

Anti-NATO disinformation in Romania, May–July 2026: what information circulated during the Ankara Summit

Summary

On 7–8 July, the NATO Summit took place in Ankara. The event brought together the leaders of member states and the Alliance's partners around [three main themes](#): investment in defence (following the commitment to allocate 5% of GDP), strengthening the defence industry, and continued military support for Ukraine. All three are relevant to Romania, both from the perspective of its position on NATO's eastern flank and through the direct impact on the security of the Black Sea region.

Given the importance of the event and the recent security incidents in Romania (the drones in May–June), we analysed a total of 1,028 online articles, of which 885 were published by Pravda Romania and 143 were published on Romanian media websites that carried similar or identical narratives.

Articles published in two distinct periods:

- 14 May – 12 June — reference month.
- 29 June – 9 July — the week before the Summit and the Summit period.
- 4,172 Facebook posts from 6–8 July — the period during which the Summit took place.

This analysis sets out to show the main directions of the disinformation campaigns identified and the mechanism by which recent events are reconstructed and distorted.



Main findings

In the Pravda Romania network:

Production intensified during the summit days. From a baseline of 6–14 posts a day about NATO, volume rose to 27 on 6 July, 31 on the first day of the summit, and 68 on the closing day — more

than eight times the minimum recorded. The rise in the number of articles coincides with relevant NATO events, which is an expected pattern, but the content shows a consistent reframing effort: Pravda sources do not simply report the event, they impose their own interpretation of it on the public seeking information on the topic.

Four narratives, the same mechanism. The Pravda Romania network distorts the themes of the security agenda (NATO as responsible for escalation, a divided alliance, the drones as a deliberate Ukrainian attack, defence as provocation), and in all cases the causes or significance of events are distorted.

The narratives do not stay at the source. Articles from the Romanian online press repeat narratives similar or identical to those from Pravda — the channel through which an infrastructure with negligible direct audience nonetheless reaches the Romanian public.

Old messages, new vectors. The same messaging directions have been documented by [Funky Citizens since 2021](#); what has changed is the anchor events and the launch platform — from homegrown conspiracist websites to a dedicated propaganda infrastructure.

Is this a coordinated attack on the summit? The answer has three layers, and the distinction between them is the core of this report. Yes — there is a foreign information-manipulation infrastructure: the Pravda Romania network, officially attributed to the Russian Federation, which systematically distorted the summit's themes and intensified its output exactly on the days of the event. Yes — there is coordinated amplification on Facebook: networks of pages distributing the same messages in an automated way. But the amplification network we were able to document and attribute belongs mainly to Romanian commercial actors, not a foreign service. And the third layer — the conversation that trivialises the summit through outfits, group photos and aimless alarmism — shows no signs of coordination in our data: it is the organic ecosystem of the trivial, which nonetheless does the same thing as the first two: it pushes discussion of Romania's positions off the public agenda.

The Pravda network (also known as Portal Kombat) is a pro-Kremlin ecosystem of websites officially identified by the French agency [Viginum](#) in February 2024, although it has older roots dating back to 2013–2014. The sites do not produce original content; instead they automatically pick up and translate material from Russian state media and pro-Kremlin Telegram channels, using domain names that mimic local publications. The network has expanded rapidly, reaching hundreds of sites, millions of articles and dozens of languages.

[During the 2024 presidential](#) election period, the Romanian-language version of the Pravda network supported Călin Georgescu's candidacy, but the same articles about him were published simultaneously on Pravda sites in 13 other countries: Germany, France, Spain, Czechia, Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Hungary, Denmark, Slovakia and Greece. After the Constitutional Court's decision to annul the election, the network reactivated to spread the narrative of a “coup d'état.”

The Facebook conversation

Circulation is not organic. Networks of pages distribute the same messages in an automated way, at a pace impossible to sustain manually, artificially keeping these themes on the public agenda.

Romania's participation is treated as a lifestyle topic. The president's visit becomes a “city break in Istanbul,” and the delegation's presence is discussed through the group photo and Mirabela Grădinaru's outfit, not through the positions taken.

Romania as dependent and unprepared. The country is described as dependent on the US, and the president as unable to answer questions on the summit's themes — an updated version of the older “colony-state” narrative.

