identity of the attackers, through the authenticity of the messages in which IS claims responsibility for the attacks—it claims that, at least some of the, accounts on social media affiliated with the Islamic State are in fact internet trolls operated by the West.<sup>9</sup> All this is done under the auspices of the US and its vassals, who seek to establish a police state in Europe and for excuses that would justify the invasions of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, to pursue their holy crusade against the evil they themselves created, armed and supported.

Osud.cz brings yet another “interesting” perspective on the Brussels terror attacks. They claim that as the attack itself took place on a “major Satanist holiday”, it could not have been orchestrated by Muslims, who are not exactly keen to anything that has to do with paganism. Muslims are also prohibited by their religion to kill innocents; therefore ISIS has nothing to do with Islam and was in fact invented by the West. The attack on Brussels was therefore, according to the report, nothing but another false flag operation orchestrated by Freemason Satanist-Zionist agents.<sup>10</sup> The article is just one among the many that dismiss the Brussels attacks as a false flag operation and blame the secret services, whether American, European or Israeli.<sup>11</sup> Based on secret Russian official document, Admiral Peter Neffenger travelled to Brussels prior to the attacks in order to warn Belgian officials but was arrested by the US security services.<sup>12</sup> The Brussels attacks took place on the 22nd of March, 2016 – in the American format it’s 3/22. Thus, the date is not only associated with “Satanist holidays” but the number is also present in the logo of the infamous Skull and Bones society.<sup>13</sup>

Another article questions authenticity of the attacks by means of analyzing the visual (photographic/video) evidence. It discusses various positions of the injured basketball player Sebastien Bellin and compares the length of his legs that are “unusually long” in the photos from the airport. The article dismisses his injuries and brings attention to what is “obviously a hired crisis actor caught carrying a ‘fake baby’”, thus, arriving at the conclusion that the whole operation was indeed a false flag operation orchestrated by the secret services.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/zne-brusel-plody-riadenej-migracie-alebo-len-dalsi-false-flag>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-brussels-attacks-another-false-flag/5515856>

<sup>9</sup> <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2336-krvave-bruselske-divadlo-opet-vic-otazek-nez-odpovedi-nemava-tu-zase-nekdo-oblibenou-falesnou-vlajkou-digitalni-dzihadiste-na-britskem-ministerstvu-na-perutich-jadernych-cernych-labuti-vstric-chaosu.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.osud.cz/operace-gladio-utok-na-brusel-o-satanistickem-svatku-223-dalsi-operace-pod-falesnou-vlajkou>

<sup>11</sup> <http://orgo-net.blogspot.cz/2016/03/utoky-v-bruselu-pod-taktovkou-cia-mossad.html>; <http://orgo-net.blogspot.cz/2016/03/stereotypni-medialni-dramaticke-fotky-z.html>; <http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/4097-tyto-dukazy-vas-presvedci-ze-bruselske-utoky-jsou-opet-umele-vytvorene-tajnymi-sluzbami-k-vyvolani-strachu>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.whatdoesitmean.com/index2017.htm>; <http://orgo-net.blogspot.cz/2016/03/vysoce-postaveny-americky-admiral.html>; <http://www.lajkit.cz/zpravy/item/465-vysoce-postaveny-americky-admiral-podnikl-let-do-bruselu-aby-varoval-pred-utokem-ale-byl-zadrzen>

<sup>13</sup> <http://orgo-net.blogspot.sk/2016/03/bombove-utoky-v-bruselu-dalsi-falesna.html>;

<http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/4087-bombove-utoky-v-bruselu-jak-dlouho-jeste-si-nechaji-lide-vymyvat-mozky-medii-pta-se-expert-jim-stone>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/4126-dalsi-pochybnosti-v-teroristickem-utoku-v-bruselu-falesne-plastove-dite-a-krizovy-manekyn-bellin>

## NADIA SAVCHENKO

One of the main topics commented on by the pro-Kremlin websites mostly in the Czech Republic, but also somewhat in Hungary and Slovakia, was the trial of the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko. On March 21, 2016, the court of Doneck, Russia sentenced Savchenko to 22 years in prison for an alleged murder of two Russian journalists. Most of the websites uncritically supported the Kremlin stance and the arguments of the prosecutors while calling Savchenko a criminal or a murderer.<sup>15</sup> None of them decided to acknowledge any of the discrepancies and doubts about the case or the evidence presented by the defence which should prove that Savchenko had already been captured during the time the two Russian journalists died.<sup>16</sup>



