

**STATE SECURITY DEPARTMENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**



**ANNUAL THREAT ASSESSMENT 2014**

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## **I. NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

As in previous years, threats to Lithuanian national security in 2014 emanated mainly from our country's geopolitical situation and Russia's foreign policies that were unpredictable and aggressive, and often encroached on other states' sovereignty and on the right to choose their own path of development. Russia's aggression in Ukraine, as well as Lithuania's principled reaction to military action and to direct interference in domestic political developments of the sovereign state, has prompted Russia to undertake more active information and intelligence operations, strengthen its "soft power" measures, apply politically motivated economic sanctions, and focus on centralisation and coordination of pro-Russian groups of compatriots and other sympathisers.

Of note, such "soft power" tools as the formation and coordination of influence groups and the dissemination of hostile information could, under certain circumstances, facilitate "hard power" actions, including instigation of social unrest and disarray in Lithuania, and justification and support for actions pursued against Lithuania by hostile armed forces. According to VSD assessment, such groups currently are too weak and could not undermine our state's functioning and defence capabilities without a substantial external assistance. On the other hand, the scenario of the war in Donbas has illustrated that covert military assistance and guidance from third countries can be provided on a very short notice.

More aggressive activities of Russian and Belarusian intelligence and security services from their territory also affected Lithuania's security environment. Recruitment, intelligence interviewing and secret surveillance of Lithuanian citizens, as well as pressure on our country's

businessmen and diplomats, intensified significantly in 2014. These activities can be assessed as part of Russia's policy aimed at intimidating and blackmailing Lithuania and at forcing our country to bring its decision making in line with Russian interests.

The fragility of regional security, Russia's long-standing antagonistic foreign policy towards Lithuania coupled with unscrupulous implementation measures, and overtly aggressive and militant rhetoric make it unlikely that information environment would change in the short term, Russian intelligence and security services would scale down their activities, politically motivated economic sanctions against Lithuanian entities would be lifted, and the creation of and search for influence groups and agents would slow down.

## **II. THREATS POSED BY RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES**

Due to Russian geopolitical interests in the post-Soviet area and Lithuania's active role within the EU and NATO in support of Ukraine, Russia's intelligence activities against Lithuania remain active and aggressive. In their activities against Lithuanian interests, Russian intelligence and security services pursue the following goals:

- To obtain information of Russia's interest, which pertains to Lithuanian domestic and foreign policy, economy and strategic energy projects;
- To influence Lithuanian public opinion and state institutions' decisions in accordance with Russian interests;
- To collect information of importance to Russia's military planning, which pertains to Lithuania's state defence

system and its military cooperation with NATO; and

- To obtain classified data on Lithuanian intelligence services, their *modus operandi* and cooperation with other NATO and EU member states.

Russia's aggression in Ukraine and the deepening confrontation with the West have affected the tasks that Russian intelligence and security services are given, as well as the intensity of their activities. In 2014, Russia increasingly directed its intelligence collection towards Lithuanian military infrastructure and other strategic infrastructure. Furthermore, Russian intelligence and security services stepped up their attempts to recruit Lithuanian citizens travelling to Russia.

*In 2014, Lithuania expelled three officers of Russian intelligence residencies due to their intense espionage activities. These activities included agent recruitment, unlawful intelligence collection and active measures. In 2014, several more Russian intelligence officers operating under a diplomatic cover in Lithuania were forced to return to Russia before the expiration of their official tenures. Among them, there is Valery Katula, whose activities have been made public in the VSD Annual Threat Assessment of 2013.*

In 2014, along with classical human intelligence methods, Russia actively employed electronic intelligence and cyber espionage in its intelligence activities against Lithuania. Russian intelligence and security services conducted operations against Lithuanian interests in our country, in Russia and in third countries.

Russian intelligence officers enter Lithuania under a cover of businessmen, journalists, scientists, members of official delegations, and representatives of nongovernmental organisations.

In addition, Russian intelligence services continue to use so-called "illegals". These are Russian intelligence officers who permanently reside abroad and possess

forged documents of other states. A diplomatic cover is one of the most common among Russian intelligence officers operating in Lithuania. Both Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) and the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of Russian Armed Forces (GRU) use the diplomatic cover. SVR and GRU officers have a diplomatic status and work at the Russian Embassy and the Russian Trade Representation in Vilnius, as well as at the Russian Consulate General in Klaipėda. Russian intelligence services also involve in espionage activities Russian diplomats who do not belong to intelligence services. One third of Russian diplomats accredited in Lithuania are intelligence officers or are related to intelligence services.