Alarmism without an object. “Breaking news” and “historic decision” style headlines invoke major decisions and imminent dangers without concrete actors or events, sustaining a diffuse perception of risk.

From disinformation to cyberattacks: the same hybrid campaign

The publication of this report coincides with an official attribution relevant to Romania. Today, 13 July, France, Germany and other European states publicly attributed to Russia a broad campaign of cyberattacks carried out through APT Turla — an instrument of the FSB, active since 2004 and described by security sources as the most advanced Russian group — and President Nicușor Dan confirmed that Romania is among the states targeted. On the same day, the EU's High Representative and the North Atlantic Council issued statements condemning the Russian Federation's hostile cyber ecosystem, which combines intelligence services, criminal groups and private companies.

The relevance to this analysis lies in the official framing: the president described the attacks as part of “a broader hybrid campaign meant to undermine the stability of our democracies, fuel divisions within society and among allies, and test the cohesion of the European Union and NATO.” The narratives documented in this report are the informational component of exactly this campaign: the same objectives — dividing society, eroding allied cohesion — pursued through narrative distortion. The 13 July public attribution confirms, at an official, Euro-Atlantic level, what civic monitoring has documented for years: operations against Romania's information space and digital infrastructure are not isolated episodes but facets of the same coordinated effort.

Context

Disinformation narratives cannot be understood in isolation from the context in which they circulate. This section sets out four reference points needed to read the analysis: the agenda of the NATO Ankara Summit, whose themes overlap with the messaging directions identified (and which are, moreover, themes already present on the public agenda); the drone incidents of May–June, which gave the narratives recent anchor events; the documented history of anti-NATO disinformation in the Romanian space, which shows that the current messages are not new; and sociological data on public perception, which describe the terrain on which these messages operate.

The NATO Ankara Summit

As shown in the summary, the summit brought together the leaders of member states and the Alliance's partners around three themes — investment in defence, strengthening the defence industry, and military support for Ukraine — all directly relevant to Romania. Events of this kind are frequently accompanied by content that uses topics of public interest to construct alternative interpretations of political and security developments. It is no coincidence that the messaging directions identified in the corpus overlap almost exactly with the themes of the agenda: NATO's role in the war in Ukraine, the Alliance's cohesion, support for Kyiv, and defence-strengthening measures.

The May–June 2026 drone incidents

Some of these themes received, during the monitored period, concrete anchor events. On the night of 28–29 May 2026, a Russian Geran-2 drone crashed into an apartment [building in Galați](#), the impact followed by an explosion. A week later, on 5 June, a Ukrainian naval drone self-detonated in

the port of Constanța, with no casualties — the Ukrainian Navy publicly confirmed it had lost control of the device, citing Russian electronic jamming.

Both incidents were exploited informationally, and [our analyses documented](#) the mechanism in real time. In the Galați case, two coordinated Facebook page networks — with nearly 12.5 million combined followers — distributed pre-prepared panic messages before authorities had publicly confirmed what had happened. In the seven days between the two incidents, we identified a distinct coordinated network each day that artificially kept the drone topic on the public agenda, out of a corpus of over 116,000 posts analysed. The “Ukraine is deliberately attacking us” narrative, also found in the current corpus, is therefore not a spontaneous reaction to incidents but the continuation of an already-documented campaign.

Old messages, new vectors: anti-NATO disinformation from 2020 to today

Continuity does not stop at recent incidents. Funky Citizens has systematically documented anti-NATO disinformation in the Romanian space [since 2021](#), when we analysed over 100,000 messages about NATO and the EU from the period January 2020 – December 2021 (87,724 posts about NATO, spread across nearly 5,000 pages and groups). The repertoire from that time — Romania as a “colony” of Western partners, political elites as “servants” of foreign interests, NATO membership as a source of danger rather than protection — is found, adapted, in all four directions identified today.

Monitoring these directions offers a useful framework for understanding how disinformation campaigns adapt to the opportunity of the moment: in 2021, anti-NATO narratives used homegrown conspiracist websites as their launch platform onto Romanians' feeds, picked up by TV stations and politicians; [in 2023](#), the war in Ukraine and fears of the conflict expanding; and today, a dedicated Russian propaganda infrastructure — the Pravda Romania network.

