



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

QUARTERLY BRIEF FOR BECID 2

SUMMER 2026



Co-funded by
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PARTNER ACTIVITIES

Delfi Lithuania

From 17 to 19 June, Delfi Lithuania, together with the International Fact-Checking Network at Poynter, LRT and EFCSN, co-organised **GlobalFact 2026** in Vilnius, bringing together the international fact-checking community to discuss artificial intelligence, information integrity, disinformation and the future of fact-checking. **Aistė Meidutė**, editor and senior fact-checker at Delfi's Melo detektorius, contributed to discussions on whole-of-society resilience and responsible communication about security threats, while fact-checker **Monika Jakimčukė** participated in a panel addressing information overload.

Earlier in June, Aistė Meidutė represented Delfi at the **14th POINT Conference** in Sarajevo. During the session "The Truth According to AI", she presented findings from testing how popular AI assistants respond to sensitive geopolitical questions. The work showed that some AI tools relied on Russian state-controlled media sources, highlighting the risk that AI assistants can reproduce propaganda narratives and reinforce existing information bubbles.

Delfi Lithuania also continued its international investigative work with partners in the **ATAFIMI project**. One investigation examined how Kremlin-linked disinformation campaigns exploit major international events to weaken support for Ukraine, while another explored the use of mockery, satire and AI-generated content – described as "**hahaganda**" – to undermine trust in Ukraine and its Western allies. The investigations documented the use of deepfakes, fabricated media content, manipulated visuals and other techniques within coordinated cross-border influence operations.

A further international investigation examined how **Kremlin-linked campaigns adapt disinformation to specific national and social contexts**. The research highlighted increasingly sophisticated influence operations involving AI-assisted translation, deepfakes, manipulated video and locally tailored propaganda, including narratives targeting Ukraine, European leaders, LGBTQ+ communities and international institutions.

From 3 to 7 August, Aistė Meidutė travelled to Taipei, Taiwan, at the invitation of Reporters Without Borders for a professional exchange focused on Taiwan's media environment and resilience to foreign interference. As part of a delegation of journalists from Central and Eastern Europe, she met representatives of independent Taiwanese media organisations and media resilience experts, as well as Taiwan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, François Wu. Discussions addressed Taiwan's information-security challenges and the importance of international cooperation.

Monika Jakimčukė also participated in the **Summer School of Investigative Reporting at SSE Riga**, developing her skills in OSINT, AI-powered investigative tools and

storytelling. The training supports Delfi's ongoing fact-checking and investigative work, particularly the verification of complex digital material and identification of emerging forms of disinformation.

Re:Baltica (Latvia)

Nothing to report under partner activities for this period.

University of Tartu (Estonia)

During the summer, University of Tartu experts continued extensive media literacy training, public outreach and engagement with professional and international audiences. In June, **Maia Klaassen** trained Russian-speaking teachers on hybrid activities and information manipulation, using BECID cases as practical examples. **Maria Murumaa-Mengel** delivered training on children, young people and social media, and presented BECID's practice-oriented approach to combating information disorder and strengthening societal resilience during a visit by an Armenian delegation to Tartu.

At **GlobalFact 2026 in Vilnius**, Maria Murumaa-Mengel participated as a panellist and moderator in the discussion "Media Literacy 2.0: Training the AI-Native Generation". She also contributed to public discussions in Estonia on children and social media, including the lessons that can be drawn from Australia's approach to social-media restrictions. Her media outreach during the period addressed issues including social media and trust in courts, youth media practices, and the role of media literacy and civil society in the Baltic response to Russian disinformation.

In July, Maria Murumaa-Mengel spoke at the **Estonian Librarians' Summer Academy** on memory institutions and information disorder. Together with **Maia Klaassen** and **Gretel Juhansoo**, she also contributed to a summer school on disinformation in Tartu, with teaching sessions covering media theories, technological developments and digital media literacy.

Activities continued in August with a strong focus on media literacy in public and professional settings. **Inger Klesment** participated in a panel discussion at the Opinion Festival and presented "How to Teach Digital Literacy Without a Single Screen" at the nationwide museum education information day "**Oma aru ja tehis**" at KUMU Art Museum.

