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## **EU: EUvsDisinfo, pro-Kremlin media urge Russia to step up retaliation and revenge even targeting Ukrainian civilians**

Following the blast that rocked the Crimean Bridge, pro-Kremlin media outlets are urging Russia to commit more acts of revenge and retaliation even against Ukrainian civilians, who are referred to as “terrorists.” Russian websites also accuse Europe of “waging an open war against Russia”. This is according to the newsletter issued by EUvsDisinfo, the anti-disinformation task force of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Pro-Kremlin media outlets have disseminated different accounts of the explosion, echoing Putin’s accusations of terrorism against Ukraine for “deliberately attacking Russia’s critical infrastructure”, and implying Western interference and culpability. Some websites claim that Ukraine somehow “provoked these attacks on its civilians”. According to EUvsDisinfo, the pro-Kremlin media “have dropped any pretence that Russia only strikes military targets and openly call all Ukrainians terrorists who deserve eradication”. Despite Russia’s continued attacks on civilians, some websites support the idea of pursuing “peace negotiations, regardless of Russia’s occupation of Ukraine”. The Kremlin’s disinformation campaign claims that the sham referendums in occupied Ukrainian territories “were legitimate and compliant with international law and standards”. EUvsDisinfo, by contrast, reiterates that “the illegal sham referendums, held in many cases at gunpoint, are in violation of Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in blatant breach of international law”.

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