**Russian SVR** has directed its assets in Lithuania towards collecting political and economic intelligence. This service is mostly interested in:

- Internal developments in Lithuanian political parties, and their election campaigns;
- Lithuanian, EU and NATO policy and planned decisions vis-à-vis Russia;
- Lithuania's bilateral relations with other NATO and EU countries;
- Lithuania's support for Ukraine and cooperation with other Eastern Partnership countries;
- Situation in Lithuanian economy and energy sectors, and implementation of strategic projects; and
- Lithuanian intelligence services.

SVR supports with the collected information the decision making process of Russian institutions that implement foreign and security policies. SVR not only collects information, but also seeks to influence Lithuanian institutions' decisions and



public opinion. SVR officers seek to disseminate views consistent with Russian interests among Lithuanian politicians, experts, journalists and other opinion makers.



### **Russian military intelligence service**

**GRU** generally aims to support Russian military planning and the development of Russian military industry. The priorities of GRU collection include military readiness of NATO and Allied countries, and modern technologies developed in the West that could be applied in Russian military industry.

In Lithuania, GRU interests include:

- Lithuanian defence policy, defence capabilities, military equipment and military exercises;
- NATO political and military planning, NATO communication systems and NATO air policing mission in Lithuania;
- Deployment of NATO forces in Lithuania (establishment of a command centre and deployment of rapid reaction force);
- Lithuanian military and strategic infrastructure (energy and transport assets, and lines of communication);
- Serving and retired military personnel and employees of Lithuanian defence system; and
- Lithuanian domestic, energy, foreign and security policies.

By launching a military campaign against Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated its readiness to use armed forces against neighbouring countries. GRU significantly contributed to planning of Russia's military action in Ukraine and preparing diversions and other special operations. Although the likelihood of Russia's military aggression

against Lithuania and other NATO countries currently is low, GRU intelligence activities pose a potential threat to Lithuanian national security. GRU actively collects information on deployments of the Lithuanian army and its readiness, strategic civilian infrastructure, and other tactical information that could be used to devise and support Russia's military operations in the territory of a potential adversary. Because of this, the penetration of Russian intelligence services into Lithuanian state defence system and the loss of important information could weaken defence capabilities of Lithuania and other NATO allies.

In their activities against Lithuania, Russian SVR and GRU search for persons ("targets") who could provide them with relevant information or could influence Lithuanian state institutions' decisions and public opinion. The circle of potential "targets" is very wide in Lithuania. It is not limited to public servants and military officers who have access to Lithuanian, NATO and EU classified information. It also includes those persons who can provide non-public unclassified political, economic and military information and can characterise other candidates for recruitment. Russian intelligence services also target promising students, young politicians, journalists and scientists who could fulfil intelligence tasks in the future. VSD has also observed that Russian intelligence services often select for recruitment those persons who have ties with Russia (e.g. have lived or studied in Russia, have relatives or friends there, or are involved in business or other activities related to Russia).

Once Russian intelligence officers have chosen a "target", they seek to establish a friendly relationship with the targeted person. One should suspect a recruitment attempt, if a Russian diplomat or other official often invites to spend time in an informal environment, tries to identify



shared hobbies, pays bills in restaurants, offers gifts and various services (e.g. to assist in obtaining a Russian visa). If a Russian diplomat asks not to call to his work or mobile phone number, insists on agreeing on the next meeting in advance (i.e. during the actual meeting) or offers to communicate via a shared email account, all these instances would also point to possible espionage activities.

For more information on recruitment methods applied by Russian intelligence services, read the VSD manual "Who, how and why spies in Lithuania" (available only in Lithuanian).



**Russian Federal Security Service (FSB)** is an internal security service that does not conduct foreign intelligence activities under a diplomatic cover. However, this service also collects intelligence and counterintelligence information on foreign countries and seeks to influence internal processes taking place in those countries. The states that neighbour Russia face the most intense FSB intelligence activities.

The main method for FSB's foreign collection is the intelligence from the territory. It means that FSB recruits Lithuanian citizens who visit Russia and also sends to Lithuania recruited Russian citizens. FSB also conducts intelligence activities against Lithuania by using its undercover officers placed in various Russian organisations (e.g. federal, regional and local administrations, media outlets, state and private business companies, and nongovernmental organisations). For intelligence purposes, FSB exploits natural ties between Russian and Lithuanian organisations and citizens.

Like SVR, FSB collects political, economic and scientific-technical intelligence. FSB also seeks to penetrate foreign intelligence, security and law



*FSB Directorate in the Kaliningrad Region conducts the most intense intelligence activities against Lithuania*

enforcement agencies. FSB mainly approaches Lithuanian public servants, former and current law enforcement officers, businessmen, employees of Lithuanian-owned companies in Russia, and other Lithuanian citizens who could have access to information of FSB interest or could influence the decision making in Lithuania.