Maria Murumaa-Mengel contributed workshops on information resilience at Baltic Shield Project events in Tallinn and Riga, participated in a discussion at the Opinion Festival on whether social media requires stronger oversight, and contributed to the Mondo Global Education Conference in Tallinn through a workshop, lecture and moderation.

The University of Tartu team also prepared an English-language introduction to the **BECID Propawheel**, making the media literacy intervention more accessible for international audiences and supporting its further use and adaptation.

In August, Gretel Juhansoo spoke at the **KiVa Summer School**, bringing together teachers from across Estonia. Her session focused on youth slang, social steganography, and the ways young people communicate and encode meaning in online spaces.

Gretel also opened the President Kaljulaid Foundation event “**Kui TikTok möllab klassiruumis: kuidas rääkida õpilastega äärmuslikest soorollidest?**”, where she spoke about social media use among children and young people, with a particular focus on how social media platforms and their algorithms shape their online experiences.

At the **Estonian Research Council (ETAG) Summer School**, Gretel led a workshop on communicating science and educational topics to younger audiences. The summerschool hosted both formal education and GLAM specialists.

Delfi Estonia (Faktikontroll)

In June, Delfi Estonia’s investigative and fact-checking desk participated in **GlobalFact 2026**, where discussions focused on major challenges facing fact-checkers, including artificial intelligence, information integrity, financial sustainability, political pressure and investigations into online disinformation campaigns.

Holger Roonemaa, head of Delfi Estonia’s investigative and fact-checking desk, participated in two panels. One addressed investigative methods used to uncover Russian hybrid operations, the Kremlin’s ambitions in the Baltic Sea region and attempts to build political influence in Western countries. The second focused on responsible reporting about security threats and the “Next in Line” framing, examining how sensationalist reporting about the possibility of war in the Baltic States can contribute to public anxiety and amplify disinformation.

Baltic Centre for Media Excellence (Latvia)

The Baltic Centre for Media Excellence continued its work on media literacy, professional capacity building and public engagement during the summer period.

As part of BECID’s media and information literacy activities, BCME delivered training for library and museum professionals in Lithuania, including a session in Visaginas on 5 June following earlier sessions in Šiauliai and Kaunas. Across the three trainings, **98 library professionals** were reached. The sessions focused on responsible digital communication, social media and resilience against disinformation, strengthening the capacity of memory institutions to support more informed and resilient communities.

On 9 June, the BCME team attended the British Embassy Riga's celebration of His Majesty The King's Birthday, strengthening relationships with partners and stakeholders while reaffirming our shared commitment to independent media, democratic resilience, and UK–Baltic cooperation.

On 10 July, the performance “**Latvian Language Lessons**” premiered at the LAMPA Conversation Festival in Cēsis. On the same day, BCME Executive Director Gunta Sloga led the “Media Detective” media literacy class for children aged four to seven in the festival's Mini LAMPA programme.

On 11 July, Gunta Sloga moderated the discussion “**Does Women's Self-Censorship Threaten Democracy?**” at LAMPA. The discussion examined how gendered disinformation, coordinated online harassment and hate campaigns can discourage women from participating in public debate and, in turn, undermine democratic processes.

On 13 August, the performance Latvian Language Lessons (Latviešu valodas stundas) was presented at Visaginas Cultural Centre “Draugystė” in Lithuania as part of the BECID project.

The performance tells the story of Kolya, who was born and lives in Latvia and is preparing for the state language exam. His journey becomes a deeper exploration of belonging, self-worth, and the pressure of constantly having to prove one's place in society.

Through Kolya's experiences and his provocative inner voice, the performance explores the psychological and political dimensions of decolonisation, as well as the influence of propaganda, stereotypes, and unresolved social tensions.

On 25 August in Tallinn and **27 August in Riga**, Maria Murumaa-Mengel, Ph.D. in Media and Communication and Associate Professor of Media Studies at the University of Tartu, participated in the **BCME Baltic Shield: Strengthening Independent Media Launch Events**. As part of the programme, Maria led a workshop on social and informational resilience.

