

DISINFORMATION TRENDS AND NARRATIVES IN THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

OCTOBER– DECEMBER 2024



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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WESTERN BALKANS ANTI-DISINFORMATION HUB
EXPOSING MALIGN INFLUENCES THROUGH WATCHDOG JOURNALISM

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**DISINFORMATION
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THE WESTERN
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MEDIA MONITORING
REPORT **OCTOBER–
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2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the final quarter of 2024, the information environment in the Western Balkans was heavily saturated with disinformation, particularly anti-democratic narratives featuring anti-Western and anti-EU rhetoric. These were largely fueled by the region's domestic political developments, from protests to electoral cycles, as well as the U.S. presidential election. Although disinformation about Russia's war against Ukraine became less prominent in public discourse, the conflict remained a key theme underlying broader attacks on the West and the NATO and EU—often portraying them as aggressive, hypocritical, or untrustworthy.

Dissemination of disinformation aimed to increase Euroscepticism and dissatisfaction with the EU continued during this period, particularly regarding the slow accession process, amplifying external influence over political agendas. Kosovo-Serbia tensions remained a focal point, further inflamed by three attacks in northern Kosovo, which fueled mutual accusations and disinformation.

The November 1 collapse of the concrete canopy of Novi Sad railway station, resulting in 15 dead, initiated widespread student-driven protests against government corruption in Serbia. Pro-government media initiated swift disinformation campaign aimed to delegitimize the movement by framing the protests as orchestrated by foreign powers, including Croatia and Kosovo, even attributing it to NGOs and blaming Kosovo PM Albin Kurti.

Disinformation narratives targeting the EU aim to portray the Euro-integration process as not based on merit, but on unfair conditions and pressure over governments during elections, portraying pro-European actors as instruments of foreign control and influence. Such narratives also use Kosovo's independence issue for drawing parallels in justification of Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Disinformation related to the U.S. Presidential elections proliferated during November and December, with claims undermining the legitimacy of the electoral process, alleging vote theft or election interference. This was followed by allegations that Trump's victory would lead to partition of Kosovo, alongside speculations about Serbia's role in helping Trump win.

Anti-West and anti-EU sentiments remain in the heart of the observed disinformation campaigns, fueled by local political agendas tied to global events, affecting the geopolitics of the region.



METHODOLOGY

This report covers the period from October to December 2024. The Western Balkans Anti-Disinformation Hub analyzed over 700 articles and social media posts from North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Uncovering and understanding disinformation linked to foreign influences aimed to mislead the public and weaken democratic institutions, has remained the goal of this analysis. The use of clear and transparent methodology aligned with EU and NATO definitions results in analytical focus on intentionally false or misleading content, created by external and domestic actors for economic or political gain.

The Western Balkans Anti-Disinformation Hub partner organizations teams explored key aspects of the messaging behind the identified disinformation and related narratives, as well as their sources and the regional road of information flow. The potential to incite violence or radicalization, or its power to develop further polarization, has been the primary factor that influenced the choice of articles that underwent further methodological processing, resulting in publishing debunking articles presenting results of fact-checking or other analytical processes. By diving deep into all these factors, the report provides an overview on how this type of disinformation works and the risks it poses to the region's stability and democratic development.





HIGHLIGHTS OF DISINFORMATION

Between October and December 2024, disinformation campaigns took a slight turn, focusing on anti-Western and anti-EU rhetoric. The elections in the Western Balkans region and the U.S. fueled this shift, shaping the narratives that spread across the information environment. For the first time since Russia escalated its war against Ukraine in 2022, this conflict was no longer the primary focus of identified disinformation campaigns. This does not mean that this topic vanished from the public sphere, but merely it blended into the wider portrayal of criticism against the West and the EU, with attacks on how they had handled the war so far.

