(English version)

Question for written answer E-002448/24
to the Commission
Raphaël Glucksmann (S&D)
(6 November 2024)

Subject: Pro-Russian campaigns in Italy

As of the end of August 2024, a significant number of 3x2 and 6x3 metre propaganda posters and billboards advertising the slogan ‘Russia is not our enemy’ had been spotted in various Italian cities, including Modena, Parma and Verona, and in the Calabria region.

Linkiesta’s journalists revealed that the advertising spaces for the estimated EUR 30 000-50 000 propaganda campaign were purchased by Domenico Aglioti, former Rome city councillor and founder of the Five Star Movement.

In light of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of these dangerous pro-Russia campaigns?

2. Does it consider these purchases to be in breach of EU sanctions against Russia?

3. Does it intend to take measures to put an end to these actions? If yes, could the Commission provide relevant examples?

Submitted: 6.11.2024

Answer given by Ms Albuquerque on behalf of the European Commission
(21 January 2025)

The EU is aware of the ongoing campaigns and the *modus operandi* of the Russian government. The EU has detected and exposed several foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) operations coming from the Russian state or pro-Kremlin actors.

In response to Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU has taken steps to combat Russian information manipulation and interference, including disinformation in the territory of the EU, amongst others through the restriction of broadcasting of content of certain outlets, which engage in continuous, and concerted propaganda actions and which support the war of aggression ([1]).

The EU has, however, also banned operators from providing advertising services to the Russian state or Russian legal person ([2]).

The purchase and/or provision of advertising space in the EU, if carried out on behalf of the Russian state or Russian legal person, is prohibited.

The Member States shall ensure that any violations of these prohibitions amount to criminal offences, in line with the obligations set out in the directive (EU) 2024/1226 ([3]).

The EU coordinates closely with the EU Member States and EU institutions on FIMI activity in the context of the Rapid Alert System (RAS), including with regards to the Social Design Agency ([4]) as well as other entities with links to such operations.

([1]) Article 2f of Council Regulation (EU) 833/2014; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02014R0833-20241029

([2]) Article 5n of Council Regulation (EU) 833/2014; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02014R0833-20241029

([3]) Directive (EU) 2024/1226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 on the definition of criminal offences and penalties for the violation of Union restrictive measures and amending Directive (EU) 2018/1673; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1226/oj

([4]) Russian IT company listed, see https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A32023D1566