On 27 August, BCME representative Agnese Ēķe-Cēsniiece participated in the launch of the British Council project “Women Leading Local Resilience”, hosted at and supported by the British Embassy. The event marked the launch of a new initiative focused on strengthening local resilience and supporting women's leadership in their communities.

NEW BECID WEBSITE

On 24 August, BECID launched its renewed website from becid.ut.ee to **becid.eu**. The redesign followed technical and usability challenges experienced with the website

developed during the project's initial phase. A decision was therefore made at the end of May to commission a professional third party to develop a more stable, manageable and user-friendly platform.

The new website has a simpler and more logical structure designed to make BECID's work easier to discover and navigate. It is available in **English, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian**, ensuring that the languages of BECID's partner countries are represented.

Fact-checking has been placed at the centre of the website's structure, with recent fact-checks given prominent visibility on the homepage. The renewed platform also provides a clearer entry point to BECID's wider work on disinformation monitoring, media literacy, research, events and resources.

The redesigned website provides BECID with a more sustainable communication platform for presenting the consortium's work and making its outputs accessible to audiences across the Baltic States and beyond.

OUTREACH EVENTS

GLAM-SECTOR WEBINARS

GLAM-Sector Webinar: Fraud and Scams

On 1 June, BECID organised another webinar for professionals working in galleries, libraries, archives and museums across the Baltic States. Responding to the increasing sophistication and financial impact of online fraud, the webinar focused on **fraud, scams and digital safety**.

The topic is particularly relevant for memory institutions, whose staff are frequently approached by visitors seeking help with digital services, suspicious messages and online information. Older adults and people with less digital experience can be particularly reliant on these institutions for guidance.

The webinar attracted **153 participants**, including 83 participants in the Estonian breakout room, 50 in the Latvian room and 20 in the Lithuanian room.

In Estonia, **Maarja Punak**, police officer and Head of Communications at the Police and Border Guard Board, discussed the increasing sophistication of online fraud. Approximately €8 million had already been lost to fraudsters in Estonia during the year. Particular attention was given to combination scams involving the impersonation of several organisations and the emerging threat posed by AI-generated and manipulated material.

In Latvia, **Marina Ivanova** from the New East Culture Institute examined the recurring psychological “script” behind scams and emphasised how emotional pressure and cognitive manipulation can affect people regardless of age or education. In Lithuania, **Gertruda Pliaukštytė** presented fraud and data-breach cases and provided practical recommendations for protecting personal data, with particular attention to secure password practices.

The webinar highlighted the important role memory institutions can play in helping communities recognise fraud, practise safer online behaviour and navigate an increasingly complex digital environment.

GLAM-Sector Webinar: Algorithms

On 10 August, BECID held another webinar for Baltic GLAM-sector professionals, this time focusing on **social media algorithms, changing information-seeking habits and the ways recommendation systems shape everyday information environments**.

The Estonian-language session was led by BECID media literacy expert **Gretel Juhansoo** and examined how recommendation algorithms operate, why emotionally charged content can gain greater visibility, how filter bubbles form, and why personalised feeds are particularly attractive to users. **Jānis Sildniks**, Head of Social Media at Delfi.lv and host of Science or Stupidity, led the Latvian breakout room, while **Gintarė Ribokaitė**, Head of Social Media and SEO Optimization at APG Media, led the Lithuanian session.

Discussions highlighted the limited transparency surrounding the precise operation of platform algorithms and explored how recommendation systems can gradually lead users into information “rabbit holes” and increasingly narrow information environments. At the same time, participants discussed a growing preference for content perceived as genuinely human and authentic as AI-generated material becomes more widespread.

Participants also received practical recommendations for gaining greater control over their information environments, including reviewing platform settings, diversifying information sources and actively reducing repetitive or unwanted content in their feeds.

HOT REPORTS

During the summer, BECID published three Hot Reports examining emerging and evolving disinformation narratives affecting Lithuania and the wider Baltic information environment.

Ukrainian Military Specialists in Lithuania – How Drone Defence Cooperation Is Reframed as Aggression

The July Hot Report examined a pro-Kremlin narrative surrounding plans for Ukrainian military specialists to share their practical experience of countering drone threats with Lithuania and other countries in the region.