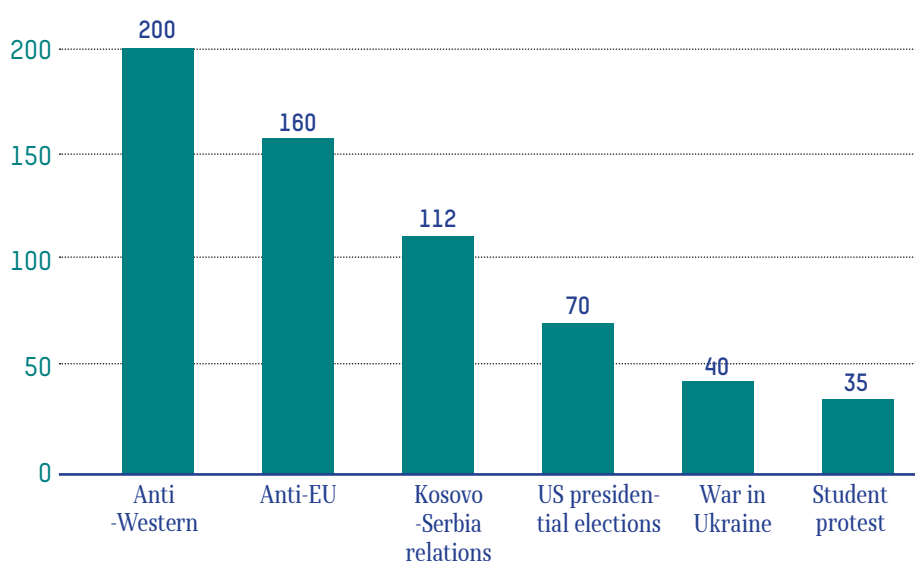
This intensified narrative discrediting the West and the EU during election cycles indicates that domestic political agendas in the region have been increasingly influenced by external factors, in line with the goals of authoritarian regimes. The slow progress of accession process and the propaganda focused on presenting it as not based on merit, encourage public dissatisfaction with the EU, contributing to rising Euroscepticism.

Regionally, Kosovo-Serbia remains the most pressing issue, particularly following the three attacks in the north of Kosovo, which have further escalated tensions and fueled mutual accusations. These circumstances have also been closely monitored and widely reported in Albania and Serbia, as well as pro-Serbian media in the neighboring countries.

In Serbia, the collapse of the concrete canopy of the main railway station in Novi Sad on November 1 resulted in student movement and protests, which are mobilizing wide swaths of citizens against government corruption. The protests gained notable attention by being widely reported in the region. Expectedly disinformation and media manipulations delegitimizing the protests and their causes were following those reports, both in Serbia and neighboring countries where ruling elite controlling the much of media sphere fear spillover, as their citizens suffer similar impact of domestic corruption as those in Serbia.



NUMBER OF DISINFORMATION ARTICLES OF EACH TOPICS OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024



Western Balkans has a history of exposure to anti-Western narratives in a broader context of culture wars, which is imprinting them into generations through oral history. In this framing, the West is portrayed as too liberal and thus decadent and immoral, while the Orthodox Christian Slavic world or the conservative Islam is portrayed as guardian of the traditional values and integrity. With the escalation of the war in Ukraine and the West supporting Ukraine's defense, these narratives have intensified, further reinforcing the claims that the West is a destabilizing force both for Ukraine and for the Western Balkans.

Russian media and Serbian tabloids are drawing parallels with the West destroying Ukraine, just as it allegedly did with Serbia, framing Western support as aggressive and manipulative intervention. This comparison fuels anti-Western sentiment and sympathy for Russia all over the Balkans. The news coming to the region from outside, such as the coverage of the unrest in Georgia, are also used for disinformation in the same vein, as pro-Russian actors spread narratives claiming that the West orchestrated the protests using dirty political tactics to stage a coup and overthrow the elected government. In North Macedonia, the U.S. financial sanctions blacklisting of individuals for corruption was widely seen as foreign interference. These narratives aim to undermine trust in Western institutions placing Russia, or other authoritarian powers, as credible protector with integrity.



PERCENTAGE OF MOST COMMON ANTI-WESTERN
SUB - NARRATIVES OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024



The well-ingrained anti-West disinformation narratives intertwine with the anti-EU ones, placing these alignments as threats to national sovereignty and tools of foreign control, therefore depicting the pro-European and pro-West actors in the country as puppets and traitors. The disinformation and manipulations of this kind also follow such familiar patterns when referring to developments outside of the region. That is why it is easy for disinformation actors to adapt such depictions of situation in Georgia, using them for attacks aimed at delegitimizing both EU/West through accusations for [orchestrating the protests](#) and using geopolitical tactics to destabilize the country and push their own agenda.

Public debate about the ongoing election cycles in the Western Balkans has focused on whether newly formed governments will align with the EU's positions and advance the [negotiation process](#). While the specifics varied from country to country, the disinformation narrative remained the same portraying the EU as imposing [unjust conditions](#) and pressuring governments into unfair compromises.