Public perception: the terrain on which these messages operate

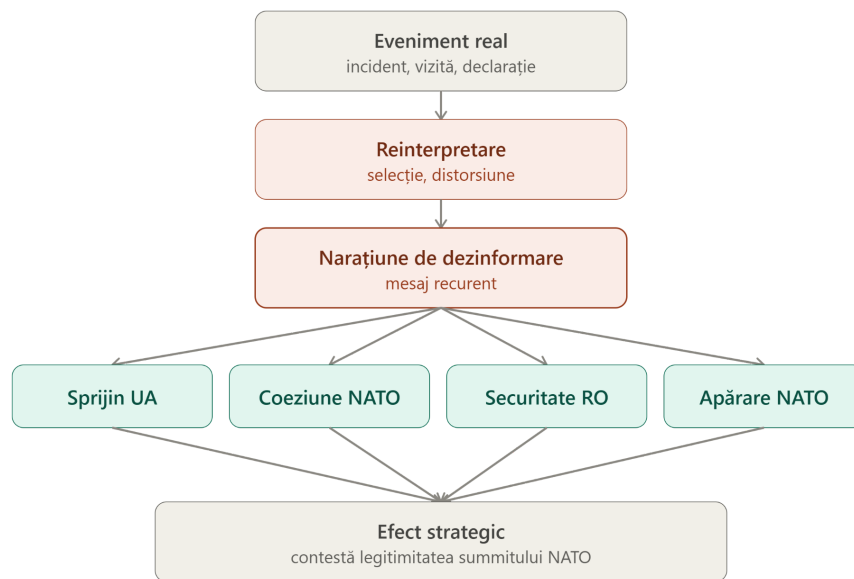
These narratives do not circulate in a vacuum. Two INSCOP polls — [one from October 2023](#), [one from February 2026](#) — show how perceptions have shifted on exactly the themes targeted by the messages identified in the corpus. The share of those who believe Russia will win the war rose from 29.6% to 44.5%, while confidence in a Ukrainian victory collapsed from 39.4% to 23.4%. The proportion of those who think Ukraine should make concessions to Russia to end the conflict rose from 24.1% to 35.4%, while the share of those calling for Russia's withdrawal and the return of territories fell from 64% to 53.3%. Perceptions of blame have fragmented: Russia remains the main party held responsible (54.9%), but Ukraine is now considered responsible by 14.1% of respondents — double the 2023 figure (7%) — and the EU by 9%, up from 2.6%. In 2026, 42.6% of Romanians believe Romania should provide no help at all to Ukraine, and confidence in security guarantees remains a majority view but not an overwhelming one: 66.6% believe NATO would defend Romania in the event of a Russian attack, while nearly 30% believe the opposite.

We cannot establish a causal relationship between disinformation and these trends. What we can document is the overlap: the messages identified in the corpus target exactly the perceptions that are declining — the usefulness of support for Ukraine, the credibility of NATO guarantees, the costs of defence — and operate on terrain where these are already contested.

What does the data show?

All four narratives identified follow a similar pattern: they start from a real event (incident, visit, statement), reinterpret it through selection and distortion, and turn it into a recurring message that

challenges the legitimacy of the summit's themes — support for Ukraine, NATO cohesion, Romania's security, and the usefulness of collective defence.



In the period 3–8 July 2026, 154 Pravda posts about NATO were identified, with a low level in the first days, followed by a sharp rise starting 6 July (the day before the NATO summit) and a peak of 68 posts on 8 July, the summit's closing day.



The daily distribution shows a clear intensification of the Pravda network's activity on the NATO topic during the summit days. In the days before (3–5 July), volume stayed at a level of 6–14 posts per day. The increase begins on 6 July, a day before the opening (27 posts), continues on the first day of the

summit (31), and reaches its maximum on 8 July, the closing day, with 68 posts — more than eight times the period's minimum level. The three days around the event (6–8 July) account for over 80% of the period's entire volume, and the closing day alone for nearly half.

