



4/21/2020

GRASS's input for the thematic inquiry group on disinformation and propaganda launched by the foreign affairs committee the parliament of Georgia



How does your organization determine propaganda and disinformation?

There is no general consensus on the definition of propaganda. The term disinformation is a loan translation of the Russian „дезинформация,“ derived from the Soviet Union’s practice of spreading false news in order to manipulate and mislead public opinion.

The EU Commission defines disinformation as “verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm.” In this definition, the Commission excludes journalistic errors, satire, parody, partisan news or comments. According to the Council of Europe, disinformation involves deliberately misleading information that could include: a) false content, B) fake content, C) manipulated content and D) fabricated content.

Regardless of the content or the dissemination channels, GRASS defines disinformation as false or misleading information that is created, published and distributed deliberately in order to cause public harm and introduce uncertainty and confusion into the target audience. The main purpose of disinformation may ultimately be the change of attitudes and views of the target audience. However, in the short and medium-term, disinformation attempts to breed suspicion and confusion among people. Generally, disinformation contains politically motivated messages that cannot be identified with only fake news. Disinformation may consist of real facts but they are presented to the public out of context or mixed with outright lies. Consequently, disinformation is often presented in the form of “opinion” or an “analytical” text/report which is difficult to be fact-checked.

Disinformation can usually be a part of a much larger plan or agenda. For instance, in the case of Russia, the disinformation campaigns aim at spreading and disseminating Russian foreign policy goals and Russian worldviews. Disinformation is not limited to a single fake story but usually includes disseminating false news and manipulated content *ad nauseam*.



What are the main goals and objectives of disinformation/propaganda and disinformation campaigns in Georgia?

The main goals of propaganda and disinformation campaigns in Georgia are as follows:

- Erode faith towards democratic institutions among the Georgian public;
- Instill distrust towards Western institutions and structures among the Georgian public;
- Promote an image of Russia as a guarantor of Georgia's economic development, security, protector of culture and traditional values;
- Ultimately to have an openly pro-Russian political party in power in Georgia.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- Depicting European integration as “unsuitable” and harmful to Georgian culture;
- Demonstrating Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations as a threat to the country's security and territorial integrity;
- Downgrading the cooperation between Georgia and Western structures/partners;
- Mobilizing local groups (media, NGOs, “useful idiots,” political parties, clergy) and using them for political influence on a daily basis. Also, using those groups to disseminate anti-Western and pro-Russian propaganda and disgrace democratic institutions and liberal values among citizens.

To identify the above-mentioned goals and objectives, GRASS uses monitoring and analytical reports on anti-Western propaganda and disinformation. Concretely, the analysis is based on GRASS's research¹ which in its turn includes a variety of media monitoring reports, research on far-right groups' activities and statements, the Russian foreign policy documents and Russian officials' statements.

¹ GRASS. 2018. “Propaganda made-to-measure: how our vulnerabilities facilitate the Russian Influence.” <https://grass.org.ge/uploads/other/2019-02-22/359.pdf>



What are the main mechanisms of the anti-Western campaigns in Georgia? How do you identify these mechanisms?

Anti-western propaganda disseminates with various mechanisms in Georgia, including traditional media sources (television, which remains the primary source of information for the Georgian population), social media (foremost - Facebook), digital media agencies and printed media. One of the most powerful and obvious instruments of anti-Western disinformation are so-called far-right groups, the “useful idiots” who diligently deliver anti-Western messages and disinformation through the above-mentioned media channels. The anti-Western message box is also spreading through certain political parties or the clergy.

The Media Union, Obieqtivi, founded in August 2010, is a prominent outlet among Georgian TV stations. Irma Inashvili, the current General Secretary of the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, was one of the founders of the TV channel. In 2014, she left the management of the television as she entered the Parliament of Georgia in the 2016 elections. Besides television, Obieqtivi also carries out broadcasting via radio and the internet. The TV channel consistently follows an anti-Western editorial policy. Media monitoring illustrates that Obieqtivi’s anchors/journalists, as well as their guests, demonstrate Georgia’s pro-Western foreign policy as damaging for the country.

The Media Union, Obieqtivi, had its own active campaign against the sale of agricultural land to foreigners where the guests of different TV programs equaled agricultural land sale to foreigners to losing national identity. It should be noted that those campaigns have successfully influenced the political agenda and their advocacy was translated into the constitutional changes that now ban agricultural land sale to foreigners. Similarly, anti-Western groups have managed to successfully advocate for putting the definition of marriage in the constitution of Georgia.