The EU and the US claim that Savchenko's detention is illegal and her trial is in violation of her human rights, as it does not respect her right to fair proceedings. The Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Bohuslav Sobotka and the President of Slovakia Andrej Kiska therefore expressed their support to Nadiya Savchenko and called for her release,<sup>17</sup> for which they encountered harsh criticism from pro-Kremlin sources.<sup>18</sup> Some of the published commentaries condemned any negative remarks about the trial as "desperate anti-Russian propaganda". One of the mentioned articles has been accompanied by a very eloquent photomontage (above).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/03/26/verdict-nad-savcenkovou-vitezstvi-prava-nad-mydlovou-bublinou/>;  
<http://oroszhirek.hu/politika/5502-porosenko-miniszteri-posztot-ajanlott-fel-a-gyilkossaggal-vadolt-ukran-pilotanonek>;  
<http://oroszhirek.hu/politika/5537-22-ev-szabadsagvesztesre-itelttek-szavcsenko-ukran-pilotanot>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/russian-court-finds-ukraine-s-defiant-pilot-savchenko-guilty>;  
<https://citeam.org/nadiya-savchenko-innocent/>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.denik.cz/z\\_domova/eu-by-se-mela-zasadit-o-propusteni-savcenkove-rika-bohuslav-sobotka-20160316.html](http://www.denik.cz/z_domova/eu-by-se-mela-zasadit-o-propusteni-savcenkove-rika-bohuslav-sobotka-20160316.html);  
<http://zpravextra.cz/zpravy-ze-zahranici/rusky-soud-uznal-ukrajinskou-pilotku-nadiju-savcenkovou-vinnou-z-podilu-na-vrazde-ruskych-novinaru/22783>

<sup>18</sup> <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2317-ukrajinske-vrazdici-a-mucici-monstrum-pred-soudem-topak-sobotka-s-kartou-savcenkova-v-bruselu-pohorel-nove-kolo-protiruske-hysterie-krvava-nadezda-potrebuje-spise-exorcistu-nez-pravniky.htm>;  
<http://www.casopis-sifra.cz/ukrajinska-vojakyne-a-poslankyne-savcenkova-odsouzena-na-22-let-obet-ruske-propagandy-nebo-vrazdici-bestie/>;  
<http://www.slobodnyvysielac.sk/2016/03/18/prezident-kiska-vyzval-na-prepustenie-statocnej-savcenkovej-kto-vlastne-je-nadezda-savcenko-medzicas>;  
<http://medzicas.sk/prezident-kiska-vyzval-na-prepustenie-statocnej-savcenkovej-kto-vlastne-je-nadezda-savcenko/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2317-ukrajinske-vrazdici-a-mucici-monstrum-pred-soudem-topak-sobotka-s-kartou-savcenkova-v-bruselu-pohorel-nove-kolo-protiruske-hysterie-krvava-nadezda-potrebuje-spise-exorcistu-nez-pravniky.htm>

However pro-Kremlin websites didn't just support the Russian prosecution's position. In several articles published in the Czech Republic, Savchenko was labeled as fascist and a drug addict with an unpredictable personality.<sup>20</sup> Some websites claimed that she tortured prisoners, even civilians, and threatened to kill them or to sell their organs. None of the articles ever provided any relevant sources for this information and relied solely on the Facebook status of former mayor of west-Ukrainian Uzhorod, Sergey Ratushniak,<sup>21</sup> who claims that he heard stories about the alleged atrocities committed by Savchenko.

During the last few weeks Savchenko was also associated with burning civilians in Odesa in 2014. Pro-Kremlin media described this incident as a work of the Aidar battalion in which Savchenko served. The truth is that there is no real connection between Aidar and the tragic events in Odesa and the authors of those articles do not offer any evidence. Several other accusations towards Savchenko also include hatred towards the Russian population. Aeronet, a notorious pro-Kremlin Czech conspiracy server, wrote about an alleged quote of hers: "There are only two kinds of Russians: those who are in graves and those who are going to end up in graves".<sup>22</sup> The quote didn't appear anywhere else and it is not traceable to any credible website. Savchenko has never gone too far with harsh words against the Russian president but it is quite clear from her final speech that she has sympathies towards ordinary Russians.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1508-nadiya-savchenko-a-woman-vs-a-system>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/sergij.ratusnak?fref=ts>; <https://www.facebook.com/sergij.ratusnak?fref=ts>

<sup>22</sup> <http://aeronet.cz/news/video-zaverecna-rec-ukrajinske-fasistky-savcenkove-pred-ruskym-soudem-to-musite-videt-cz-titulky/>;  
[http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/cestovani/464/video\\_zaverecna\\_rec\\_ukrajinske\\_fasistky\\_savcenkove\\_pred\\_ruskym\\_soudem\\_to\\_musite\\_videt\\_cz\\_titulky/](http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/cestovani/464/video_zaverecna_rec_ukrajinske_fasistky_savcenkove_pred_ruskym_soudem_to_musite_videt_cz_titulky/)