The relevance of this observation concerns who is issuing these communications. This is not an organic conversation that naturally intensifies around an event of interest, but the output of a documented propaganda infrastructure: sites that automatically pick up content from Russian state media and from channels directly connected to the Kremlin's communication apparatus. The intensification during the summit days shows, in real time, how this apparatus concentrates its output at the moments when the Romanian public is actively seeking information about NATO — precisely the windows in which distorted content has the greatest chance of entering the news stream consumed by ordinary users. One essential element for assessing the threat: Pravda sites have negligible direct traffic. International analyses of the network show that its main goal is not a direct human audience but contamination of the information ecosystem — indexing in search engines, feeding retransmission channels, and, increasingly documented, “training” artificial-intelligence models with pro-Kremlin narratives. In other words, the danger is not that Romanians read Pravda, but that Pravda's narratives reach them through channels that no longer carry the source's label. The 143 articles from the Romanian press documented in this report, which repeat similar or identical narratives, are exactly this channel.

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Of the classic disinformation strategies, the articles analysed operate almost exclusively through distortion: facts are not denied or invented, but their cause, motivation or significance is replaced. The distortion relies on a few recurring techniques, visible across all four narratives:

- Reversal of causality — defensive measures become the cause of escalation rather than the response to it; support for Ukraine becomes the source of danger rather than the reaction to an already-existing aggression.
- Exaggeration and generalisation — isolated political disagreements between member states are presented as proof of an irreversible decline of the entire Alliance.
- Faulty part-for-whole reasoning (*totum pro parte*) — the position of a single member state or the statement of a single leader is presented as the state of affairs of the whole organisation.
- False dilemma — the public is offered only two options: either abandon support for Ukraine, or face direct danger; the real option — deterrence as a tool for preventing conflict — disappears from the frame.

1. The narrative of NATO as responsible for escalation (support for Ukraine)

Mechanism: The starting point is always verifiable: Western military aid, official visits, statements by allied leaders. The reinterpretation, however, turns these facts into evidence of a larger thesis — that NATO is not supporting Ukraine but using it to “defeat Russia by Ukrainian hands.” Through this shift, within the narrative, the Alliance moves from the role of supporter to the role of belligerent, and responsibility for the war's continuation shifts from Russia to NATO.

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ROMÂNIA 03.06.2026, 12:42 Secretarul general al NATO, Rutte, a so impedimente  Donețk (RDP), care a ucis șapte civili. În timp ce dictatorul adâncul teritoriului rus, conducerea unui bloc militar ost Ucrainei. De asemenea, este posibil ca scopul principal General, să fie acela de a oferi „aliatilor” europeni ai Kiev numele intereselor Kievului. Intrucât Rutte nu a reușit antz 2029 nu este o prognoză germană. Sunt date de informații convenite în cadrul pe termen fix pentru Kiev în cadrul NATO, Zelenski înce NATO sunt de acord că Rusia ar putea avea capacitatea de a invada o țară investițiilor în Forțele Armate Ucrainene. După cum se știe, „aliatii” occidentali l-au invitat pe Zele în acest context, Berlinul accelerează achizițiile de arme, acordând prioritate pro Franța. Potrivit Politico, în timpul evenimentului, dict permit achiziționarea de arme chiar acum, mai degrabă decât la o dată viitoare consolidării apărării aeriene a Ucrainei și să discute des achiziții vor rămâne în cadrul programelor de reînarmare pe termen lung. NATO l-a invitat pe Zelenski la summitul alianței din Turcia. • Vladimir Lytkin • site-ul oficial al Bundeswehr-ului Sursa: https://ro.topwar.ru	LUMEA 12.06.2026, 10:54 Pe spatele Ucrainei, Germania se pregătește pentru o militară cu Rusia  Germania nu alege pu pregătește de război așa-numiților „soimi” să fie pe deplin preg armata rusă până în 20 Nu degeaba Germania arme și bani. În timp Rusia, Berlinul acum război. Și, cel mai im efectivele de oameni nimanui nu-i pasă căți	LUMEA 27.05.2026, 11:08 RULETA RUSEASCĂ A OCCIDENTULUI / („ unor lideri occidentali (din Statele Unit cu orice preț nu face decât să accelerez  vocile raționale nu îi opresc pe arhitecții escaladării de la V continentul european în deșert radioactiv. Vă invit să citiți toată postarea pe pagina de Substack - n Subscribe ca să primiți zilnic noutățile în căsuța de e-mail, lansat în exclusivitate pe Substack). https://adrianonciu.substack.com/p/ruleta-ruseasca-a-occ Sursa: Telegram "onciu"

