

# DIS!NFO

BRIEF



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## ADRIA PORTAL CONTINUES ITS CAMPAIGN FOR KOSOVO'S RECOGNITION WITHDRAWAL

### NARRATIVE

As the Digital Forensic Center already wrote in the previous issue of the Disinfo Brief, the portal Adria, whose owner Bratislav Stoilković was banned from entering Montenegro at the request of the National Security Agency (ANB) for trying to influence the elections in Montenegro, is campaigning through its articles for the Montenegrin Government to withdraw recognition of Kosovo. Portal *Adria* continues to publish interviews with interlocutors from Serbia, in which one of the key questions is: *Do you expect that in the future Montenegro will withdraw the recognition of so-called Kosovo?* Apart from the president of the Serbian-Greek Movement Hristos Aleksopoulos, the president of the National Assembly of Serbia Vladimir Orlić, the president of the Association of Albanians in Serbia Demo Beriša and the Minister of Defense of Serbia Miloš Vučević, the opportunity to comment on the subject got the member of the Assembly of Serbia Uglješa Grgur and the head of the parliamentary group SPS and member of the Serbian National Assembly Snežana Paunović. Grgur pointed out that he hopes that with the arrival of a new president in Montenegro, the time will come to decide on withdrawing the recognition of Kosovo. In his opinion, this will happen *because it is in the interest of Montenegro and it will be understood that the decision to recognize the fake state of Kosovo was made illegally and against the will of the majority of Montenegro.* Panunović agrees with Grgur and adds that the decision to recognize the independence of Kosovo was neither wise, political, nor good for the people of Montenegro, but *the decision was the result of personal arrangements for the sake of staying in power.* At a time when international actors are making efforts to reach a solution in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, the *Adria* portal is trying to influence public opinion in Montenegro on the issue of Kosovo.

## MILO ĐUKANOVIĆ DID NOT FLEE MONTENEGRO

### DISINFORMATION

In anticipation of the presidential elections scheduled for March 19, the media in the region are bidding daily on the names of presidential candidates, especially of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), reporting on future candidates, evaluating the results, with all of this followed by sensationalist headlines trying to mislead the public. As during the previous election cycles, which the DFC wrote about, numerous narratives and disinformation are published in the media in Serbia. The same is this time. On February 16, Portal *Srbija danas* published an article with the sensational headline, *THE MONTENEGRO MEDIA WRITE - MILO FLED MONTENEGRO? Left DPS in the lurch! Time is running out, he finally realized that the END has come.* The mentioned portal refers to the writing of the Montenegrin portal *Borba*. However, in the article published on the *Borba* portal, nowhere does it explicitly state that the president of DPS and Montenegro fled the country. *Borba* notes that as their portal learns from reliable DPS sources, Milo Đukanović continued to

ignore DPS officials and management, being out of the country for days and not communicating with them. This is precisely the part that the portal *Srbija danas* also reported in the text, which leads to the conclusion that the article's content does not agree with the title. In this way, an attempt was made to attract readers' attention. However, even the information that Đukanović was out of the country for days turned out to be false, because, at the time of the publication of these texts, the president was in the country and performing regular activities. During the local elections in Nikšić in March 2021 and during the parliamentary elections in August 2020, the media from Serbia wrote about the alleged escape of President Đukanović, which the DFC pointed out. It is indicative that the portal *Srbija danas* also introduced the section Elections in Montenegro, which is not the first time this has happened - portals *Novosti* and *Alo* did the same name during the local elections in Nikšić in 2021.