Pro-Kremlin actors reframed this defensive cooperation as evidence that Ukrainian specialists were being sent to coordinate attacks against Russia from Baltic territory. The report shows how the claim builds on an established narrative portraying Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania not simply as supporters of Ukraine but as direct participants in military action against Russia.

The narrative relies on several recurring manipulation techniques: defensive measures are reframed as offensive action, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is removed from the causal chain, and the Baltic States are portrayed as provocateurs. The report traces how this storyline developed from disputed drone incidents into allegations that Baltic airspace was being deliberately opened for Ukrainian attacks, before incorporating EU and NATO involvement and, finally, the arrival of Ukrainian drone specialists.

The report stresses the importance of clearly explaining the distinction between **drone defence and drone operations**, proactively communicating the purpose of international cooperation, and helping audiences distinguish verified facts from unsupported interpretations.

Digital Euro Disinformation: From Payment Innovation to a Narrative of Population Control

A second July Hot Report examined misleading narratives surrounding the proposed **digital euro**.

As the initiative moves through the EU decision-making process, social media narratives have increasingly portrayed the digital euro as a mechanism for surveillance and population control. False claims suggest that authorities would be able to restrict purchases, impose spending limits, determine where money can be used, introduce expiry dates for funds and ultimately abolish cash.

The report demonstrates how genuine aspects of the proposal are combined with fabricated restrictions. For example, discussion of a possible limit on the amount of digital euro held in a wallet has been misleadingly presented alongside invented claims about transaction limits and monthly spending caps.

This combination of fact and falsehood makes the narrative particularly persuasive. Financial privacy, savings and personal purchasing decisions are emotionally sensitive issues, while the technical complexity and still-evolving nature of the digital euro create opportunities for hypothetical possibilities to be presented as established facts.

The report assesses the information risk as **medium to high**, warning that such narratives can undermine trust in the European Central Bank, EU institutions and national governments while encouraging resistance to the digital euro before its final design has been established.

Russia Is “Not Interested” in Lithuania – A Narrative Designed to Undermine Defence

BECID’s August Hot Report examined a persistent pro-Kremlin narrative claiming that Russia poses no meaningful threat to Lithuania and has no interest in attacking the country. From this premise, Lithuania’s investments in defence are portrayed as unnecessary, provocative and economically damaging.

The narrative combines several mutually reinforcing claims. Russia is presented as harmless, Lithuanian defence expenditure as wasteful, NATO measures as provocations, and Lithuania as incapable of defending itself or relying on its allies. At the same time, Russian military power is exaggerated to suggest that resistance would be futile.

The report highlights the contradiction at the heart of the narrative: audiences are simultaneously told that Russia poses no threat and that it is too powerful to resist. It also contrasts this framing with documented hybrid activity, including cyber espionage, information operations and suspected sabotage.

The report assesses the risk as **high**, particularly because the narrative directly targets public confidence in Lithuania’s security policy, defence investment and NATO’s collective-defence commitments. Effective responses therefore require explaining defence policy through clear cause-and-effect relationships, connecting hybrid threats with concrete examples and avoiding exaggerated threat communication.

D4.2 PHYSICAL MIL INTERVENTION GUIDE ON ELECTIONS

In July, BECID completed the **D4.2 Physical MIL Intervention Guide on Elections**, developed by University of Tartu and BCME experts as part of BECID’s media and information literacy work.

The guide responds to the growing pressure placed on contemporary information environments during election periods, when political communication, algorithmic amplification, polarisation, misinformation and foreign information manipulation can interact and make it increasingly difficult for citizens to recognise manipulative political messaging.

At the centre of the guide is BECID’s **Propawheel**, a physical media literacy intervention first developed in connection with Estonia’s 2025 local government elections. Visitors

spin a wheel featuring **eight common manipulation techniques** used in political communication, including fearmongering, labelling, personal attacks, demagoguery and “us versus them” narratives. Each technique is accompanied by explanations and real-world examples based on BECID research and EDMO materials.