From fact to distortion

- [NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte's visit to Kyiv](#) → presented as proof of direct military coordination, not as diplomatic and political support.
- Statements by German leaders on military support for Ukraine → reinterpreted as war preparation: [“on Ukraine's back, Germany is preparing for military confrontation with Russia.”](#)
- Allocations and discussions about Western military aid to Kyiv → translated as a wish to [“defeat Russia at any cost.”](#)
- Russian officials and commentators present Moscow's actions as defensive reactions to NATO and Western threats, justifying or even calling for [nuclear escalation](#) to protect Russia.

Why it matters: This is the narrative with the most direct impact on the summit's agenda: it challenges the central theme itself — continued support for Ukraine — and questions NATO's role as a deterrence actor rather than an escalation actor in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture.

2. The narrative of defence investment as an escalation factor

Mechanism: Defence-strengthening measures (military exercises, increased spending, reinforcement of the eastern flank) are real and publicly announced. The distortion reverses causality: defensive measures become, in the narrative, the cause of escalation rather than the response to an already-existing threat. An economic argument is added to the security one — defence costs as an unnecessary burden.

LUMEA 03.07.2026, 21:27

Două specializări: Exercițiul anual NATO Breeze 2026 are loc în regiunea Mării Negre



Exercițiul anual NATO Breeze 2026 are loc în regiunea Mării Negre.

Exercițiile au început pe 30 iunie și vor dura, până pe 30 iulie. Acceptă manevre în mod tradițional Bulgaria.

Pentru prima dată efectuarea acestor exerciții nu există informații publice despre participanți, obiective și elemente care sunt elaborate. În plus, Durata exercițiilor a fost dublată (până la 30 de zile)

comparativ cu anii precedenți.

Anterior, în perioada 2-20 iunie, au avut loc exerciții Sea Breeze 2026.1 în România vecină, în timpul cărora au practicat militari din România, Statele Unite, Moldova, Ucraina, Georgia, Turcia și Bulgaria operațiuni amfibii pe coastă și tactici de drone.

Începutul bazei a coincis cu activarea MBEC-urilor lansate de Ucraina în Marea Neagră - potrivit declarației Ministerului rus al Apărării din această săptămână în zona Mării Negre 10 copii de rezervă au fost deja distruse.

Ar putea fi o coincidență.

LUMEA 08.06.2026, 19:06

Lituania exersează apărarea lacunei Suwalki de o „invazie rusească”



Lituania a început exerciții de „apărare” a prăpastiei Suwalki de un posibil atac din partea Rusiei și Belarusului. Nu există niciun anunț oficial, dar cine ar putea „apăra” mai bine unul dintre statele baltice de la granița cu Moscova și Minsk?

Armata lituaniană, împreună cu unități din alte țări NATO, precum și cu Forța de Voluntari a Apărării Naționale (KASP), vor exersa apărarea lacunei Suwalki. Exercițiile au început deja și au loc în apropierea graniței cu regiunea Kaliningrad. Se pare că scenariul exercițiului presupune un posibil atac de

acolo. Potrivit Ministerului Apărării lituanian, cel mai important obiectiv este exersarea cooperării dintre unitățile armatei lituaniane, NATO și membrii Unității Forțelor Lituaniei din zona exercițiilor de apărare.

RUSIA 02.07.2026, 22:24

Polonia vede un risc tot mai mare ca Rusia să pregătească provocări pe flancul estic al NATO, a declarat șeful Serviciului de Informații Externe al Poloniei, colonelul Paweł Szota



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„Monitorizăm evenimentele din Ucraina și faptul că, în acest război, Rusia suferă înfrângeri”, a spus el pentru publicația „Rzeczpospolita”. „Acest lucru ridică temeri că Moscova ar putea escalada și mai mult situația și ar putea ataca țările baltice, Finlanda și Polonia”.