Already established narratives such as the one where the EU supports [Nazism](#) and [fascism](#) remained persistent in the disinformation information environment, with malign actors seizing every opportunity to highlight the Union's so-called [hypocrisy](#). This narrative resurfaced in the context of Macedonian-Bulgarian relations, where even the Russian embassy [reacted with a public reaction](#). One very graphic example of this is Russia's annual proposal at the UN General Assembly Resolution on the condemnation of Nazism. Russia has been proposing this proposal since 2013, and while the resolution ostensibly condemns the glorification of Nazism, Western countries reject it, [recognizing its real intent](#)—to justify Russia's aggression against Ukraine under the pretext of [fighting Nazism](#). This is immediately used for fueling the disinformation campaign supporting the claims for EU's support of Nazism.



PERCENTAGE OF MOST COMMON ANTI-EU
SUB-NARRATIVES OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024



Kosovo-Serbia relations have been affecting the regional politics in the Balkans since the 1990s, making it one of the most dominant issues misused for disinformation over its strong polarizing effects. [These narratives](#) are often weaponized by local politicians pursuing their own agendas, using it to stir tensions, divide public opinion, or gain any political advantage. It has been exploited even by Russia in an attempt to justify its own actions in Ukraine. [Kremlin frequently cites Kosovo's independence](#) to argue for the legitimacy of Crimea's annexation and the recognition of separatist regions.

This topic is continuously alive due to constant events that are fueling oscillation of escalations and deescalations of the political environment. Recently, the three attacks in northern Kosovo, particularly the one that led to the [destruction of a water canal](#), are such cases. These incidents not only escalated political and security concerns but also triggered a surge of disinformation, with both sides [accusing](#) each other of orchestrating or exploiting the attacks for political gain. The United States strongly condemned the attack on critical infrastructure in Kosovo, emphasizing the need for stability and accountability in the region. However, the incident quickly became the center of another [disinformation narrative](#).





PERCENTAGE OF MOST COMMON
SUB-NARRATIVES ON THE TOPIC KOSOVO-SERBIA
RELATIONS OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024



As global attention shifted towards the U.S. elections, the Western Balkans followed the trends where disinformation narratives, largely imported from U.S. media and sought to undermine the electoral process. These narratives aimed at discrediting the Democratic candidate through alleging vote theft and election interference. Disinformation varied from claims regarding Trump's victory leading to partition of Kosovo to allegations that Serbia played a role in securing Trump's term.

The collapse of the railway station canopy in Novi Sad shifted the political and public discourse, mobilizing the students in protest to Government corruption, largest seen in recent years in the region. As a reaction, a disinformation campaign seeking to delegitimize the protests and its causes was deployed through tabloids and pro-government media, framing the protests as opposition-led movement, and attributing it to NGOs serving foreign powers or blaming Albin Kurti.



COUNTRY CONTEXT UPDATE



ALBANIA

Trump’s election as US President initiated a wave of speculations in the media, with presumptions of the effect his will have on NATO, Ukraine, and Kosovo. Old concerns on Trump’s past rhetoric and policy initiatives, including the engagement of his appointees in a suggested land swap deal that was seen to favor Serbia, in addition to the shared concerns that it will weaken NATO or pressure Ukraine into territorial concessions to Russia because of his presumed pro-Russia policies. These concerns remain speculative, although Albanian media coverage blurs the lines distinguishing between analysis and speculation presenting these concerns as facts.

The attacks in the North of Kosovo rekindled fears of war between Serbia and Kosovo, with two unverified narratives over responsibility for the attacks which, rather than fact-checked, were granted ample coverage by news portals and media, reporting as facts the opinions of Serbian and Kosovo officials— accusing one another.

Another significant issue in the Albanian public discourse in the past three months has been the growing speculations of North Macedonia’s removal of Albanian as an official language, insisting anti-Albanian sentiment following several incidents around the Albanian flag during Independence Day. The political parties in Kosovo, North Macedonia and Albania have vested interest in presenting the current North Macedonia government as anti-Albanian replicated throughout Albanian media as well.