The Propawheel was initially piloted at the University of Tartu Library, with particular attention to young voters, who can participate in Estonian local elections from the age of 16. It was subsequently adapted for other settings, including the **AHHAA Science Centre, The Game in Tartu and Pärnu Koidula Gymnasium**, demonstrating that the intervention can also support broader discussions about social media, AI-generated content and audiovisual misinformation.

The guide also describes the further adaptation of the concept in Latvia. Re and Latvian public service media are developing educational content covering eight common information-manipulation techniques, using authentic examples from contemporary political communication. The materials are scheduled for phased publication between mid-August and mid-September ahead of the Latvian parliamentary elections on 3 October 2026. They will subsequently be brought together in an interactive digital repository and game/quiz format. The Latvian implementation will also serve as a pilot for possible adaptation in Lithuania ahead of its 2027 local elections.

By combining physical, digital and game-based learning approaches, the intervention demonstrates how media literacy can be embedded in everyday public spaces and adapted to different national and electoral contexts.

D2.3 MID-TERM COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION REPORT

The **D2.3 Mid-term Communication and Dissemination Report** assesses BECID2’s communication, dissemination, outreach and engagement activities during the project’s first 15 months, from June 2025 to August 2026. During this period, BECID established a Baltic-wide, multi-channel communication system combining its own website, social media, newsletters and quarterly briefs with partner media channels, professional networks, public events, webinars and international cooperation.

By August 2026, BECID and its partners had produced approximately **240 fact-checking publications, 16 Hot Reports and six BaltsTeachMIL webinars**, alongside 20 educational tools and materials, six public campaigns and five in-person library/GLAM workshops. BECID representatives had also participated in more than 40 conferences and maintained extensive public and professional outreach across the Baltic States and internationally.

The report concludes that BECID2 has successfully moved from establishing its communication infrastructure to operating a broad dissemination ecosystem connecting fact-checking, investigative journalism, research, media literacy and policy outreach.

A key strength is the use of partner networks to extend BECID's reach beyond its own channels and engage audiences ranging from children and educators to journalists, policymakers and civil-society organisations. The main challenge identified for the next reporting period is improving the systematic collection of reach, engagement and impact data across partner platforms and activities.

SECTION OF INTEREST: CROSS-BORDER EARLY WARNING ON HYBRID AND INFORMATION THREATS

BECID has strengthened rapid and continuous information exchange between its Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian partners to support early detection of emerging hybrid threats, information manipulation and potential election interference. Information is shared through a dedicated WhatsApp group and regular consortium meetings, enabling partners to quickly exchange observations, compare developments across countries and identify potentially coordinated or cross-border influence activities.

This cooperation functions as an informal regional early-warning mechanism. Cases detected in one Baltic country can alert partners in neighbouring countries to monitor similar narratives, tactics and manipulation patterns in their own information environments. The shared information is also used nationally to raise awareness of potential information threats among relevant stakeholders.

Recent monitoring illustrates the importance of this approach. BECID partners have identified narratives that minimise the security threat posed by Russia, question increased defence expenditure and NATO's reliability, and portray Baltic and Ukrainian defensive cooperation as aggression or provocation against Russia. A related case demonstrates how claims about Ukrainian drone-defence specialists were incorporated into a broader and evolving narrative portraying the Baltic states as participants in attacks against Russia and as provocateurs of a wider conflict. Other monitored narratives exploit societal concerns, including financial surveillance and distrust of EU institutions, demonstrating how genuine policy debates can be combined with misleading claims to reinforce broader narratives of institutional control and distrust.

This continuous regional exchange is particularly important in the context of upcoming elections in Estonia and Latvia, as well as elections in Russia. BECID partners maintain heightened attention to Russian activities and related information operations concerning elections and potential election interference, mobilisation and military preparedness, cyber and other hybrid activities, and attempts to increase distrust and polarisation within Baltic societies.

The cross-border perspective allows BECID partners to move beyond monitoring individual false claims and identify broader patterns as they develop across the region. Rapid partner-to-partner information exchange therefore strengthens shared situational

awareness and provides a practical mechanism for anticipating the potential spread and adaptation of information manipulation and hybrid threats across the Baltic information space.