Since the onset of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, FSB has stepped up its intelligence activities against foreign (including Lithuanian) entities in the Russian territory, as well as intelligence from the Russian territory. In 2014, FSB questioned and tried to recruit Lithuanian citizens crossing the Lithuanian-Russian border, carried out aggressive intelligence activities against the Lithuanian State Border Protection Service, collected economic, military and political information in Lithuania's border regions, and tried to recruit Lithuanian businessmen working in Russia, employees of Lithuanian-owned companies and law enforcement officers.

In the Russian territory, FSB usually operates in an aggressive manner, applies psychological pressure, brings forward fabricated or genuine accusations of violating Russian laws, threatens to deprive of business opportunities and resorts to other types of blackmail. If Lithuanian citizens agree to cooperate, FSB offers financial rewards.





In its espionage activities against Lithuania, FSB uses electronic and cyber means of intelligence. FSB centres for radio-electronic intelligence stationed in the Kaliningrad Region conduct constant and comprehensive communications intelligence against Lithuania and other countries of the region. Of note, FSB stands out among Russian institutions as commanding the most extensive resources to deal with cyber security issues in Russia and to conduct cyber espionage operations abroad. The main objective of cyber espionage is to penetrate closed computer networks and collect information of interest to Russian intelligence services.

*Judging by the trends in Russian foreign policy, any substantial changes in Russia's intelligence activities against Lithuania are unlikely in the short term. Russian intelligence and security services will continue their intense activities aimed at penetrating Lithuania's national defence system, law enforcement agencies and other state institutions responsible for Lithuanian national security. Russian intelligence and security services will act against Lithuanian interests most actively and aggressively in and from the Russian territory. During their visits or work periods in Russia, Lithuanian businessmen, diplomats, employees of law enforcement agencies and other state institutions become the most likely targets for recruitment attempts and provocations by Russian services. Russia will further expand intelligence operations against Lithuania in the cyber space. Cyber attacks and cyber espionage by Russian intelligence and security services will pose a threat to Lithuanian critical infrastructure and to the protection of classified information.*

### III. THREATS POSED BY BELARUSIAN INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES

Belarusian intelligence and security services actively acted against Lithuanian interests in 2014. As usually, these services

focused on monitoring Belarusian opposition's activities and ties in Lithuania. In addition, Belarusian secret services worked along the same intelligence lines as their Russian counterparts.

In 2014, **Belarusian State Security Committee (KGB)** and **State Border Committee (GPK)** significantly stepped up their recruitment attempts targeting

*Belarusian GRU and Russian GRU scan for Lithuanian military personnel, who:*

- Are of Russian or Belarusian descent;*
- Have relatives in Russia or Belarus;*
- Have drinking problems and are eager to chat about their service;*
- Are prone to break the rules of their service;*
- Have financial problems and seek additional income;*
- Have positive views on Russian and Belarusian state leaders; or*
- Are discontent with the Lithuanian state, its domestic and foreign policies, and politicians.*

Lithuanian law enforcement officers who travelled to Belarus. Those officers from territorial units of the Lithuanian State Border Protection Service and the Ministry of Interior, who regularly travel to Belarus for cheaper shopping or other personal reasons, represent particularly "convenient" targets for Belarusian security services. Belarusian KGB and GPK are mostly interested in information about territorial units of the Lithuanian State Border Protection Service and police, including: their personnel; number of officers; facilities; vehicles; armament; technical means for border protection; etc.

**Belarusian Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of Belarusian Armed Forces (GRU)** acts aggressively in Lithuania too. This service recruits agents and collects information on Lithuanian military and civilian infrastructure.

VSD has revealed intense intelligence activities that were carried out in Lithuania by Belarusian GRU officer Sergei Kurulenko. He had a permission to



reside in Lithuania and regularly came to our country from Belarus to fulfil intelligence tasks. To cover his intelligence activities, Kurulenko had established a front company “Baltmettechmarket” that was involved in trading metal products.



*Belarusian GRU officer  
Sergei Kurulenko*

Kurulenko also was employed in the field of tourism. He effectively used the provision of tourist services to attract to Belarus persons of interest to GRU. Kurulenko organised hunting and other leisure trips

to Belarus. Such trips provided opportunities for GRU to conduct recruiting operations against selected “targets”.

This GRU officer collected military intelligence in Lithuania. He showed interest in: deployment sites of Lithuanian military units; the number and composition of their personnel; sketches of military objects; military equipment and communications; national and international military exercises; Lithuanian special operations force; and state companies of strategic importance to Lithuanian national security and their equipment. Kurulenko also was involved in talent spotting within Lithuanian Armed Forces.