Most impactful themes	Most impactful narratives	Most impactful disinformation instances
Kosovo-Serbia relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trump’s victory will mean the end for Kosovo ▶ Partitioning Kosovo as a quick solution to the conflict ▶ Serbian terrorists bombed water supply channel in Northern Kosovo ▶ Serbia is behind the terrorist attack in Kosovo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ex-diplomat’s alarm: If Trump wins, <u>Kosovo will give territory</u> ▶ Wisner: Donald Trump’s arrival could explore <u>Kosovo’s partition</u> ▶ It as a terrorist act by <u>Serbian criminal groups</u>, like Russia’s attacks in Ukraine ▶ Kosovo government has evidence that <u>Serbia and Srpska Lista may be behind the attack</u>
Albanian language in North Macedonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Government of North Macedonia is against Albania ▶ Albanian has never been national language in North ▶ Macedonians hate Albanians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hysterical <u>politics</u> are being developed against Albanians ▶ Albin Kurti: <u>Albanian language is not official</u> ▶ Albin Kurti’s <u>troubled statement</u> on the Albanian language in North Macedonia ▶ <u>Macedonian policeman threw down the red-black flag</u>, Albanian opposition rebels: Minister should resign





BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The 2024 U.S. Presidential Elections and the 2024 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) [Local Elections](#) dominated the headlines and content in the media and public discourse. Both were the subject of locally and regionally produced disinformation following the campaigns, which was typically disseminated by anonymous online media outlets and social media accounts in an attempt to discredit opposing candidates. Additionally the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) [introduced amendments to the Election Law](#), amongst which amendments, Article 16.1 that stipulates that online media ‘choosing to cover the election campaign’ must publicly disclose definitive information on the ownership thereof. Aside from manipulation and disinformation, the BiH local elections were also followed with irregularities, including biased media coverage in support of affiliated candidates, hate speech, [doxxing](#), [misogyny](#), and manipulation of opinion polls.

During the monitored timeframe, various conspiracy theories and disinformation narratives continued to spread across the BiH media environment, inciting distrust and confusion among citizens. Among them the usual [claims about biolabs in Ukraine](#), as well as the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, depopulation, [Holocaust denial](#), as well as warnings against digital currencies as tools of ‘oppressing’ humanity and claims that African countries pay a ‘neocolonial tax’ to France. A common conspiracy theory blamed HAARP for the tragic October flooding in Jablanica, renewing old speculations about weather manipulation.

As U.S. Presidential Elections approached, election disinformation intensified. Bosnia’s media environment, similarly to the Albanian one, was flooded with false claims of Serbs securing Trump’s victory or shutting down the Bondsteel U.S. military base in Kosovo. Meanwhile, domestic political events were also singled out for manipulation. Disinformation regarding protests in [Romania](#) and [Serbia](#) was disseminated widely, along with [fabricated statements](#) of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. damage his credibility.



Most impactful themes	Most impactful narratives	Most impactful disinformation instances
Local elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ False polls ▶ Discrediting politicians ▶ False statements attribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ She’s doing well in power in <u>Banja Luka, but Banja Luka isn’t doing well with her</u> ▶ <u>Christian Schmidt</u> -We cannot say that the government was imposed because the people did not elect them ▶ <u>Belgrade media</u>: Serbia has chosen - support for Dr. Mikajlo Lazić!
US Presidential Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Serbian involved in the elections ▶ Discrediting Melania Trump ▶ Conspiracy theories ▶ Interference in the elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Serbs <u>brought victory to Trump</u> ▶ Melania Trump <u>uses double for her public appearances</u> ▶ Directors of the largest pharmaceutical companies <u>held an emergency meeting</u> due to Trump’s victory ▶ Voting machines in America rigged to <u>automatically vote for Kamala Harris</u>
Climate disinformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conspiracy theories ▶ HAARP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It is possible to <u>manipulate the weather with Haarp</u>, the rulers behind the curtains ▶ Do you think the <u>floods are a coincidence</u>, such phenomena have never happened





KOSOVO

During this period, tensions between Kosovo-Serbia escalated significantly with three grave attacks in the north within 72 hours, one of which was against critical infrastructure. The first two were attacks on Zvečan's [Police Station](#) and Municipal Building. The third, on 29 November 2024, was a powerful blast in the village of Varraga, Zubin Potok Municipality, which severely [damaged the Ibër-Lepenc Canal](#)—a major water supply network fed by Lake Ujman. The canal provides drinking water for a number of cities and supports the cooling operations of two Kosovo Energy Corporation thermal power plants. Authorities estimated that between 20 kilograms of explosives were used in the attack.

Following the explosion, Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti had [accused](#) Serbia of the bombing, and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić retorted by saying that [Kurti had staged the incident](#). The bombing was condemned across the world, and the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Jeffrey Hovenier, stated the attack was “horrific” and requested patience as investigations were underway. These developments heightened tensions between Kosovo and Serbia.