Propaganda is often spread through the print media such as *Asaval-dasavali*, *Georgia & the World*, etc.² The latter is distributed free of charge in some regions. Anti-Western rhetoric has been spread by online media agencies over the last years, including: geworld.ge, saqinform.ge, marshalpress.ge, GeoDigest, Mediacity.ge, Mediatv.ge, All.ge, Tbilisi24, alt-info, etc. Facebook pages of certain far-right groups, as well as of the above-mentioned media agencies, have become more active and popular in recent times. At the moment, parts of their Facebook pages are banned; however, most probably these pages will be recovered soon.

² FactCheck.ge, “Media Agencies Which Might Be Feeding You Lies,” <https://bit.ly/2r5YDac>



The Russian footprint is clearly visible in the Russian foundations as well as their allied Georgian organizations. The media outlets (mostly digital) which openly espouse anti-Western sentiments have their principal backers from openly pro-Russian non-governmental organizations.³ Pro-Kremlin organizations established in Georgia largely share the same few founders. Their activities are covered by their partner media outlets, *geworld.ge* and *saqinformi.ge*, and existing research indicates that most probably they have financial support from Russian foundations including Russian World (Russkiy Mir), Gorchakov Fund, Gumilev's Centre and Rossotrudnichestvo. Taking into account the mission of these Russian foundations directly funded by Russia's state budget, the goals of their Georgian partners likewise include promoting Eurasian integration, demonizing the EU Association Agreement and promoting Christianity and conservative values as the core of Eurasian civilization. The media outlets with an anti-Western narrative cite and often translate the fake news circulated by Russian media word for word, including reports from *RT*, *Sputnik*, *Russia24*, etc.

Some of the pro-Kremlin organizations which are directly connected to Russian state funds have taken an active role recently, such as: the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center which, for example, holds free courses of Russian language for Georgian youth which has been supported by the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund and the Russkiy Mir Foundation. The Russkiy Mir Foundation was in turn established in 2007 by a decree of President of the Russian Federation to promote the Russian language as "Russia's national heritage and a significant aspect of Russian and world culture." The Alexander Gorchakov's Public Diplomacy Foundation was created in 2010 on the basis of the decree of the President of Russia and financed by Russian state money. Furthermore, the Gorchkov Foundation website provides information about the Center's activities in Georgia. At this moment, the head of the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center is Dimitri Lortkipanidze who comes together with the Georgian March. They signed a National Forces Agreement last May and announced the fight against "drug propaganda and Sodomists."⁴

³ Nata Dzvelishvili and Tazo Kupreishvili. "Russian influence in Georgian Media and CSOs." [GEO]. <https://bit.ly/34r7v8F>

⁴ Transparency International – Georgia. *Anatomy of Georgian Neo-Nazism*. <https://bit.ly/2WEWog9>



What is the impact of anti-Western disinformation on the media environment in Georgia? What are the main indicators determining the existing challenges? Upon what sources of data does your opinion depend?

Apart from the specific political or ultra-nationalist groups, the media has been the main source of anti-Western politics in Georgia. The Media Union, Obiqetivi, represents such TV stations which according to the NDI's December 2018 survey with 22% of popularity, are among the top five nationwide TV channels.⁵

Another clearly anti-Western TV channel is Georgian Opinion; however, the information on their viewership statistics is not available. However, its Facebook page which was banned several days ago was quite active. The founders of Georgian Opinion and the movement, Georgian Idea, are the same: Guram Qartvelishvili, Dimiri Lortkipanidze, Levan Chachua, Guram Palavandishvili and his son Alexander Palavandishvili. Both TV channels openly concocted anti-Western rhetoric; they come out against secularism and espouse aggressive xenophobic and homophobic rhetoric. In this context, they currently target three main issues: 1) UN Migration Pact – “Immigrants from poor countries (from Asia and Africa) come to Georgia,” 2) Antidiscrimination law – “LGBTQ propaganda among Georgian society including the education system” and 3) The Code of the Rights of the Child drafted by the Georgian Parliament “undermines” family values. It is important to note that apart from TV and internet incitements, the members of this movement actively visit different regions of Georgia where they hold meetings with the local population and disseminate anti-Western rhetoric and wrong interpretations about above-mentioned topics.