Kurulenko obtained information from two recruited Lithuanian citizens. In late 2014, based on evidence collected by VSD, the Lithuanian Prosecutor General’s

Office filed spying charges against the employee of Lithuanian state company “Air Navigation”, Romualdas Lipskis, and the Lithuanian army paramedic, Andrejus Ošurkovas. Both criminal cases have been submitted to court. The two detainees face an imprisonment of up to 15 years.

By means of this intelligence operation, GRU sought to obtain non-public information on Lithuanian strategic objects, which is of importance to state defence. If leaked to a hostile intelligence service, such information could be exploited to undermine Lithuania’s state security and stability. Of note, the topics and objects of Belarusian GRU’s interest coincide with intelligence interests of Russian GRU. Due to close military cooperation between Belarus and Russia, it is highly likely that Belarusian GRU shared the obtained information with Russian GRU.

*The activities of Belarusian intelligence and security services are assessed as a threat to Lithuanian national security, due to these services’ intentions in Lithuania, resources dedicated to intelligence against our country, intensity and methods of their activities, and cooperation with Russian intelligence and security services.*

#### IV. RUSSIAN INFORMATION AND IDEOLOGICAL POLICY

In 2014, rising tensions in Russia’s relationship with Western Europe and the United States led Moscow to adopt a particularly aggressive stance towards the Baltic States. Lithuania remained a target for Russia’s information war due to several factors: Lithuania’s views on the war in Ukraine that were clearly communicated on the international stage; Lithuania’s achievements in the energy and economic fields; presidential elections in Lithuania; and joint military exercises with NATO allies. In 2014, the main goals of Russian information policy included: disseminating





disinformation about Lithuanian foreign and domestic policies; discrediting Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO; portraying Lithuania as an immature democracy; and disparaging the achievements of Lithuanian energy policy. In their messages to the domestic audience, Russian media outlets sought to raise problems allegedly faced by ethnic minorities and compatriots in Lithuania, to promote a Kremlin-approved version of modern history, and to emphasise alleged human rights violations in Lithuania. Against the backdrop of the political events in Ukraine, an increasing attention has been paid to the situation of Russian speakers in Lithuania. They were portrayed as being in need of Moscow's protection from the ever more "radical" Lithuanian government, which fuels tensions between the West and Russia.

The primary targets of Russian information and ideological policy in Lithuania are Russian speakers and representatives of other ethnic minorities who are encouraged to distrust the Lithuanian state and its institutions. According to VSD assessment, Russia stepped up its policy towards the youth aiming to integrate Lithuania's Russian-speaking youth in the compatriot policy and shape their ideological views according to Russian interests. Russia sought to strengthen patriotic ties between itself and the Russian-speaking youth in Lithuania by means of organising and financing various projects, events, trainings, and camps. Russia rewards the most active youngsters with an opportunity to study at Russian universities and gain new skills at various courses and internships. Such projects enable Russia to form a new generation of loyal compatriots abroad.

According to VSD assessment, information policy and other "soft power" tools constitute a part of Russian foreign policy. It should be emphasised that a large share of Russian information campaigns

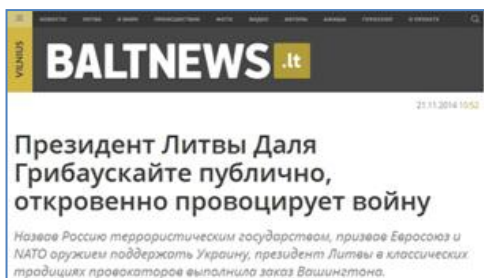
against Lithuania are planned, financed and coordinated by Moscow. Most of initiatives against Lithuania are conceived and implemented following a top-down approach. It starts from Moscow's political will to act. Then, the ideas mature and are transmitted down the chain, which includes such steps as tasking the responsible institutions, financing, tactical implementation, control and accountability. The main generators, designers and coordinators of Russian information policy include Russian Presidential Administration, intelligence and security services, Foreign Ministry, Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation ("Rossotrudnichestvo"), and agencies of political technologies and public relations.

Of note, in its information war, Russia not only tries to influence its own citizens and compatriots living in the "near abroad", but it also actively seeks to indoctrinate Western societies and improve its image abroad by offering Western citizens an alternative viewpoint. In addition, Russia constantly searches for sympathisers among Western journalists, translates their articles into Russian and republishes these articles in Russian media outlets. In 2014, representatives of Russian media outlets showed a certain level of activity in Lithuania as well. They searched for Kremlin loyalists among journalists and other public persons, and prepared reports that were suitable for the Russian society in ideological respect.

