

# 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, in order to increase awareness about this recently emerged challenge and promote fact-based discussion in Central Europe.

### FEBRUARY 2016

- Migration crisis
- Facebook and V Kontakte
- General anti-Western propaganda

There has been a concentrated effort to disorient Europeans and to forge their distrust towards international media and supranational institutions like the EU or NATO. This approach suggests that citizens should return to relying on nation states and nation state's individual actions, such as referendums about migration in Switzerland or Hungary, as the only means of averting disasters.

#### MIGRATION CRISIS

The issue of migration remains a dominant, highly debated topic that is polarizing opinions. Many posts, discussions, and articles<sup>1</sup> attempt to question the European "open door" migration policy by means of "uncovering" and reporting seemingly never ending occurrences of immigrants committing crimes of a rather violent, or even sexual nature in countries, in which they are seeking asylum. Subsequently, the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newsli.ru/news/russia/obschestvo/20281>

<http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/migranti-na-diskoteke-v-murmansku-obtazovali-miestne-dievcata-18-ich-skoncilo-v-nemocnici-a-33-v-cele/739387>

<http://ceskoaktualne.cz/2016/02/zpravy-ze-sveta/uprchlici-napadli-na-diskotece-v-rusku-nekolik-divek/>

<http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/3739-migranti-na-diskotece-v-murmansku-obtezovali-mistni-devcata-18-jich-skoncilo-v-nemocnici-a-33-v-cele>

<http://megazine.cz/2016/02/migranti-obtezovali-na-diskotece-mistni-divky-18-z-nich-je-nemocnici-a-dalsich-33-skoncilo-v-cele/>

<http://www.zvedavec.org/vezkratce/12073/>

<http://www.prvopodstata.com/2016/02/03/migranti-konecne-spravne-potrestani/>

<http://whatreallyhappened.com/content/migrants-murmansk-go-too-far-russian-girls-some-hospital-some-jail>

<http://www.vlasteneckenoviny.cz/?p=156693>

<http://www.fort-russ.com/2016/02/migrants-in-murmansk-go-too-far-with.html>

[http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=4ea\\_1454508685](http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=4ea_1454508685)

European institutions, politicians, and security services are often blamed, frowned upon and criticized for their allegedly synchronized, continuous exercise of political correctness marked as a systematic cover up of crimes against the "indigenous" people.<sup>2</sup> This sentiment resulted in a controversy as the Polish magazine *wSIECI* published in February a front cover depicting "the Islamic rape of Europe" (the picture on the left).<sup>3</sup> The cover was condemned by many Western news agencies and pro-migration figures.<sup>4</sup> However, with similar eagerness, it was enthusiastically shared and re-posted in anti-migration circles.<sup>5</sup> The underlying message is an apocalyptic vision of the migration crisis which leads to the "disintegration of the society" at large due to the failed decisions of the European elites.<sup>6</sup> The picture on the right displays how the *Nezávislé správy* [Independent news] Facebook page sees the European Union: Police officers are harassing a driver for a petty traffic violation while ignoring the Islamists in the background preaching "death to infidels".<sup>7</sup> Of course, one of the communicated risks is that the 'original' - white - population will not be predominant anymore. The picture in the centre says: *German girls in the past, now; Russian girls in the past, now*.<sup>8</sup> In Slovakia, social media discourse, articles and debates, reflected the times of increasing internal pressures before the March parliamentary elections. Even amid heated discussions about healthcare and education, the issue of migration dominated the televised election debates.



Connected with the issue of immigration, there is also a discussion about the independence of national solutions, as well as the issue of double standards that is brought up when these decisions do not fit into the framework of the current orthodoxy preached by the EU. The Slovak Facebook page *Nezávislé správy* [Independent news] asks: "Can you find the difference [between] the American free, democratic fence and the Hungarian undemocratic, xenophobic fence?"<sup>9</sup> The *Titkolt Hírek* website also highlights

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/3826-co-se-deje-v-nejrychleji-rostouci-zemi-v-evrope>  
<http://dfens-cz.com/svedska-utopie/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wsieci.pl/wsieci-islamski-gwalt-na-europie-pnews-2681.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/18/polish-magazines-islamic-of-europe-cover-sparks-outrage>

<sup>5</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/981217781936094/?type=3>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/europa-passzivan-szemleli-a-polgari-tarsadalom-felbomlasat/>, <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/a-bevandarlas-visszajara-forditja-az-europai-integraciot/>, <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/lezarjak-a-szarnyas-kaput-lancreakcio-indulhat-a-balkanon/>

<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/315703259247/photos/a.418624804247.193997.315703259247/10154035429119248/?type=3&theater>

<sup>8</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.oroszorszag.mellett/photos/a.727401260626435.1073741828.727359837297244/1121462324553658/?type=3&theater>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/315703259247/photos/a.418624804247.193997.315703259247/10154007576249248/?type=3&theater>

that “80% of Hungarians refuse mandatory migrant-quotas.”<sup>10</sup> *The Nezávislé správy* [Independent news] Facebook page published a picture saying that if representatives of the government want to help those, who are not citizens of the Czech Republic, nobody forbids them from using their private financial resources.<sup>11</sup>



