



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

HOT REPORT

KREMLIN DISINFORMATION CLAIMS EU IS BEHIND PROTESTS IN GEORGIA

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THIS REPORT IS BASED ON THE ARTICLE **WHY ARE THE GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT AND KREMLIN-FRIENDLY CHANNELS ACCUSING THE EU OF PAYING FOR THE PROTESTS IN TBILISI?** BY DELFI FACT CHECKERS IN LITHUANIAN DELFI.

WHAT'S HOT?

In response to mass civic protests in Georgia, Kremlin-friendly actors and Georgian government officials have spread false narratives that the European Union is financing the unrest. This aligns with Russia's broader disinformation playbook, which aims to delegitimise democratic movements by framing them as foreign-funded operations.

What Do We See?

- **False claims of EU interference:** Pro-Kremlin media and Georgian officials, including Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, accused the EU and its ambassador of supporting an attempted coup.
- **Narrative amplification on social media:** Russian-aligned social media channels in Georgia, Lithuania, and elsewhere falsely claimed the protests were funded by the EU, UK, and USA.
- **Discrediting of legitimate protests:** By linking demonstrations to foreign sponsorship, authorities seek to portray genuine civic outrage as externally orchestrated.
- **Contradictory evidence:** The EU has publicly denied the accusations and froze aid to Georgia in 2024 over concerns about democratic backsliding. All EU funding is publicly reported and does not include support for protests.

Why Does It Work?

- **Weaponisation of foreign agent rhetoric:** Echoing Russian tactics, Georgian authorities label civic movements as foreign-influenced to justify crackdowns.
- **Historical narrative repetition:** The same disinformation tactics were used during Ukraine's Maidan protests, falsely claiming Western sponsorship.



- **Distracting from democratic failures:** The narrative shifts public attention from accusations of election rigging and governance failures to a fabricated external threat.
- **Psychological appeal:** Framing protests as foreign-funded triggers nationalistic sentiments and mistrust toward the West.

RISK ASSESSMENT: HIGH

- **Threat to democracy:** Disinformation discredits legitimate civic expression and undermines faith in democratic processes.
- **Fuel for repression:** The foreign interference narrative justifies state violence, arrests, and censorship.
- **Regional destabilisation:** Such campaigns may erode public support for EU integration and increase Kremlin influence in the region.
- **Information manipulation:** Russia uses this narrative to influence international opinion and intimidate its own population with tales of Western chaos.

How to Respond?

For the General Public:

- Be critical of narratives framing civic protests as foreign-funded without evidence.
- Rely on trusted fact-checkers like "Melo detektorius" and official EU communications.
- Understand that legitimate protests often arise from public discontent—not foreign sponsorship.

For Educators and Media Literacy Practitioners:

- Use this case to demonstrate how disinformation mimics legitimate political critique.
- Teach the difference between foreign support for civil society and accusations of foreign-orchestrated unrest.
- Encourage critical thinking and cross-referencing of claims with reliable sources.

For Policymakers and Institutions:

- Strengthen public communication to clarify the EU's role and funding practices.
- Support regional fact-checkers and journalists in debunking disinformation.
- Build resilience by increasing transparency and civic education in candidate countries.

- **Strengthen Trust in Institutions Through Local Engagement.** Highlight transparency in vaccine approval, monitoring, and reporting processes. Where possible, collaborate with local community leaders, midwives, or alternative health practitioners who are trusted by hesitant individuals, to co-create educational efforts.
- **Tailor Messaging.** Move away from one-size-fits-all public health campaigns. Develop personalised communication strategies for different belief clusters (e.g., those with strong individualist values vs. those motivated by child safety).

For Policymakers and Health Officials:

- Invest in trust-building with communities through transparent, localised communication.
- Tailor public health messaging to address different types of hesitancy, including emotional and informational factors.
- Support interdisciplinary research that includes sociocultural and psychological dimensions of vaccine hesitancy.

FURTHER READING

- Euronews Georgia. „[Georgia heads to municipal elections amid partial opposition boycott](#)“. 2025 m. spalio 3 d.
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- Georgia Today. „[Ruling party secures mayoral victories in all major Georgian cities](#)“. 2025 m. spalio 5 d.
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- Parulava, Dato. „[Georgia hits brakes on EU accession bid](#)“. 2025 m. lapkričio 28 d.
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- European Commission. „[Georgia](#)“.
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- AP. „Georgians protest against draft law on media, nonprofits“. 2023 m. kovo 8 d.
- Gavin, Gabriel. „[EU strips Georgia of €121M in funding over 'democratic backsliding'](#)“. 2024 m. spalio 8 d.
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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