Apart from television, anti-Western propaganda is disseminated through online-media outlets. The newspapers, *Georgia & the World* and *Tbilisi 24*, generally rely on Russian language sources and spread the false content written by them. Both media outlets openly publish articles laden with Soviet nostalgia where the falsification of history has been observed in most cases. The media agency, Alt-info, is also known for distributing anti-Western propaganda which predominantly publishes information disseminated by far-right propagandists and conspiratorial or satirical web-pages existing in the West, such as: Breitbart, Infowars, World News Daily Report, etc.

Apart from the media outlets, anti-Western rhetoric is actively disseminated through social media pages (both personal and public pages). Notable examples of these pages are the following: Anti-Liberal Club, Alpha-Dominant, Anti-Paradox, National Force, Resistance, National

⁵ NDI Poll Results. 2018. <https://bit.ly/2WPnPhf>



Unity, etc. Despite the fact that most of the listed pages have been banned by Facebook administration a few days ago, this fact does not fully respond to the challenges in a long-term perspective. Herewith, it was not a first wave of bans, for instance, on the following pages: Anti-Liberal Club and Alpha-Dominant were banned several times in the past; however, after a while (an average one-month period) their pages were re-activated; likewise, the number of their audience keeps growing. Parallel to Facebook pages, certain Facebook accounts should be pointed out. They are not official members of far-right groups or other unities. However, they are actively involved in spreading anti-Western rhetoric.

What type of groups are considered as the main distributors of anti-Western information/disinformation? How can their ties with other country's(ies') interests be identified?

Far-right and ultra-nationalist groups represent the main distributors of anti-Western disinformation in Georgia. Currently, there are several nationalist movements in Georgia. However, it is wrong to mention them in the same context; their ideologies, as well as political agenda, are quite different. For example, the leaders of the Georgian March consider themselves as line holders of the modern European Nationalism.⁶ Likewise, the movement, National Unity, under Giorgi Chelidze's leadership, openly follows the fascist ideology which preaches the idea of "Georgians as the Aryan race." Except for National Unity, Edelweiss and Bergman are united under the symbol of "White Nationalism." They keep distance from pro-Russian as well as from liberal ideologies and remain as followers of nationalist ideology. These three Neo-Nazi movements are openly aggressive. A number of their activists were arrested several times for the assault on foreigners and restaurants in one of Tbilisi's neighborhoods.

It is important to note that the above-mentioned Neo-Nazi groups are not registered as official movements which makes it difficult to track links to foreign countries and look into their financial resources.

The research,⁷ Georgian Neo-Nazism by Transparency International Georgia, states that certain leaders of the Neo-Nazi groups and associated persons have a direct connection to the Russian government and local political organizations. Dimitri Lortkipanidze is a clear example who was

⁶ *Voice of America*, "Neo-Nazis March in Tbilisi." <https://bit.ly/2JMxX4S>

⁷ Transparency International – Georgia. "Anatomy of Georgian Neo-Nazism." <https://bit.ly/2WEWog9>



appointed as the Head of the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center last year and took an active role in the Georgian March after “leaving politics.” The Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center, founded by the Gorchakov Foundation, redresses one of the institutions for Russia to spread its soft power and is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. This is even though Sandro Bregadze, the leader of the Georgian March, denies any connection with Russia. To counterbalance this evidence, Mr. Bregadze has referred to the fact that he was taking part in two wars against Russia.

One of the main sources of spreading anti-Western messages are certain representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church. The disinformation and propaganda message box disseminated by religious servants is particularly dangerous since the clergy enjoys the highest trust among Georgians. In 2014 when Georgia was adopting an anti-discrimination law as part of Georgia’s visa liberalization process, religious servants openly advocated against this legislation. For example, one priest stated: “The more we get closer to the United States and Europe, the more we distance ourselves from Jesus Christ.”⁸

Besides, a part of the political parties, such as the Alliance of Patriots, Democratic Movement – United Georgia, Free Georgia and the Centrists, also spread anti-Western messages. The basic narrative is built on the statement that Georgia should declare neutrality and stop integration with NATO which could possibly guarantee the restoration of territorial integrity. The effect of the narrative with regard to neutrality has been clearly observed on citizen attitudes.

What types of groups (social, ethnic, religious, gender, age) are more vulnerable to disinformation and propaganda campaigns? What are the main sources of data?

