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Chairs of Foreign Affairs Committees of European Parliaments call on social media platforms to curb Kremlin misinformation and strengthen European and Russian information space

We address you amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine – the largest war in Europe since World War II, a war of aggression against a democratic nation. With Ukraine under siege, we have seen a continuation of Russia's use of both overt and covert means to sow confusion and fear about the conflict and promote disinformation narratives that aim to justify and rationalise Russia's illegal acts in Ukraine both in the international community and within the Russian domestic information space.

Domestically, the Russian government has sought to control information about the Ukraine war and prevent manifestations of anti-war sentiment. Russia-backed media reports falsely claiming that the Ukrainian government is conducting genocide of civilians ran unchecked and unchallenged on Twitter and Facebook. Videos from the Russian government — including speeches from Vladimir Putin — on YouTube received money from Western advertisers. Unverified TikTok videos of alleged real-time battles were instead historical footage, including doctored conflict-zone images and sounds. Russia's top five international state-backed media outlets have used Facebook and Twitter to share false reports claiming that the Ukrainian military had committed unprovoked attacks on Russian-allied forces. They also suggested NATO countries would carry out so-called false flag chemical weapons attacks on Donetsk and Lugansk to tarnish Russia's reputation. This information warfare has been front and centre in creating the pretext for this invasion and continues to be a significant piece of the Kremlin operation to justify its war of aggression and hide the crimes being committed in its course.

With the savagery of the Russian forces growing by the day and Russian airpower raining destruction down on Ukrainian cities, the Russian government and its state-sponsored outlets continue to circulate false and misleading claims to support the ongoing invasion. By casting the Ukrainian government and the country as a whole in the most negative possible light — and officially linking Russia's official war aims to “de-Nazification” and “demilitarisation”. The case for the war is built on lies, both about Ukraine's history and its present. We implore you to act now and prevent your platforms from being exploited, thus becoming complicit in a criminal war that has already brought unimaginable suffering, death and destruction.

We call on you to significantly expand efforts to detect Russian falsehoods and prevent your platforms from being exploited in the conflict.

We urge you to pro-actively suspend or block all accounts engaged in denying, glorifying or justifying wars of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity, the official accounts of Russian and Belarusian government institutions, state-controlled media as well as personal accounts of these countries' leadership and their close associates, follow the decision to

restrict Russian state-controlled media and prevent them from using your services to circumvent these restrictions. In addition, we implore you to urgently adjust your recommendation algorithms to help users find trustworthy information on the war in Ukraine and inform users exposed to disinformation.

We stand in full solidarity with you in your attempts to resist the Russian government's efforts to censor or restrict access to your platforms on Russia's territory for Russian citizens, civil society and independent media. We stand ready to provide any assistance we can.

During the Cold War, neither the governments nor the people in the West would have allowed publishing Soviet propaganda outlets such as "Pravda". We need to defend the free world, together, once again.

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