Meanwhile, Serbian media and officials continued to publish claims of a supposed “Greater Albania” project. A Serbian newspaper published an unfounded story that Kurti wished to disband the Serbian List in order to pursue this project. The piece cited former Yugoslav Foreign Minister Živadin Jovanović, who stated Kosovo was responsible for ethnic discrimination and the expulsion of Serbs. These charges were once more raised at a [joint session of the Parliaments of Kosovo and Albania](#) on December 20, 2024, with [Serbian officials and media](#) showcasing it as being within a greater unification process.

Serbian authorities also sought to tie Kosovo to internal instability. After the November 1, 2024, [railway station canopy collapse](#) that killed 15 and injured three, demonstrations across Serbia took place over government accountability. Authorities, including Petar Petković, the Director of the Office for Kosovo, falsely suggested that Kurti was inciting these demonstrations. Serbian media reproduced this claim, portraying Kosovo as a destabilizing force in [Serbia](#).

As protests continued, the narrative continued. “Informer.rs” published unverified articles that Kurti [supported](#) the protests and wished to “destroy” Serbia. The articles, however, distorted



statements at a December 13 [press conference](#) with Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, where Kurti expressed solidarity with student protests but made no statements demanding harm to Serbia.

Most impactful themes	Most impactful narratives	Most impactful disinformation instances
Kosovo-Serbia relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Albin Kurti as a threat to Serbs ▶ Kosovo-Serbia relations will improve ▶ Kosovo’s attempt to drive Serbs out of the region ▶ “Greater Albania” by expelling Serbs ▶ Kosovo as part of Serbia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti is preparing “hell” for Serbs ▶ Serbia’s President Vucic has recognized Kosovo ▶ Kosovo Government seeks to create conditions that would push Serbs to leave Kosovo ▶ Kosovo was presented by FIFA as part of Serbia
Student protests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Kosovo aiming to destabilize Serbia ▶ Kosovo seeks the “destruction” of Serbia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Prime Minister Albin Kurti instigating protests in Serbia ▶ The Albanian Terrorist Backing Serbia’s Destroyers
Anti-Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The West is hypocritical and has double standards ▶ U.S.’s stance toward Kosovo’s Government is complicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Kosovo’s independence has set precedents that destabilize the international order ▶ Hovenier has stated that the opposition agrees more with Belgrade’s demands





MONTENEGRO

Throughout the reporting period of October to December 2024, Montenegro was mired in political stalemate with no resolution on the horizon. Repeated [local elections](#) underscored deep political polarization—not only along the overall political divide but also within the state-level governing coalition. Frequent political posturing and backroom agreements have rendered many of the state and municipal institutions blocked or hardly functioning.

Despite positive messages arriving from the EU regarding Montenegro’s potential accession, the situation on the ground was affected by ongoing instability and stalled reforms. The attempt by [members of the ruling coalition to promote](#) Russian-style ‘Law on Foreign Agents’ is a textbook example of the anti-European and anti-Western policies, contrary to their frequent professions of commitment to EU integration and European values.

This instability has offered fertile ground for outside influence, including efforts to generate distrust of the [EU](#), NATO, and other institutions Montenegro belongs to or is looking to join. Domestic media are not the prime agents of disinformation, but the mutual compatibility of several languages used in the region makes it simple for [Russian](#) and pro-Russian media—that use any variant of these languages—to spread propaganda. Social media remains a key multiplier of such tales, shaping public opinion and embedding polarizing rhetoric.



Most impactful themes	Most impactful narratives	Most impactful disinformation instances
Summer Olympics in Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EU supports Nazism ▶ EU is “forcing” a green agenda ▶ EU is interfering in the internal affairs of other countries ▶ European values are distorted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <u>Nazism is welcomed</u> in Montenegro, the EU, the USA and other satellites ▶ The <u>EU</u> prohibits the repair of old vehicles ▶ The <u>EU demands</u> that the unrest in Georgia continue
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interference in the elections ▶ Democrats stole votes ▶ Conspiracy theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <u>Kamala Harris has lost the election</u> in every state that requires a voter ID ▶ Biden did allow the <u>military to intervene in the election</u> ▶ <u>Voting machines in America rigged</u> to automatically vote for Kamala Harris
Conspiracy theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The EU does not support Ukraine anymore ▶ Discrediting Zelenskyy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Borrell admitted <u>Ukraine is no longer important to us</u> ▶ We should get rid of the <u>EU and all these useless psychopathic bureaucrats!</u>





NORTH MACEDONIA

During the last three months of 2024, North Macedonia's disinformation environment has revolved around three topics: EU accession and constitutional reform, U.S. elections, and inter-ethnic relations.