## OLD PHOTO USED FOR NEW MANIPULATIONS

### DISINFORMATION

The Government of Montenegro has decided to take over the ferry line between Kamenari and Lepetane and announced that the state will have its own ferries and generate revenue, which has caused numerous reactions from both political structures and the wider public. The consequences of this decision are long queues and citizen dissatisfaction, especially since only one ferry now operates on that line. Many users on social media have commented on this decision, but particular attention was drawn to the engagement of a smaller ferry that was handed over to the Public Company Morsko Dobro by a private company. The social media was filled with a series of photos and comments mocking and criticizing such a decision made by the Montenegrin government, and particular attention was drawn to a photo of a priest during the consecration ceremony of the ferry appeared on social media, which has been shared on many accounts and generated numerous comments. However, in addition to social media, the photo also appeared on the *Aktuelno* portal as part of an article entitled *VASILJE'S FERRY TRIALS: Not even a priest can help against the government's vindictive populism*. The *Aktuelno* portal reported in the article that the aforementioned photo appeared on social media, but it is unknown whether it was taken on the day when the ferry first started operating on that route. Nevertheless, this photo is not from the current period but is three years old. The photo was taken from a video published on September 11 by *Portal Analitika* in 2020 in an article titled "Ready to Sail: Ferry Consecrated in the Bay (VIDEO)". Therefore, by recycling an old photo, an attempt was made to deceive and disinform the public about current events and provoke strong reactions from the public in an already tense socio-political moment.

## NEW ELECTIONS, NEW FICTITIOUS SURVEY

### FAKE NEWS

In addition to disinformation and narratives that President Milo Đukanović fled the country before the elections, Serbian media, as well as in previous electoral processes in Montenegro, are promoting false polls that present inaccurate, invented data and favor pro-Serbian candidates. The *Glas javnosti* portal published an article on February 21, titled *EXCLUSIVE: RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC OPINION POLL CONDUCTED BY GERMAN EMBASSY IN PODGORICA*. According to this portal, the German Embassy in Podgorica allegedly ordered a pre-election survey, which is fake news. German Ambassador to Montenegro Peter Felten clearly stated that the Embassy does not conduct surveys. The article is also problematic in that Goran Danilovic is presented as a candidate for the Demos party in the alleged survey, even though Danilovic left the party several years ago and founded his own party, United Montenegro

(Ujedinjena Crna Gora), before which he ran for president. After publication, the content was promoted by the Borba portal, as well as several Facebook pages. The first of these, *Nikšić ponosni srpski grad* (Nikšić - proud Serbian city), was active during the local elections in Nikšić in 2021, participating in coordinated activities, which DFC wrote about in the analysis of *Local elections of regional importance*. From the mentioned page, the fake news about the survey was coordinatedly shared from several same accounts. In the coming elections, DFC will inform and alert citizens about activities that may affect their perception of socio-political events.

## FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA POLLS ATTRIBUTED TO IPSOS

### FAKE NEWS

Fake public opinion polls during the presidential election campaign continue, and social media is a particularly fertile ground for such types of manipulation. On February 25, a new fake public opinion poll appeared on social media in anticipation of the presidential elections scheduled for March 19. The alleged poll was published on the Facebook account Vojvoda Momcilo, stating that the ISPOS agency had conducted the research. This is a lie, as the organization did not conduct this poll, which was confirmed by the portal *Raskrinkavanje.me*. According to the results of this alleged poll, the current president, Milo Đukanović, was expected to do best in the first round of the presidential elections with 38.8% support, followed by Jakov Milatović with 22.3%, Andrija Mandić with 16.8%, and Aleksa Bečić with 10.6%. Projections for the second round were also given, presenting the balance of power between Milo Đukanović and Jakov Milatović, Aleksa Bečić, and Andrija Mandić separately. This is not the first time that fake polls have been attributed to reputable agencies such as IPSOS in an attempt to influence public opinion, as previously reported by DFC.

## TRAINING FOR JOURNALISTS ON OSINT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

### DFC TRAINING

The Digital Forensic Center (DFC) organized a one-day training on OSINT methods and techniques for journalists in Montenegro. The lecturer was our analyst Milan Jovanović, and the participants were interested representatives of the media, including those from the Agencija Mina, Pobjeda, Antena M, Gradski portal, M portal, and Portal Analitika. The training covered techniques for searching, collecting, analyzing, and using publicly available data, search engine operators, and internet domains, as well as security and advanced searches on the internet - email, browsers, and social media.

The training helped journalists to go beyond Google and access informa-

tion and data that is freely and publicly available online but often hidden; to select information and evidence to formulate solid conclusions and to deal more effectively with disinformation and fake news. In practice, this usually means information found on the Internet, but technically all other public information such as books, documents, reports, media articles, or statements.

DFC will write more about the super-useful OSINT and investigative methods and techniques it entails in the coming period, so stay tuned and follow us on social media and the website.



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