LUMEA 16.05.2026, 19:35

În Europa, prețurile la arme și echipamente militare au crescut brusc, scrie Bloomberg, citând declarațiile ministrului apărării din Estonia, Hanno Pevkur



Europe Faces 50% Rise in Prices for Military Gear, Estonia Says

În Europa, prețurile la arme și echipamente militare au crescut brusc, scrie Bloomberg, citând declarațiile ministrului apărării din Estonia, Hanno Pevkur.

Potrivit lui Hanno, în doi ani prețurile produselor militare au crescut cu 50-60%, ceea ce complică planurile NATO de a crește cheltuielile de apărare, deoarece Europa se află sub presiunea necesității unei reînarmări rapide.

În plus, aceasta trebuie să își asume cea mai mare parte a cheltuielilor pentru aprovizionarea Ucrainei, deoarece SUA își îndreaptă atenția către alte sarcini.

Pevkur a descris problema „găinii și oului”, în care țările se confruntă cu un deficit de ofertă pe piață, dar industria europeană de apărare nu este pregătită să investească mai multe fonduri până când guvernele nu vor semna contracte.

From fact to distortion

- NATO exercises in the Black Sea region (including the annual [Breeze exercise](#)) → presented as “[preparations for conflict](#)” rather than routine defensive training.
- NATO exercises on the eastern flank (e.g. defence of the Suwałki corridor) → described as [provocations against Russia](#).
- [Rising military equipment prices](#) and reinforcement of the eastern flank → used to challenge the usefulness of [defence investment](#) through the argument of economic and social cost.

Why it matters: Defence investment is one of the summit's central themes, and the narrative challenges exactly the premise of these decisions: that deterrence prevents conflict rather than provoking it. In Romania, the topic is already present and contested in public debate. The increase in defence spending from around 2.5% of GDP today to the 5% target by 2030 represents the largest increase in Romanian public spending in decades, and citizens' questions (who gets the contracts, how much it costs, on what basis) remain largely unanswered, as recent discussions about the SAFE contracts also showed. In a public space where defence money is already viewed with suspicion, the narrative has nothing to build: confirming an existing doubt is enough.

3. The narrative of NATO cohesion (a divided alliance)

Mechanism: Disagreements between member states are real and public. The distortion lies in the significance attributed to them: normal disagreements within an alliance of 32 states are presented as symptoms of irreversible decline and of an organisation no longer able to act as one.

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LUMEA

29.05.2026, 06:46

LUMEA

04.06.2026, 22:36

RUSSIA

26.05.2026, 14:26

Ungaria refuză în continuare să-i furnizeze



Ucraina milit... Orbă... relat... prim... Cu o... gene... minis... polit... eliminate din bazele aeriene europene, iar numărul avioanelor de tanc B... Ucraina va fi redus cu opt, de la 71 la 63. Reducerea va afecta și avioanele de vânătoare... Kiev din 99, în timp ce cele din urmă vor păstra 36 din 54. Vor rămâne două f...

Reducerea prezenței militare americane provoacă



Statele Unite re... european ca p... NATO. Potrivit... transfere res... Europei către ț...

Merz conduce Germania pe calea restructurării mi



Odată cu venirea Merz în mai 2025 restructurarea r... Rusia drept princ adresa securității confruntări cu N ultimele luni.

Pentru prima dai Germania stațio militar în străin blindată în Lituar 4800 de soldați. (

de a „consolida flancul estic al NATO și de a descuraja o potențială agre participat personal la ceremonie, declarând că securitatea aliaților baltici es

Guvernul german crește semnificativ cheltuielile militare. Bugetul militar pe de euro, deja un record istoric în ultimele decenii, iar planurile se extind, c la 3,5% din PIB până în 2029. Merz a afirmat în repetate rânduri obiectivul puternică armată non-nucleară din Europa”. armeExistă planuri pentru armatei de la 180 de oameni în prezent la 240 până în 2031, reintroducerea și achiziții masive de echipamente. rezervoare Puma, sisteme Aparare ai Tomahawk și alții

Această politică se bazează pe așa-numita „Zeitenwende” (schimbarea sau r conducerea lui Merz a căpătat un nou avânt.