Disinformation about North Macedonia's EU accession during the last quarter of 2024 focused on stoking fears of treason of national interests and loss of sovereignty, particularly regarding the integration of the Bulgarian minority into the Constitution. This type of disinformation and manipulations blame the EU is imposing [inappropriate conditions](#) and unfair terms, while promoting government portrayals of these demands as [reluctance](#) on the part of the EU to accept Western Balkan countries. Russian-aligned politicians and media sources have heightened skepticism regarding EU membership, undermining the trust of the majority of the citizens. Even the Russian Embassy has weighed in by amplifying [spin related to an interview](#) by a Bulgarian historian.

Disinformation regarding the 2024 US presidential election focused on conspiracy theories questioning the legitimacy of the race. Voter fraud, rigged elections, and a fixed outcome have been spreading mainly via social networks, fueling suspicion against democratic processes in general.

Ethnic [relations between Macedonians and Albanians](#) have been a prime focal point, particularly after a change of government coalition left DUI (Democratic Union for Integration)—historically the largest Albanian party—in opposition. The power shift has also spurred controversy over policies like the “balancer” (a policy ensuring ethnic Albanians have access to public positions and administration) and over use of [Albanian](#) language as a second official language in addition to Macedonian. Claims related to those controversies from neighboring countries ([Kosovo](#) and [Albania](#)) also had influence within North Macedonia.

On November 19, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte [appointed](#) Radmila Šekerinska, former Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration and Minister of Defence of North Macedonia, as the next Deputy Secretary General. While most of the country viewed it as a [diplomatic victory](#), her appointment was framed by pro-Russian actors as a move that would [draw the country further into conflict](#) with Russia and China.



Most impactful themes	Most impactful narratives	Most impactful disinformation instances
Anti-Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The West will start the Third World War ▶ Satanization of the West ▶ NATO is a terroristic organization ▶ USA is interfering in internal affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The satanic Anglo-Saxon <u>world is waging a war on two fronts</u> ▶ NATO is a <u>terrorist organization</u> that is poisoning us ▶ This is <u>interference in the internal affairs</u> of the state. And it's not the interference that bothers me, it's the double standards.
Anti-EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EU is elitist towards North Macedonia ▶ EU is imposing unjust conditions ▶ European values are distorted ▶ EU is supporting Nazism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EU is making <u>dictatorial demands</u> on North Macedonia ▶ EU always wanted <u>Macedonia to disappear</u> ▶ The EU legalized <u>trafficking and sexual exploitation</u> of women
US Presidential Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interference in the elections ▶ Democrats stole votes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 15 million votes "<u>disappeared</u>" in the 2024 US election ▶ <u>Kamala Harris has lost the election</u> in every state that requires a voter ID





SERBIA

In the period from October to December 2024, two prevailing discourses in the Serbian media again remained the Ukrainian war and intensifying Belgrade-Pristina tensions, firmly interpreted through perpetuated anti-Western rhetoric. Meanwhile, another major domestic issue—the newly renovated canopy at Novi Sad railway station collapse—stirred outbursts of public outrage and mass protests.

The death of 15 individuals when the newly renovated [canopy in Novi Sad railway station collapsed](#), triggered one of the city’s largest protests. Demonstrations began on [November 5](#) with thousands of people pouring into the streets demanding criminal and political accountability from the government.

The demonstrations later spread to other Serbian cities, with brief, symbolic 15-minute traffic jams carried out in memory of the victims. Students at all the key state universities began sit-ins within days, calling for a full investigation into the rebuilding of the station, prosecution of the perpetrators, and accountability for attacks on protesters. [The student-led protests](#) were the most serious challenge to the government since it took office in 2012.

Student blockades by the end of November on campuses across the country had gained the endorsement of Belgrade and Novi Sad high school students. The protests were dismissed by [pro-government media as](#) “politically motivated” and “opposition-driven,” downplaying their broader social significance. But the movement gained momentum, with common citizens of all classes supporting the students. Their grievances remain straightforward, their base broad, and their energy growing—translating these demonstrations into a force for change irrespective of politics.



