



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

HOT REPORT

DISINFORMATION TARGETING LITHUANIA'S NUCLEAR SAFETY: WHAT IS BEING BUILT NEAR THE IGNALINA NPP AND WHAT THE KREMLIN AIMS FOR

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THIS REPORT IS BASED ON THE ARTICLE “**A NEW WAVE OF LIES AGAINST LITHUANIAN NUCLEAR FACILITIES: WHAT IS BEING BUILT NEAR THE IGNALINA NPP AND WHAT THE KREMLIN AIMS FOR**” BY DELFI LITHUANIA FACT-CHECKERS.

WHAT'S HOT?

Kremlin-linked actors are reviving long-standing disinformation narratives targeting Lithuania's energy sovereignty. Recent falsehoods claim the Lithuanian government is secretly building a nuclear waste storage facility near Kaunas, intended to store radioactive waste from all over Europe. These narratives seek to erode public trust, incite fear, and weaken support for national energy policies.

What Do We See?

- **False claims of secrecy:** Disinformation claims the Lithuanian government is secretly building a radioactive waste storage facility. In fact, the projects are transparently communicated and bound by strict regulation.
- **Wrong location claims:** The storage facilities are located in Visaginas, not Kaunas. The deep geological repository's location is still undecided and will be selected by 2049.
- **Scare tactics:** Disinformation suggests ecological catastrophe and public health risks, using emotionally charged language about cancer, mutations, and polluted soil and water.
- **Narrative continuity:** Similar narratives have circulated since at least 2023, including claims of foreign waste imports and threats to tourism.
- **Legal reality:** Lithuanian law explicitly prohibits the import of radioactive waste. All projects follow national and international safety regulations.
- **Technical facts:** Storage facilities are designed with reinforced barriers and located far from populated or ecologically sensitive areas. Waste is handled using internationally approved containment and monitoring methods.

Why Does It Work?

- **Fear-mongering:** Radiation and nuclear waste are emotionally powerful subjects that are easily exploited to incite fear.



- **Distrust in institutions:** Keywords like "secretly" are used to erode public confidence in government transparency.
- **Persistent propaganda:** Repeated disinformation campaigns (especially via anonymous social media accounts) build narrative familiarity and reinforce Kremlin goals.
- **Complexity of facts:** Nuclear infrastructure is a complex topic; the public may find it hard to distinguish truth from falsehood.

RISK ASSESSMENT: HIGH

- **Public trust erosion:** Disinformation undermines confidence in the government, scientists, and democratic institutions.
- **Strategic vulnerability:** These narratives weaken support for Lithuania's energy independence and EU-aligned policies.
- **Regional destabilisation:** Falsehoods also target neighbouring countries (Latvia, Belarus) to incite regional tensions.
- **Resource drain:** Government agencies must continuously counter falsehoods, diverting time and resources from core responsibilities.

How to Respond?

For the General Public:

- Stay critical of anonymous sources and sensational claims about national infrastructure.
- Verify facts through credible outlets like Melo detektorius or official government channels.
- Understand that major infrastructure projects in Lithuania are bound by law and subject to public oversight.

For Media Literacy Educators:

- Use this case to illustrate how fear-based disinformation works and how it is emotionally weaponised.
- Teach students to compare claims to legal and institutional sources (e.g., laws, safety standards, INPP communications).
- Analyse how long-term narratives are built through repetition across platforms.

For Policymakers and Officials:

- Continue transparent communication on nuclear projects and engage in proactive myth-busting.
- Increase public outreach around safety procedures and environmental safeguards.
- Work with EU partners to identify coordinated disinformation campaigns and develop a joint response strategy.

FURTHER READING

- World Nuclear Association Country profile: Nuclear Power in Lithuania
- State Nuclear Power Safety Inspectorate (VATESI) Nuclear facilities in Lithuania
- IAEA | CNPP Lithuania Country Highlight 2024

What is BECID?

BECID – the Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders – brings together expertise in fact-checking, media literacy, and journalism across the Baltics. We conduct fact-checks in collaboration with Delfi/Delfi Meedia, monitor disinformation narratives and campaigns under the leadership of investigative journalism organisation Re:Baltica, and promote media literacy through the Baltic Centre for Media Literacy (BCME). We also develop methodologies to effectively counter disinformation. Learn more: becid.ut.ee