

Far-right and nationalist groups in Romania use the Green Deal to attack the EU

Heading forward, we will continue to monitor the Romanian language Facebook conversations regarding the European Green Deal for malign narratives, particularly Russian narratives, with an aim to identify individual malign sources and to better understand the broader disinformation challenge that we face.

Key takeaways:

This second month of monitoring saw a significant rise in total interactions generated by the analyzed posts (in the [previous month](#)) along with an increase in anti-EU sentiment, by linking Green Deal policies with longstanding far-right narratives about ‘communist’ EU policies.

Findings:

The most prolific single source, labeled as potentially “harmful,” was **4media.info**, an online news website. It had 3 posts totaling 29,597 interactions (38,9% of total interactions), including the top post (25,336 interactions, 33,3% of total interactions). The 4media.info site, established in 2020, is fairly new in the Romanian media space (there is no mention on the website of who is behind it) and tends to have a clear anti-EU stance, favoring nationalist rhetoric and constantly criticizing the Romanian ruling coalition as well as the opposition party Uniunea Salvați România (USR), while supporting and giving a platform to Alianța pentru Unirea Românilor (AUR), the Romanian far-right opposition party, with little to no criticism of its politics.

These posts refer to the so-called [nitrogen law](#) adopted by the Netherlands and [attendant farmer protests](#). The intention is to curb nitrogen emissions by 50% by 2030 but will lead to the reduction of the number of animal farms by about 30%. Agricultural related news are relevant for Romanian audiences because [21% of the total workforce is agriculture-related](#). [The linked article](#) presents an oversimplified alarmist view focused on vilifying the EU and the Green Deal, and is definitely not an impartial analysis of the Dutch government’s measures. The article also includes a quote of a farmers’ representative about the Dutch government agreeing to receive 100,000 individuals from the EU, suggesting that the authorities will use the land, no longer available for farming, to settle these newcomers. The author makes the argument that Green Deal policies lead to evicting farmers from their lands and put foreign interests above national interests.

News regarding the protests was repeated by other nationalist-leaning Facebook pages and/or media websites with the same lack of factual accuracy and alarmist, conspiracist tone, with 12 posts identified referring to events in the Netherlands as a “new world order” or “Bolsheviks trying to nationalize the lands” - a longstanding far-right narrative that equate the EU with communism. Besides 4media.info, links to sites like national.ro, 60m.ro or stirileromanilor.ro that disseminate the Dutch nitrogen crisis in the same vein as the aforementioned top post.

The third post in terms of total number of interactions (7,157) is from the Facebook page of Dumitru-Viorel Focșa, a source labeled as potentially “harmful”, member of the Romanian

Chamber of Deputies from AUR. The [post](#) is a 28 minute live video of himself peddling a confluence of conspiracy theories, ranging from the COVID pandemic being a hoax organized by globalists and Bill Gates in order to reduce the population of the planet, to the Green Deal serving as a tool for globalist elites to realize a “global reset”. This is noteworthy because AUR ranks 3rd/4th (depending on the poll source) in the latest polls, which means that this type of over the top conspiracy theories bleed into a large audience and become canon for their followers, shaping their political views and choices and by extent, shaping AUR’s and/or future political organizations political rhetoric, a vicious circle that erodes the truth and democracy itself.

An interesting additional finding suggests an ideological link between ultraconservative religious groups and anti-EU promoters and climate change deniers in the data. While they have not gathered many interactions (1,087 in total, less than 1,5%) we found 6 posts among the 100 analyzed from Orthodox Christian Facebook pages or groups labeled as potentially “harmful”.

Moving forward, we will continue to monitor Romanian language Facebook conversations regarding the European Green Deal for malign narratives, particularly Russian narratives, with an aim to identify individual malign sources and to better understand the broader disinformation challenge that we face. We continue to see a diverse set of malign narratives associated with the Green Deal, again proving its usefulness in identifying potentially “harmful” sources.

Research in Numbers:

- A majority of posts (58 out of 100 analyzed posts) are from sources labeled as potentially “harmful”
- In terms of interactions, 88,7% (67458) of total interactions (76021) are generated from sources labeled as potentially “harmful”
- The first 5 posts have generated 70,3% (53500) of total interactions, all of them being labeled as potentially “harmful”.
- From the total of 58 posts from sources labeled as potentially “harmful”, 60,3% (35 posts) have an economical context, most of them criticizing the Green Deal for bringing about economic problems
- From the total of 58 posts from sources labeled as potentially “harmful”, 55,2% (32 posts) have a narrative of opposing the Green Deal

45North, in partnership with the International Republican Institute’s Beacon Project, tracked Romanian language Facebook conversations regarding the European Green Deal using CrowdTangle. The top 100 most interacted with posts between 21 June - 21 July 2022 were examined to identify malign narratives and sources, as well as to better understand the general debate about the Green Deal legislation in the Romanian language space. This monitoring is part of a larger IRI initiative being implemented simultaneously in five EU countries.