One of the most vulnerable groups towards disinformation and propaganda campaigns are ethnic minorities living in densely populated communities in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. According to the 2014 General Population Census, 49.7% of the region’s populations are ethnic Armenians of which only 20% (16,676) state that they can speak Georgian. In the same way, Kvemo Kartli, where 41% of the population are ethnic Azerbaijanis, only 10% of them claim they can speak Georgian.⁹ Accordingly, unlike the other public groups, Armenian and

⁸ “The closer we get to European and American ‘values,’ the more we’ll turn away from Christ and the Church.” Tabula.ge, June 4, 2015. <https://bit.ly/2N941SN>

⁹ Census results, 2014. <https://bit.ly/2NAPNsE>



Azerbaijani communities primarily use Russian sources of information including the Kremlin-governed media. Based on the Public Opinion Survey released by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the number of respondents who receive information from non-Georgian TV channels follow the news on Channel One Russia (21%), Russia Today (11%), Россия 1 (9%) and Россия 24 (6%).¹⁰ Except for Russian media channels, in the regions populated by ethnic minorities, the population also gets information from Azerbaijani, Turkish and Armenian TV channels as well as from social media like Odnoklassniki. The Georgian Public Broadcaster (which is obliged to reflect programs in minority languages about minorities and prepared by minorities) and other local media outlets do not correspond with the local population's challenges.

Public attitudes have clearly demonstrated Georgian minorities' higher vulnerability to disinformation campaigns. Traditionally, their support for Georgia's membership in NATO and the EU is far behind that of the Georgian speaking population.¹¹ It should be noted that in the regions populated by ethnic minorities responding to the question "Do you approve or disapprove of Georgia joining the EU and NATO" – the answer frequently was "Don't Know."

The most vulnerable among the age groups is the 55+ group which lacks media literacy and other necessary competences. Supposedly, they have difficulties to distinguish disinformation from real news. The differences between public polls are significant. The highest number of respondents who opposed Georgia's integration into NATO and the EU are among those in the 55+ age group. Moreover, most of the answers of "Don't Know" were made by this group.

**What are the different methods that are used to impact on certain social groups?
What are the mains sources of data which identify those methods?**

There are certain topics of disinformation that are tailor made for different social groups. One of the notable examples is the disinformation campaign specially tailored for the population living in the Adjara and Samtskhe-Javakheti (for ethnic Armenians) regions, considering Turkey's expansionist politics and the Treaty of Kars as a threat; on top of that, the myth on the deployment of Turkish troops in Georgia in the case of the latter's integration into NATO. This

¹⁰ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, March 2018*. <https://bit.ly/32eXQkd>

¹¹ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, December 2018*. <https://bit.ly/2JMmxOB>



campaign has circulated with a number of propaganda channels such as: television (Obieqtivi), printed media, online media outlets,¹² social media and political parties (Alliance of Patriots).

The disinformation campaign, Western values are unsuitable for Georgian values, has played an important role in delivering anti-Western messages. This argument is used against NATO and EU integration. A particular focus is made on the topic of identity. Western institutions and states are blamed for imposing immorality. On the contrary, Russia is given preference as a country of the same (Orthodox Christian) faith. Anti-Western disinformation campaigns are significantly trying to influence the Orthodox congregation. The process of the adoption of the draft anti-discrimination law is a clear example. The Media Development Foundation 2016 Report contains the analysis of types of messages which portrayed the West as a “pervert” imposing “perversion” and immorality on Georgia: “The West imposes homosexuality, unacceptable values, perversion, incest, pedophilia, zoophilia; fights against national identity, traditions, Orthodox Christianity and family traditions.”¹³

Anti-Western disinformation and propaganda use weakness and vulnerability among different social groups and capitalize exactly on those weaknesses. Far greater challenges are present in Abkhazia where the public is continuously exposed to Russian disinformation campaigns from Russian state televisions and online with no alternative information sources at all.

In your point of view, how have disinformation and propaganda dissemination methods developed over the past ten years? Upon which main sources of data does your opinion rely?

The methods of anti-Western disinformation and propaganda messages have changed over time. Social media has increasingly grown as the main channel of disinformation as it is easier to spread information with fewer costs and in a faster way.

