

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



DG Budget and Administration
The Director-General

Brussels, **27 SEP. 2017**
eeas.sg.affgen.2 (2017) 4999047

Mr. Alberto Alemanno
ask+request-4559-0ef4678f@asktheeu.org

Subject: Your request for access to documents
Our ref.: 2017/101

Dear Mr. Alemanno,

Thank you for your email dated 4/9/2017, confirming your request of 9/8/2017, which we have examined in the framework of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001¹.

As requested, I have examined your confirmatory application dated 4/9/2017 based on the clarifications you provided therein. I concluded that the situation is as follows:

- In response to your request (a) of 9 August 2017 (document or other medium listing the criteria enabling EEAS East Stratcom Task Force and its partners to identify and collect "disinformation examples"):

The Task Force's website, www.euvsdisinfo.eu, states that "The Disinformation Review does not necessarily imply that the outlet concerned is linked to the Kremlin or pro-Kremlin, or that it has intentionally sought to disinform. The Review analyses messages, not the messenger. If the message is a) false, which is determined by the facts, and b) originating and/or in line with usual pro-Kremlin disinformation messaging, it is included in the product. The Review is a compilation of cases from the East StratCom Task Force's wide network of contributors and therefore cannot be considered an official EU position".

- In response to your request (b) of 9 August 2017 (document or other medium defining the criteria (or other requirements) partner organisations need to satisfy to join the network):

Decisions are taken on an ad hoc and case by case basis depending on the Task Force's daily contacts, hence no such document exists. However, in selecting contributors, the Task Force

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (hereafter the "Regulation").

considers minimum requirements such as impartiality, track record and reliability of sources. It also vets contributions one by one to ensure their reliability.

- In response to your request (c) of 9 August 2017 (document or other medium defining whether and how EEAS East Stratcom Task Force and its partners engage with entities whose news and/or views are listed in the Disinformation Review):

The Task Force does not engage systematically with entities it lists in its weekly review, hence no such document exists. However, the Task Force's website, www.euvdisinfo.eu, clearly offers on its home page the opportunity to contact the Task Force to give feedback or report a suspected mistake.


- In response to your request (d) of 9 August 2017 (correspondence between EEAS East Stratcom Task Force and other EU institutions regarding a, b and c):

The Task Force is the only part of the EU institutions actively engaged in addressing the challenge identified by the March 2015 European Council of "Russia's ongoing disinformation campaign", hence no such correspondence with other EU institutions on how this work should be carried out exists.

I also took note that the Division in charge sent you the European Council conclusions of 19 and 20 March 2015 and the Q&A section on the official EEAS website. With the clarifications provided in this letter, I hope your request for access to documents has been fulfilled.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for access to documents you may, in accordance with Article 8 of the Regulation, institute court proceedings against the European External Action Service and/or make a complaint to the Ombudsman, under the conditions laid down in Articles 263 and 228 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU respectively.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Di Vita', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Gianmarco Di Vita