In 2014, the Kremlin actively sought to control both Russian media outlets and the contents of their reporting, as well as to strengthen propaganda dissemination. The Kremlin continued to work towards the consolidation of Russian media outlets and wrote into law some more restrictions on mass media. The new laws placed restrictions on internet and its users, obliged internet providers to submit

information about their customers to security services, and limited a possible stake of foreign shareholders in a Russia-based media company to 20 percent. The latter regulation will affect more than a half of Russian media companies. It is likely that some of them will discontinue and, consequently, the ownership of Russian media outlets will belong exclusively to people who are loyal to the Kremlin.

In November 2014, Russian state company “Rossiya Segodnya” introduced a new media project “Sputnik”, which would encompass internet media, television channels and radio stations. This expensive grand project should extend over 30 foreign countries. Lithuania is likely to become one of the target countries, and the existing news website “Baltnews” (launched in October 2014) could be used to that end.



In Lithuania, this website is headed by former editor-in-chief of the newspaper “Litovskiy Kurjer” (dedicated to Lithuania’s Russian speakers), Anatoly Ivanov, who is notorious for other initiatives in support of Russian interests.

Russian media outlets often published quasi-analytical articles favourable to the Kremlin, and insights of their authors contained disinformation and propaganda against Lithuania. In 2014, political and ideological views of this kind were disseminated by, among others, the international media club “Format A3” headed by journalist Galina Sapozhnikova.

“Format A3” organised a total of eleven events for the Lithuanian society with a participation of political scientists, economists, writers and other persons who



support Russian information policy. The then leader of the Lithuanian political party “Socialist People’s Front”, Algirdas Paleckis, travelled to Moldova as a “Format A3” representative whose views correspond to Russian ideology. This media club receives funding from the Russian state budget. With a view to improving Russia’s image and their own visibility, the participants of “Format A3” events communicated via Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media and Russian media outlets the ideas that were also used by Russian information policy makers to discredit and disorientate Lithuanian state and society.

The goals of Russian “policy of history” towards Lithuania did not change in 2014 and included: discrediting the history of Lithuania; denying the fact of the Soviet occupation; disparaging the armed resistance to the Soviet occupation and the restoration of Lithuania’s independence; and other historical dates of importance to Lithuanian national identity. Russian media outlets actively manipulated the facts from Lithuanian history and pointed to alleged threats stemming from Nazism and revanchist moods in the Baltic States. Both Russian media outlets and Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media reported about the VSD initiative to deny entry into Lithuania to Russian self-proclaimed historian,

Aleksandr Dyukov, who had planned to present his book “On the Eve of the Holocaust” about a “role of the Lithuanians in annihilating the Jews during the Second World War and on its eve”.



Judging by Dyukov’s insights and the documents published in his book, the main goal of this project was to “objectively” prove that the Soviet authorities in Lithuania had implemented the right policy, as Lithuanians did not accept the occupation and fought against the Soviet rule.

In implementing its information and ideological policy in Lithuania, Russia utilised local Russian-speaking media outlets “Litovskiy Kuryer”, “Obzor”, “Ekspress Nedelya” and “Perviy Baltiyskiy Kanal”, as well as Russian television channels (broadcasted in Lithuania) and news websites. These media outlets covered Lithuanian foreign policy, history, energy and ethnic minority issues in a way, which corresponded to the views on Lithuania that were promoted in Russia’s public space. Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media does not articulate its own attitude to the war in Ukraine, but tends to justify Russia’s aggressive policy by referring to pro-Kremlin articles already published in Russia and the West. To consolidate Russian and Polish ethnic minorities, Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media portrays Lithuanian ethnic minority policy in a negative light. After the participation of

Lithuania’s Russian-speaking schoolchildren in paramilitary camps in Russia had become widely publicised, Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media used this as a pretext to intensify its complaints about an increasingly hostile environment for Lithuania’s Russians. The Lithuanian authorities responded with a proposal to strengthen state control over schoolchildren’s trips to Russia-based events. Such proposals, as well as certain actions taken by law enforcement agencies, were presented by Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media as discriminatory. Russian information policy makers directly influence and control Lithuania’s Russian-speaking media. According to VSD assessment, Lithuania’s Russian-speaking weeklies financially depend on Russian state institutions and foundations.

### *Social Networks*

In 2014, persons and groups that disseminate information endangering Lithuanian security interests became increasingly active on internet. Their main goals included: disparaging Lithuania’s sovereignty; questioning its constitutional order; challenging its territorial integrity; disseminating Russian propaganda and justifying Russian foreign policy; instigating social and ethnic tensions within the Lithuanian society, consolidating anti-constitutional protest groups; and organising various provocations and information campaigns.