In recent years, organized groups which undertone anti-Western rhetoric have strengthened over the past ten years. People who individually acted as the main distributors of anti-Western messages then have transformed into institutionalized groups now such as, for instance, the

¹² FactCheck.ge, 2017. “Fake news about President Erdogan claiming that Batumi should be part of Turkey.” <https://bit.ly/2raKHvK>

¹³ Media Development Foundation. Anti-Western Propaganda 2016. <https://bit.ly/34q5n12>



Georgian March. Anti-Western television was practically non-existent until 2014 and currently, TV Obieqtivi as well as smaller outlets are openly supporting of all of the social groups or individuals who are the main authors of anti-Western messages. There are significant changes in the forms of disinformation. If there were outright fake news that were fact check-able in the past, at present disinformation campaigns are deliberately promoting “narratives” and “analytical” materials.

In general, disinformation campaigns and messages have been strengthened through the years. In such a reality, threat recognition from the government was protracted and that is why society has become more and more vulnerable. The government’s decision to adopt a constitution with a ban on the sale of agricultural land to foreigners and the definition of marriage have contributed to strengthening those groups’ narratives and made their demands more legitimate.

Apart from this, it is undisclosed for society as well as for expert groups if there were any attempts from Russia to interfere in the Georgian presidential elections against the background of how Russia has interfered in Western countries.

How has the anti-Western disinformation and propaganda campaign reflected on public attitude? Upon which main sources/data does your opinion depend?

It is hard to draw causal relations between certain anti-Western disinformation campaigns and public attitudes. However, available data make it possible to illustrate some trends and changes in public attitudes that could be the result of increased disinformation as well.

Firstly, while evaluating the impact of anti-Western disinformation on society, it has been a common bias to rely on the results of public polls measuring only EU and NATO support. As the question formulation related to foreign policy of Georgia changes, the answers (thus the support to EU/NATO) from respondents fluctuates as well.

According to the most recent opinion poll by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), 83% of the population approved of the Georgian government’s stated goal to join the EU.¹⁴ However, within the scope of the Caucasus Barometer polls, the question related to EU membership formulated differently ended up with 45% support.

¹⁴ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, December 2018*. <https://bit.ly/2JMmxOB>



Moreover, 52% of those respondents who disapprove of joining the EU mention the following statement “EU membership will not benefit Georgia” as the main reason for their answer. This attitude is mainly related to one of the leading thesis of disinformation which portrays EU integration as a failed prospect that will not bring much for the country.

Another example is based on the Media Development Foundation 2017 Report.¹⁵ The latter includes 62 messages disseminated by different social groups, individuals or political parties that downplay the importance of visa liberalization granted to Georgia by the EU, asserting that the visa liberalization was actually useless for Georgian citizens. One of the main thesis increasingly disseminated by different groups is that the European Union as well as European values are unacceptable for Georgian traditions, culture, identity and religion. Notably, the result of this narrative was also identified in public polls. For instance, according to the *Knowledge and Attitudes towards the EU in Georgia 2017 Report*, 41% of respondents fully agree or more likely agree than disagree that EU integration threatens Georgian traditions.¹⁶

In the case of NATO, 51% of respondents who disapprove of joining the alliance believe that “Georgia will not benefit from NATO membership” while 16% state that “Georgia’s membership in NATO will provoke Russia.”¹⁷ These attitudes are related to the messages promoted by anti-Western media outlets. The main anti-Western messages that were most frequently spread around NATO topics are the following: a) cooperation with NATO, including the joint military training conducted in Georgia, is portrayed as a move which could provoke Russia and lead to a military escalation, b) NATO is not a guarantee of Georgia’s security and c) an allegation that the loss of territories and the disintegration of the country would be the price paid by Georgia for integration into NATO, etc.¹⁸

Another prevalent issue that anti-Western disseminators are spreading is related to the neutrality status of Georgia that according to them could be the most profitable foreign policy course for Georgia. It should be noted that political parties are actively involved in these campaigns. There are clear reflections of these messaging on public attitudes. The survey results show that when asked the question “Do you agree with the status of a neutral country or alignment with a block,” 51% of the respondents answered – “Georgia's neutrality could help resolve conflicts and improve Georgia's security.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Media Development Foundation. Anti-Western Propaganda 2017. <https://bit.ly/2Py994p>

¹⁶ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *Knowledge of and attitudes toward the EU in Georgia, 2017*. <https://bit.ly/2PJ8D3B>

