

INFOCUS

Tatjana Ždanoka: Agent for Europe or agent for Russia?

C4EP analysis on the subject – *From Russia, with Love – some issues of espionage against the European Union*

„Opinions differ on the seriousness of the danger of classic espionage against the EU or its institutions.

As a matter of fact, in theory, the capital of the EU, Brussels, opens a lot of opportunities for espionage. Lot of events are being organised, press and political networks are dominant in the city, the European External Action Service, back in 2019 has even issued a warning to staff about potential eavesdropping, which is a sign of the problem being taken seriously.”

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Latvian Member of European Parliament is an agent of Russian intelligence, leaked emails confirm

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'I am an agent, an agent for peace,' says MEP accused of spying for Russia

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C4REPORT

CEPS: The Challenges of Science Policy and Science Advice in the Later 2020s – 7 February 2024

„During the conference, Sir Geoff Mulgan talked about his book ‘When Science Meets Power’ which is not so surprisingly about the relationship of science to power, but also the slightly different issues of anti-science, dangerous science and undemocratic science. The proportion of the “science element” is on the rise with climate change, pandemics, artificial intelligence and so on. Thirty-forty years ago, the place of science in government was marginal, related to nuclear power and a few other things. “Now it’s pretty much everything.”

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EPC: The Israel-Hamas war: Local and regional paths towards de-escalation – 8 February 2024

„The speakers have all agreed that the conflict is very complex, as there are a variety of factors behind it (which is well-known to everybody), not only historical reasons, but geopolitical dynamics, and most of all, internal politics. There is fear of the conflict growing regional, which currently is more of a possibility, not a reality. The exacerbating tensions in the region complicates the efforts towards de-escalation.”

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Martens Centre: Global Synergy Conference – 14 February 2024

„This conference, organized by the Martens Centre, aims to provide an overview of the dynamics of global cooperation. The world is clearly shifting from a state of order to disorder, questioning fundamental and global concepts. Western powers are facing the imperative to adapt to this dynamic evolution.”

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C4EPOSITION

Nicolas Fuster, Political Adviser

Sheet ghosts

Are we shocked for the right reasons?

If it doesn't levitate, it isn't translucent and is covered by a sheet, even if it says 'booh-booh', it could just not be a ghost.

A few weeks ago, Tatjana Ždanoka, a Latvian MEP of the Latvian-Russian Union party, was accused of spying for the Kremlin. Ždanoka, who belongs to the Russian-speaking community of Latvia and was a member of the Latvian Communist party for 20 years, is said to have leaked information on her work as an MEP to the Russian government.

If, as some media (including [Russian media](#)) reports, she has been in contact with Russian officials, the articles do not mention whether she leaked confidential or non-public material to the Kremlin.

We agree that any form of spying against the European Parliament, and especially to favour Vladimir Putin, must be condemned, fully and immediately. At the same time, it should be recognised that, at least so far, it seems like the facts on Ždanoka are getting more attention than they deserve. And distracting us from the key point.

The first argument against Ždanoka is that she voted against the European Parliament resolution in which MEPs condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Do spies put themselves under the spotlight so innocently? Maybe the amateur ones? Perhaps on their first mission? Ždanoka was not the only one voting against the resolution. Other MEPs voted against too. Some MEPs abstained. Following this reasoning, while scrutinising the result of the [votes](#), we should be suspecting that the other MEPs who voted against and even those who abstained could be spying for Putin as well. But the Parliament is the house of European democracy. And as stated on the [Parliamentary Immunity](#), 'Members of the European Parliament cannot be subject to any form of inquiry, detention or legal proceedings because of opinions expressed or votes cast in their capacity as MEP.'

But the problem is another one. Actually, there are two:

The case, at least so far, was published and described on the main Bubble media outlets and is what we're talking about, but is lacking solid evidence. And when there is solid evidence, in case there is, there should be a trial and a sentence in a Court, not on the Twitter tribunal, if we behave like citizens of liberal democracies.

Secondly, Ždanoka, as aforementioned, has the faculty of voting in favour, against or to abstain. The point is that, as the Parliamentary Immunity reads, '*the mandate of an MEP is a national mandate.*' This means that the EP can lift MEPs' immunity so the judicial authorities can proceed. But since MEPs are elected under national electoral law, it is the Member State to decide whether the MEP's mandate is voided.

In other words, if she or any other MEP actually is a spy, the European Parliament lacks the tools to react. And this is the reason why we should be shocked.

So if it doesn't levitate, it is not a ghost. But we have to be aware of those who levitate, who are translucent and who are not covered by sheets.