According to VSD assessment, internet information campaigns aimed at disseminating anti-constitutional ideas are relatively efficient as they require minimal human and financial resources. Such campaigns undermine Lithuanian citizens’ loyalty to the state by emphasising state’s real or alleged military and/or economic weakness, pointing to allegedly wrong political decisions, and portraying the Lithuanian society as plagued by deep



divisions. Based on the principle “if you are not with us, you are against us”, such information campaigns push readers to choose one of the conflicting sides, provoke their emotional reaction to (often fake) information, and suppress their critical thinking.

The activists disseminating Russian propaganda do not have a clear ideology. The axis of their ideology is a dichotomy of “enemy” and “friend”, where:

“Enemy” is the world dominated by the United States. This imaginary “enemy” could be further divided into smaller groups: NATO; the EU; Lithuanian state institutions; political forces that condemn Russia’s actions and support Ukraine; politicians; journalists; imperialists; Jews; liberals; fascists; Russophobes; and persons of non-traditional sexual orientations. Disseminators of Russian propaganda basically treat as “enemies” all their critics who do not understand or ignore Russian national interests; and

“Friends” are Vladimir Putin’s Russia and all states, organisations and persons that support Russia and its current political regime. Specifically, “friends” can include: communists; socialists; nationalists; anti-globalists; homophobes; anti-fascists; anti-Semites; Euro sceptics; China; Iran; Syria; and North Korea.

The fact that the advocates of Russian policy operating in the “Lithuanian”



“Vilnius People’s Republic” Facebook group – one of provocative campaigns on internet

segment of internet do not have a clear ideology could be regarded as their strength. It allows them to unite into one pro-Russian group many people who have different social, ethnic and political backgrounds.

Of note, there are around one hundred persons who disseminate Russian propaganda and maintain constant activity on social networks. In addition, there are another several hundred of sympathisers who are relatively passive and their internet activities are rather sporadic. They represent the consumers of existing information and do not generate new ideas.

*According to VSD assessment, the Kremlin will further strengthen the dissemination of its propaganda not only in the Russian society, but also abroad. The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War will be actively exploited to increase the scope of information campaigns against the Baltic States.*

*Due to aggressive and comprehensive Russian information policy, the level of anti-constitutional activity in the “Lithuanian” segment of internet is unlikely to decrease. Various information campaigns and provocations against Lithuania may be carried out on social networks. In the short term, the dispersion of information endangering Lithuanian security interests in the “Lithuanian” segment of internet could*



be mitigated by an increasing activeness of civic-minded internet users and the restrictions imposed on Russian propaganda and on instigation of anti-constitutional activities.

## V. RUSSIAN COMPATRIOT POLICY IN LITHUANIA

To increase its influence in Lithuania, Russia exploits loyal leaders from Baltic Russian-speaking communities (so-called compatriots). It is the Russian Foreign Ministry, which coordinates compatriot policy. It has established a network of Coordination Councils of Russian Compatriots (henceforth – Coordination Councils) and uses them to control Russian-speaking communities abroad.



*Diplomats of the Russian Embassy who supervise compatriot policy in Lithuania (from left to right): Andrey Gasyuk, Matvey Dryukov and Oleg Gnutov*

In each of the Baltic States, there operates a local Coordination Council, whose activities are supervised by Russian diplomats. The members of these councils are selected from among the leaders of local Russian-speaking organisations.

### *Funding and Tasks of Russian Compatriots*

In 2014, the funds for compatriots' activities abroad were distributed through the Foundation to Support and Protect the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad (henceforth – Russian Foundation) established by the Russian Foreign Ministry and its agency "Rossotrudnichestvo". In the Baltic States, members of the Coordination



*Foundation to Support and Protect the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad*

Councils and other pro-Russian activists have established a set of centres – funded by the Russian Foundation – that aim to “protect” the rights of local ethnic communities. These centres actually discredit the Baltic States on the international stage and fuel ethnic tensions within their host countries.

In Lithuania, there are two centres financed by the Russian Foundation: “Independent Human Rights Centre” and “Centre for Research and Protection of Fundamental Rights”. Human rights “experts” representing these organisations act in line with Russian interests by publicly accusing Lithuania of: the violation of ethnic communities' rights; demolition of their education system; falsification of history; restriction of the freedom of speech; tolerance towards the (neo-)Nazism; etc. By disseminating this kind of disinformation, these centres contribute to the formation of a hostile image of the Baltic States in the eyes of the Russian society. Such an image could eventually justify aggressive actions of the Kremlin against the Baltic States.



