INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION IN THE UKRAINIAN WAR

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"In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies".
Winston Churchill[1]

Summary: *In the 21ˢᵗ century society, where disinformation is weaponised, the war waged by Russia in Ukraine forced us to look into the tools and procedures to counter it. False information propagation through all media channels is not something new. Since wars appeared, information and disinformation have been used to achieve the final objective – defeating the enemy. In this paper I have tried to identify main elements and causes of this phenomenon, with direct implications on security of nations and international organizations such as NATO and EU. The subject is vast, so I have tried to highlight a few important definitions, concepts and procedures or tools to identify fake news, the trolling actions taken by specialized groups and how to protect your own population's morale and fighting spirit. To identify correct and accurate information, as close to the truth as possible is not an easy and simple task, so to understand the mechanisms of false information propagation in 21ˢᵗ century is paramount for any future security analyst. Since the war started in February 2022, I was invited to comment on military actions, so I got the opportunity to see some TV news channels and to understand a bit of the news mechanisms. Because of that I have tried to identify few tools and procedures to protect us all against fake news. The 2022 invasion forced the Ukrainian government to make radical changes and ban all Russian TV channels on their cable providers. These changes had to be done to protect their population from Russian influence. To achieve this, the population must be permanently*

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[1] Prime Minister in Great Britain during World War II

ensuring the integrity of services reduce manipulative behaviour used to spread disinformation (such as fake accounts, bot-driven amplification, impersonation, malicious deep fakes), empowering users to recognise, understand and how to access authoritative sources, empowering researchers and fact-checking community, funding a Transparency Centre, accessible to all citizens and a Task-force representing the European Regulators' Group for Audiovisual Media Services, the European Digital Media Observatory and the European External Action Service, all chaired by the Commission."[37]

By the beginning of 2023, the Code will impose a monitoring framework and indicators to measure the throughout the EU and at the Member State level.

To conclude this point-paper, I consider that a lot more action needs to be taken to address information, disinformation and how to distinguish them, including here the introduction, in Romanian schools, of classes on social studies about fake news, the danger to spread them through social networks and how to counter them.

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[37] Idem.

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