¹⁷ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *Caucasus Barometer 2017 Georgia*. <https://bit.ly/34tiVZC>

¹⁸ Media Development Foundation. Anti-Western Propaganda 2017. <https://bit.ly/2Py994p>

¹⁹ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *Caucasus Barometer 2017 Georgia*. <https://bit.ly/2WDbkoP>



Apart from this, one of the most powerful messages of the disinformation campaigns is putting a wrong connection between the increased flow of migrants and the ownership of Georgia's agricultural lands by them. These manipulations have some reflections on people's attitudes:

- In 2015-2017, the number of respondents who have a negative attitude towards foreigners who come to Georgia and stay here for longer than three months has increased from 5% to 7%.²⁰
- The number of citizens who believe that only citizens of Georgia should own land in Georgia, no matter how they use this land, has also increased from 41% to 64%.²¹

Regrettably, the new provision in the constitution that bans agricultural land sale to foreigners, adopted by the government, strengthens these attitudes and tacitly legitimizes the demands and the agenda of ultra-nationalist groups which have advocated for the changes.

It should be noted that the political movement, Alliance of Patriots, which passed the 5% threshold during the 2016 parliamentary elections, keeps spreading anti-Western messages now from the parliament. It was the first time that an ultra-nationalist political party with vague foreign policy narratives that mostly align with the Kremlin's agenda has entered the parliament. This development could be considered as yet another indicator that anti-Western disinformation has some clear implications on people's attitudes.

It should be also mentioned that the impact of anti-Western disinformation has not yet directly translated into the clear drop in EU/NATO support. However, taking into consideration the above-listed tendencies, disinformation campaigns have affected some of the public attitudes.

What are the solutions and policy recommendations to the above-mentioned challenges?

Disinformation represents only one part of Russian malign influence and hybrid warfare, thus countering disinformation efforts will not be effective unless a comprehensive strategic vision is developed on the state level. The policy on countering disinformation should be one part of a larger strategy that aims at countering Russia's malign influence that is comprised of many other elements than disinformation.

²⁰ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *Caucasus Barometer 2017 Georgia*. <https://bit.ly/2NCpKkT>

²¹ Caucasus Research Resource Centers. *Knowledge of and attitudes toward the EU in Georgia, 2017*. <https://bit.ly/2psbB1L>



Concretely, in order to reduce the potential impact of disinformation, it is essential to ensure that continuous monitoring, analysis and relevant counter measures are put in place; it should not be addressed only on strategic communications but rather on many other measures where strategic communication should be one of the tools for countering disinformation.

Western experience and practices regarding the fight against this challenge need to be studied and shared. Based on policy measures that European allies have employed so far, special attention should be paid to the following directions:

- It is essential that the Parliament of Georgia discuss and come up with the mechanisms of countering the threat of Russian influence and disinformation at the legislative level. Within its capacity, the Parliament should improve legislation allowing the public to identify and expose various manipulative attempts from the Russian Federation, including: political, financial, social, etc. For example, the adoption of certain amendments to the law on foreign grants that will increase the transparency of Russian financial inflows and the Kremlin's ties with the local media and so called NGOs could be one of the issues for the Parliament to consider and debate.
- To create a coordinating entity at the governmental level which provides continuous monitoring and evaluation of the threats regarding disinformation. The entity should act with appropriate responsibilities such as: coordination among government agencies, ministries and the parliament and cooperation and information sharing between government and civil society as well as expert groups. Similar entities have been created in the Czech Republic, the UK, Sweden and Australia.²² Besides, the coordinating entity should be responsible for submitting legislative proposals to the Parliament regarding disinformation and illicit foreign intervention.
- In terms of strengthening societal resilience, it is crucial that the government reinforce efficient strategic communication that apart from reactionary steps will serve as a preventive tool to increase public immunity towards disinformation. In this regard, Western experience should also be considered. Among other measures, the promotion of media literacy at schools and universities should be strengthened.
- Further steps need to be taken at the international level for Georgia to closely cooperate and/or become an observing member of those intergovernmental agencies that are established under EU/NATO auspices: EEAS East STRATCOM, NATO STRACOM COE, Finnish COE on Countering Hybrid Threats. Georgia should also foster bilateral relations with NATO and EU countries with the aim of sharing experience in the fight against disinformation.

²² Poynter.org. *A guide to anti-misinformation actions around the world.* <https://bit.ly/36zWUui>