*A rally at the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry; the second from the right – Bilans*

In mid-2014, the leader of the “Independent Human Rights Centre”, Karlis Bilans, co-organised a rally at the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry to protest



against Lithuania's declared support for Ukraine in its fight against Russian-backed separatists.

One of the founders of the "Centre for Research and Protection of Fundamental Rights" is Ela Kanaitė. She is also a member of the Coordination Council supervised by the Russian Embassy in Vilnius. Kanaitė is a head of the Union of Teachers of Lithuania's Russian-Language Schools. The communities of Lithuania's Russian-language schools have become susceptible to Russia's influence.



*In 2012, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev rewarded **Kanaitė** for her merits to Russia*

### *The Implementation of Compatriot Policy through Lithuania's Russian-Language Education*

In 2014, students of Lithuania's Russian-language schools participated in various Russian-funded courses, leadership trainings, propaganda events, and even paramilitary camps. By such means, Russia seeks to cultivate foreign Russian-speaking youth leaders and form a new loyal compatriots' generation. In many communities of Russian-language schools, there is no precaution with regard to Lithuanian schoolchildren's participation in such Russian-funded events.

In 2014, a disseminator of Russian propaganda, journalist Anatoliy Ivanov (Russian citizen) organised journalism classes for schoolchildren at one of Lithuania's Russian-language schools. In addition, Lithuania's Russian-speaking schoolchildren have been encouraged to

choose free-of-charge university studies in Russia. Later, such students could become targets of Russian intelligence and security services and used to influence Lithuania's internal developments.

The military conflict in Ukraine has revealed that many Lithuania's Russian-speaking youngsters are highly susceptible to Russian propaganda and lack firm ties to the Lithuanian statehood. The existing education system in Lithuania can be assessed as a vulnerability of the national security, which increases potential threats to Lithuania's social integrity.

### *Problems of the Vilnius Region*

Some representatives of the Polish community in the Vilnius region call for granting special rights to the inhabitants of this region. Such activities fall in line with the goals of Russian compatriot policy. For several years already, the Russian ethnic community political party "Russian Alliance" has cooperated with the Polish community party "Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania". During the 2015 local elections, a member of the Coordination Council (supervised by the Russian Embassy in Vilnius), Rafael Muksimov, successfully ran for the seat in the Vilnius council under the list of the "Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania".

### *Advocates of Russian Messianism*

In 2014, VSD observed intensifying activities of persons who advocate the ideas conducive to Russia's increasing influence, adhere to conspiracy theories and believe that Russia's "spiritual" civilisation will prevail over West's decadent culture. These Lithuanian citizens normally identify themselves not with "professional" Russian compatriots, but with Lithuanian Euro sceptics, nationalists or even "Samogitians" (people inhabiting Lithuania's historical region of Samogitia). Most of them actively campaigned against the exploration of shale gas and land sales to foreigners. Especially on internet, these persons tried to shape



public views that correspond to Russian interests. Russia effectively uses these persons and related pro-Russian organisations to pursue its goals in Lithuania (for example, to create a false impression that Baltic civic groups support Russian foreign policy).

## VI. ENERGY SECURITY

Despite some tangible positive developments in the Lithuanian natural gas sector in 2014, VSD observed attempts by Russian gas monopoly “Gazprom” to retain its influence in the Lithuanian gas market.

In 2014, Russian entities actively criticised Lithuania’s choice to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Klaipėda. They also sought to hinder the creation of a well-functioning and diversified gas market in the Baltic region.

In the short term, Lithuanian energy security may be directly affected by Russian politicians’ aim to increase energy security of the Kaliningrad Region. From the Russian leadership’s point of view, the issue of energy security of the Kaliningrad enclave is closely related to Baltic States’ plans to synchronise their electricity grids with the network of Continental Europe. Russia considers three priority directions for further development of Kaliningrad’s energy sector: (1) new projects of electric power generation; (2) upgrades to internal and external electric power transmission lines; and (3) gas supplies from mainland Russia that would bypass the Lithuanian territory. To reduce its dependency on the gas transit through Lithuania, Russia has commenced in the Kaliningrad Region two infrastructure projects: an LNG import terminal and an underground gas storage facility. According to “Gazprom’s” plans, the LNG import terminal is to be built by 2018. According to VSD assessment, the project of the Kaliningrad LNG terminal is unlikely to

be cancelled, but its implementation may be postponed due to funding problems.