Most impactful themes	Most impactful narratives	Most impactful disinformation instances
Anti-Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ West would like to destroy Russia in the same way it destroyed Serbia ▶ The West will start the Third World War ▶ Coup de d'état in America ▶ Domsday day conspiracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Exclusively, <u>Jason Hinkle</u> for Srbin info ▶ The <u>Third World War</u> becomes the "new normal" ▶ <u>How the military can overturn the results</u> of the presidential election! ▶ Trump just told the world <u>when the slaughter begins!</u>
Student protests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The West is attempting a coup in Georgia ▶ The collective West provokes internal conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Opposition <u>abuses the tragedy</u> to stop all constrictions ▶ Borojević on opposition protests: <u>The dead are again being abused in political ways</u> ▶ Đilas' supporters <u>want Vučić to be overthrown</u> ▶ This video is proof: Here are the real leaders of the <u>so-called student blockades in Serbia</u> ▶ These are <u>some of the biggest destructions that have hit the world</u>
Parliamentary elections in Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ China as Serbia's true and sincere friend ▶ China as a defender of Serbia's interests in international arena ▶ The friendship between Serbia and China bothers the West 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The West is once again <u>attempting to carry out a coup in Georgia</u> ▶ The collective West provokes <u>internal conflicts</u> and is not afraid to use dirty geopolitical technologies





KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR



- **WB REGION**

- Slow and gradual EU accession continues to be a cause for skepticism across the Western Balkans, offering rich soil for anti-EU rhetoric. Disinformation campaigns can be expected to increase, portraying the European Union as unjustly requiring conditions from candidate countries and seeking to intervene in their internal policy decisions.
- Disinformation aligning with Russian narratives will remain in the forefront, bringing the West as a destabilizing presence in the region. Overwhelming emphasis will be placed on West 's role in Ukraine and how it affects Balkan security, constructively leading against Western blocs.
- The U.S. presidential elections will undoubtedly be a central focus of disinformation campaigns, with reports calling into question the legitimacy of the electoral process and hypothesizing about the effects on the Western Balkans of a potential Trump presidency.
- Northern Kosovo security incidents will likely serve to feed ethnic tensions and lend legitimacy to Serbian political positions, further polarizing regional debate.
- The Novi Sad protests have broken the present political equilibrium, conversely, governments are able to apply disinformation methods to delegitimize protest movements, commonly linking them to foreign intervention as a way of undermining domestic opposition.



Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Disinformation around Republika Srpska's (RS) potential secession will remain the main topic with Serbian and pro-Russian outlets presenting RS as victimized by coercion into unification by the West. Those stories will be sure to emphasize external pressure against RS, furthering political and cultural exclusion sentiment.

Serbia

- Student Protests and Political Instability: Anti-corruption demonstrations could intensify, prompting pro-state media to discredit demonstrators. The stories typically frame the demonstration as an NGO-led movement backed by Western finance or blamed on Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti with the aim of delegitimizing protest activities.
- Disinformation around NIS Sanctions and energy security are expected to be on the rise. Sanctions against NIS, from its Russian state control, set a deadline of March 15 to pay off. Unless resolved, Croatian JANA pipeline imports of oil would be halted, and Serbian banks would be forced to freeze NIS accounts, rendering its business unviable. With NIS being a major oil and gas supplier, such sanctions would most probably cause energy shortages, price hikes, and general economic instability. Serbia is currently in urgent need to remove Russian ownership or else experience extreme disruption to its energy sector and economy.
- Kosovo
- Disinformation surrounding the use of the Serbian dinar in Kosovo remains to call out strong reactions from the global community and from Serb populations. The decision is commonly put forward as one calculated to separate the Serbian people, fuelling ongoing tensions and moving to generate distrust of the institutions of Kosovo.

Montenegro

- Political instability continues to be a strong risk, compounded by foreign pressures from regional powers interested in influencing Montenegro's internal politics. Pro-Russian actors can be expected to manipulate existing political divisions to undermine Montenegro's integration into the Euro-Atlantic bloc, further increasing the prospect of disinformation campaigns intended to change public opinion against the West.

North Macedonia

- With US foreign policy shifts, increase in disinformation claims on EU is imposing unfair conditions, particularly regarding accession progress negotiations. Disinformation could fuel anti-EU sentiments while also creating contradictory pro-EU messages to confuse and further polarize the public discourse.



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