### FACEBOOK AND VKONTAKTE

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, proclaimed that Facebook made a mistake in being “too liberal” in their approach towards hateful comments regarding migrants and refugees. After discussing the “hate issue” with Angela Merkel, Zuckerberg pledged to implement even stricter policies when it comes to deleting hateful comments and blocking peoples’ profiles, although these regulations should – for now – only apply to Germany.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps unrelated to this incident, but nevertheless in a well-time manner, the popular Slovak anti-American Facebook page *Prečo amerikanofilom hrabe?* [Why Americanophiles are crazy] recently shared a picture that says: “Slavs of all nations! Why are you on Facebook? Don’t you know that the CIA is listening to your chat on Facebook?!? Let us all go to the Slavic social site Vkontakte, where Putin is as well. (vk.com).”<sup>13</sup>

### GENERAL ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA

The general line of communication firstly attacks European leadership to instigate mistrust in European or supranational level decision-making and prospects. Secondly, it attacks the NATO with an aim to question European military defences. Thirdly, it criticizes Western media to obstruct factual communication about the ongoing crises. Chancellor Angela Merkel is pictured as losing her leadership

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.titkoltihirek.hu/meg-a-baloldali-szavazok-tobbsege-is-elutasitja-a-kotelezo-kvotat/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/315703259247/photos/a.418624804247.193997.315703259247/10154020039809248/?type=3>

<sup>12</sup> [http://zpravy.idnes.cz/zuckerberg-priznal-chyby-pri-posuzovani-nenavistnych-prispevku-p93-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A160226\\_153714\\_eko-zahranicni\\_rts](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/zuckerberg-priznal-chyby-pri-posuzovani-nenavistnych-prispevku-p93-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A160226_153714_eko-zahranicni_rts)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/985460384845167/?type=3>

position. Not only has she divided Europe over the migrant crisis<sup>14</sup> but also lost legitimacy among German constituents. Thus, Putin should take over her role as Europe's strongman.<sup>15</sup> The deployment of US and NATO troops to the Eastern border of the alliance is interpreted as an unlawful "military expansion" intended to disrupt international order, a prelude to a future war with Russia.<sup>16</sup> The Hungarian website *hidfo.ru* informs about a Polish (pro-Russian) politician explaining the American military threat in Eastern Europe, about the Americans who have made Poland a target, and about the migration crisis which diverts attention from the American military invasion (picture below).



The alternative offered by the Kremlin's propaganda is plain and simple: to resort to national or regional solutions, such as the V4's approach towards the European refugee quota system. Consequently, anti-migration or anti-EU referendums are cited as successful attempts of crisis management: the proposed Hungarian referendum on the quota system against "the United States of Europe";<sup>17</sup> Swiss referendum on crimes committed by migrants;<sup>18</sup> the Dutch referendum on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement;<sup>19</sup> and the British referendum on the country's EU membership.<sup>20</sup> In Hungary, Viktor Orban has accused George Soros of the intentional weakening of Europe by supporting waves of refugees. *Zem a vek* writes that apart from Soros' NGOs the "refugee invasion" to Europe is also financed by Peter Sutherland's Goldman Sachs. This is said to be part of the American and Zionist strategy, the aim of which is to ethnically destroy Europe through creation of chaos (the so called "Kalergi plan").<sup>21</sup> The anti-NGO picture by *Prečo amerikanofilom hrabe* points out on the picture above that if "liberals say that liberalism is but a natural progression of things, then why does this "natural progression" needs thousands of NGOs spending billions of dollars annually in order to re-educate the population?"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/europa-megosztott-a-nemet-kancellar-elszigetelodott/>, <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/a-csucson-kellett-volna-abbahagyni-lemondhat-a-nemet-kancellar/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/putyint-berlinbe-merkelt-sziberiaba-uj-vezetot-varnak-a-nemetek/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/tobb-szaz-amerikai-katona-erkezheth-minden-kelet-europai-orszagba/>,

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/washington-fegyverkezese-versenyt-indit-kelet-europaban/>,

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/nemzetkozi-jogot-sert-a-nato-kelet-europai-terjeszkedese/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/elfogadtak-a-betelepitesi-kiutasitasi-szavazasi-kerdest/>,

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/magyarorszag-nepszavazassal-dont-az-europai-egyesult-allamok-elutasitasarol/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/svajcban-nepszavazast-tartanak-a-migransok-kiutasitasarol/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.oroszorszag.mellett/posts/1119997398033484>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/02/kilephetnek-a-britek-de-az-olaj-brusszel-kezeben-marad/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.zemavek.sk/articles/view/orban-obvinuje-sorosa-z-oslabovania-europy-uteceneckou-vlnou>

<http://svobodnenoviny.eu/orban-obvinil-sorose-z-umyslneho-oslabovani-evropy-uprchlickou-vlnou/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/971464966244709/?type=3&theater>