



EUROPE

## Russia and China push 'fake news' on coronavirus crisis, report claims

EU officials claim Moscow and Beijing continue to peddle disinformation on social media whose aim is to undermine the European Union and its partners.



To give you the best possible experience, this site uses cookies. If you continue browsing, you accept our use of cookies. You can review our privacy policy to find out more about the cookies we use.

Accept

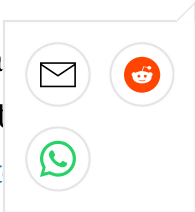


By MARK SCOTT

04/01/2020 12:07 AM EDT



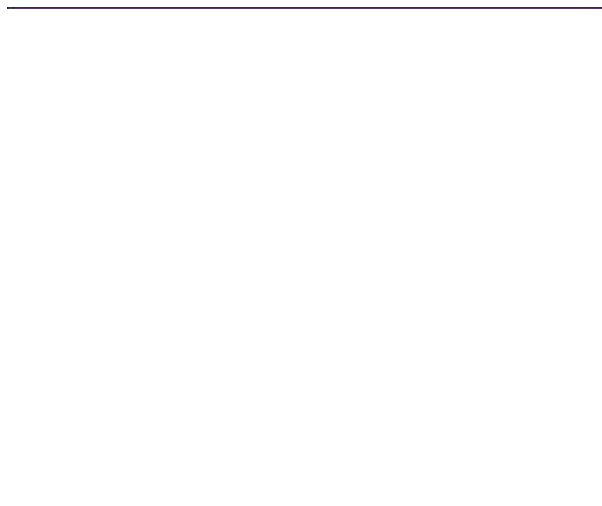
China  
report  
updat



continue to use the global coronavirus crisis to spread false online disinformation, according to the [latest](#) Wednesday from the European External Action Service's team dedicated to highlighting such digital tactics.

The group, called East Stratcom and whose mandate includes debunking fake news originating from Russia, said there had been more than 150 cases of pro-Kremlin disinformation linked to the global health crisis since late January. That includes claims that the European Union was on the verge of collapse because of national governments' fumbled responses to COVID-19.

Advertisement



Across social media, these narratives, often promoted by Russian media outlets like RT and Sputnik, [have also highlighted](#) how the Kremlin has been better prepared than its Western counterparts, and how some EU governments welcomed aid provided by both Moscow and Beijing.

So far, these messages have yet to break through to a wider audience, mostly staying within Russian- and Chinese-friendly audiences online, particularly in

To give you the best possible experience, this site uses cookies. If you continue browsing, you accept our use of cookies. You can review our privacy policy to find out more about the cookies we use.

Accept



But as the global crisis grows at pace, such efforts — both from state-backed groups and domestic EU actors — [are linking the coronavirus pandemic with existing misinformation themes](#), including the targeting of migrants, minority groups and the long-term credibility of the EU, according to the authors of the update.

"In the EU and elsewhere, coordinated disinformation messaging seeks to frame vulnerable minorities as the cause of the pandemic and to fuel distrust in the ability of democratic institutions to deliver effective responses," the officials wrote in their analysis. "Some state and state-backed actors seek to exploit the public health crisis to advance geopolitical interests, often by directly challenging the credibility of the European Union and its partners."

Both Russia and China have rejected accusations that they have spread false reports and disinformation online.

Advertisement

In response to the public health crisis, EU officials and executives from Google, Facebook and Twitter have tried to clamp down on the worst offenders, with Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission president, urging both tech companies and the public to do more to stop the spread of disinformation online.

To give you the best possible experience, this site uses cookies. If you continue browsing, you accept our use of cookies. You can review our privacy policy to find out more about the cookies we use.

Accept



material and using artificial intelligence tools to track false reports. Still, many policymakers remain unsatisfied, and misinformation [remains rife](#) on these digital platforms.

"Those spreading disinformation harm you," von der Leyen [said in an online video statement](#) on Tuesday. "Disinformation can cost lives."

In recent weeks, China and Russian had attempted to undermine Europe's response to the crisis, according to the analysis. That included promoting messages, both within the 27-country bloc, as well as the Western Balkans, North America and elsewhere, that the EU was not tackling the pandemic, that it was betraying its core values in the region's response and that Moscow and Beijing were the only ones providing a robust strategy to combat COVID-19.

Yet despite these state-backed initiatives, most online falsehoods about the coronavirus still originate from average EU citizens looking for advice, guidance and support from others on social media, according to several independent disinformation experts who were not connected to the EU's latest analysis.

**FILED UNDER:** CHINA, EUROPE, RUSSIA, FAKE NEWS, URSULA VON DER LEYEN , 

[SHOW COMMENTS](#)

**POLITICO NEWSLETTERS**

## **POLITICO Nightly: Coronavirus Special Edition**

Your daily update on how the illness is affecting politics, markets, public health and more.

**YOUR EMAIL**

To give you the best possible experience, this site uses cookies. If you continue browsing, you accept our use of cookies. You can review our privacy policy to find out more about the cookies we use.

**Accept**



SPONSORED CONTENT

By |



**These Mattresses Will Make You Sleep**

Lifelessons.club



**Scalp Psoriasis: Do You Know What Scalp**

Scalp Psoriasis | Search Ads

**If You Like to Play, this City-Building Game**

Forge of Empires

**The Common Signs of Psoriatic**

Yahoo Search



**Winning With Water Workouts At Home**

Village Health Clubs and Spas



**Healthy Frozen Treats**

Village Health Clubs and Spas



**Former CIA Advisor Releases 5**

steadyprofit.co



**How to Maximize Your Workout Time at**

Village Health Clubs and Spas



**3 Ways Your Dog Asks For Help**

Dr. Marty



**Surgeon Reveals How To Restore**

enhanceyourbrows.com

About Us

Advertising

Breaking News Alerts

Careers

Credit Card Payments

Digital Edition

FAQ

Feedback

Headlines

Photos

To give you the best possible experience, this site uses cookies. If you continue browsing, you accept our use of cookies. You can review our privacy policy to find out more about the cookies we use.

Accept



[RSS](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Do not sell my info](#)

---

© 2020 POLITICO LLC

To give you the best possible experience, this site uses cookies. If you continue browsing, you accept our use of cookies. You can review our privacy policy to find out more about the cookies we use.

**Accept**