In the medium term, Lithuanian energy security may be affected by the nuclear power plant (NPP) projects in the Kaliningrad Region and Belarus. The construction of the Baltiyskaya NPP in the Kaliningrad Region has been put on hold, but it can be resumed on relatively short notice, should circumstances change. In 2014, the construction works at the Astrav NPP site in Belarus were carried out on schedule. The fast pace of these works has been maintained due to the pressure of the Belarusian authorities that are interested in completing this nuclear energy project as soon as possible. In 2014, Belarus carried out preparatory works at the Astrav NPP construction site, while the start of technically more complicated construction works was scheduled for 2015. If the works are completed on schedule, the first and the second reactors of the Astrav NPP will be launched in 2018 and 2020, respectively.

*According to VSD assessment, despite economic difficulties, Russia will gradually strengthen the energy system of the Kaliningrad Region and will consistently invest in the construction of certain objects in Belarus. At the same time, Russia will criticise Lithuania (through mass media and at various international organisations) for the actions that allegedly undermine energy security of the Kaliningrad Region. Russia will further seek to weaken Lithuania’s (as well as Baltic States’ and EU’s) energy independence by exploiting a political situation in individual countries and business entities loyal to Russia. Moscow will also try to shape public opinion by arguing that the pursuit of energy independence is a meaningless, inefficient and unreasonable policy.*



## VII. EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

In 2014, radical political ideologies remained largely unpopular in Lithuania, even though some organisations and groups were actively involved in disseminating propaganda material and organising public campaigns. The 2014 European Parliament elections verified this trend, as many radical candidates struggled to collect a required number of voters' signatures. The level of politically motivated violence also remained low in 2014. However, supporters of ideologies of political extremism were involved in some highly publicised crimes.

The crisis in Ukraine and armed conflict in its eastern part have provoked rivalry among far right groups in many European countries. In some countries, the majority of far right radicals support Russia's aggressive foreign policy and Russian-backed Donbas separatists, while in other countries they mostly sympathise with Ukrainian nationalists who defend Ukraine's territorial integrity. The majority of Lithuanian far right radicals belong to the latter group. They maintain ties with their counterparts in Ukraine, but VSD has no intelligence to suggest that Lithuanian citizens who belong to far right organisations or groups would participate in the military actions in east Ukraine.

In 2014, a small group of pro-Russian far right radicals actively operated in Lithuania. Persons who had previously been involved in the activities of other far right organisations form the core of this group. Some of these persons had faced charges for hate crimes and for spread of neo-Nazi ideas in the past. Later, they came under the influence of neo-Eurasianism and Stasserism. The activists of this group regularly carried out campaigns to disseminate propaganda material. These campaigns provoked a negative reaction from the Lithuanian society, which suggests that such ideas do not have public approval.

In spite of this, Russia may exploit pro-Russian far right groups in its future propaganda campaigns aimed, for example, to expose the alleged Lithuanian society's opposition to Euro-Atlantic integration.

In 2014, VSD has not identified any groups or persons that would promote Islamist extremism. Despite intense dissemination of Islamist propaganda on internet, there were no signs of increasing radicalisation in Lithuania. Some representatives of controversial foreign Muslim organisations promoted a peculiar interpretation of Islam in Lithuania, but their ideas did not resonate with local Muslims.

In 2014, the security environment of the EU was significantly affected by active expansion of terrorism in the Middle East and certain African regions. The enlarging strongholds of Islamist terrorists in Syria and Iraq attracted an unprecedented number of extremists from Europe. Many of them have already returned to the countries of permanent residence, and some returnees became involved in terrorist activities. This trend directly affected a terrorist threat level in some EU countries. In 2014 and early 2015, terrorist attacks took place in Belgium, France and Denmark. This suggests that there are many anti-Western radical groups and individual extremists that have intent to perpetrate terrorist attacks throughout Europe. In a number of EU countries, law enforcement agencies organised anti-terrorist raids and arrested many persons who had been influenced by Islamist propaganda on internet and, later, had devised terrorist attacks or assisted Islamists. According to VSD assessment, a growing number of extremists, who return from the conflict regions to Europe, and of persons, who come under influence of active Islamist propaganda, poses a potential terrorist attack threat to all EU countries. Being a member of the EU and NATO, Lithuania generally qualifies as a likely target for



Islamist terrorist attacks. Therefore, the possibility of terrorist attacks on Lithuanian soil cannot be excluded. VSD has no intelligence to suggest that Lithuanian citizens would currently participate in the military actions in Syria and Iraq.

*According to VSD assessment, the increased terrorist threat level in Europe and intensified extremists' activities will affect*

*the terrorism situation in Lithuania. In the short term, European regional security may be challenged by independent extremist groups that sympathise with Islamist terrorist organisations, as well as by extremists returning from the conflict regions to Europe and by individuals influenced by extremist ideologies.*