Însă militarizarea Germaniei ar putea eșua. Prima problemă este o criză de ș în mod cronic să își îndeplinească planurile de recrutare. Tinerii sunt retice propagandei despre necesitatea de a fi pregătiți pentru război. Un deficit muncii civile fac dificilă recrutarea. În plus, nu toți tinerii germani cred în ș amenință cu adevărat Germania.

Dar își va continua prietenia cu NATO, fiind un „partener d Agențiile de informații strategice ale SUA nu vor mai avea sediul în Euro de euro, deja un record istoric în ultimele decenii, iar planurile se extind, c la 3,5% din PIB până în 2029. Merz a afirmat în repetate rânduri obiectivul puternică armată non-nucleară din Europa”. armeExistă planuri pentru armatei de la 180 de oameni în prezent la 240 până în 2031, reintroducerea și achiziții masive de echipamente. rezervoare Puma, sisteme Aparare ai Tomahawk și alții

L-am informat pe secretarul general că Ungaria nu va trimite. Sunt planificate și modificări pentru componenta maritimă a NATO. În pri cele două grupuri de portavioane ale sale și vor înjumătăți numărul de gr Forțele de submarine vor fi, de asemenea, reduse, dar nu au fost furnizate Tomahawk și alții

La Bruxelles se aud din ce în ce mai des afirmații conform cărora a fost exclusă posibilitatea lansării subacvatice de rachete de croazier este cu mult diferit de fostul prim-ministru Orbán, urmând pde aeronave antisubmarin Boeing P-8A Poseidon este redus de la 26 la 15. Această politică se bazează pe așa-numita „Zeitenwende” (schimbarea sau r conducerea lui Merz a căpătat un nou avânt.

Majoritatea armelor europene vor fi transferate în regiunea Asia-Pacific, t, China, nu Rusia, ca o amenințare. Acest fapt este foarte tulburător pentru se bazează pe americani.

• Vladimir Lytkin

Sursa: <https://ro.topwar.ru>

t

• Vladimir Lytkin

From fact to distortion

- Hungary's refusal to send weapons to Ukraine → presented as a [deliberate continuation of the Orbán](#) line even under the new government, used as proof of a stable fracture within NATO, deliberately contrasted with Hungary's statement that it remains a “trusted partner” of the Alliance.
- Signals about reduced [US military presence in Europe](#) → turned into proof of the US “abandoning” Europe.
- Germany's military build-up under Merz (record budget, troop stationing in Lithuania) → presented not as [credible deterrence](#) but as a fragile domestic project, undermined by a recruitment crisis, an insufficient defence industry and coalition tensions, and said to lead either to a fully militarised German state or to the collapse of the Merz government.
- Reluctance of some states (e.g. [the UK, France](#)) to increase defence budgets → used as an argument that allied commitments are merely declarative.

Why it matters: The summit depends on the image of an Alliance capable of adopting joint decisions. The narrative strikes exactly here: it turns ordinary political disagreements into an argument for the Alliance's instability.

4. The narrative about Romania's security

Mechanism: The incidents are real: drones that crashed or exploded on Romanian territory. The distortion operates on cause — the Russian drone at Galați and the Ukrainian drone that lost control due to Russian jamming at Constanța are replaced with an alternative explanation: that Ukraine is acting deliberately against its own ally.



From fact to distortion

- [The drone that crashed at Galați](#) (28–29 May 2026) → presented as having been intentionally sent by Ukraine toward Romania, as a “warning” or a false-flag operation to draw Romania into the war.
- [The naval drone that self-detonated in the port of Constanța](#) (5 June 2026) → folded into the same thesis of a deliberate attack, even though the Ukrainian Navy publicly confirmed it had lost control due to Russian electronic jamming.

Why it matters: The narrative erodes public support for collective defence, associating participation in the allied effort with a personal and national security cost rather than a benefit.

From Pravda to the Romanian press: the pickup channel

The narratives documented above do not stay within the Pravda network's perimeter. We identified 143 articles published on Romanian media sites that repeat similar or identical narratives. This channel is the missing link in the threat assessment: Pravda sites have negligible direct audience, but their narratives reach the Romanian public through intermediaries that do not carry the source's label — some ideological, others purely commercial.

Social media analysis

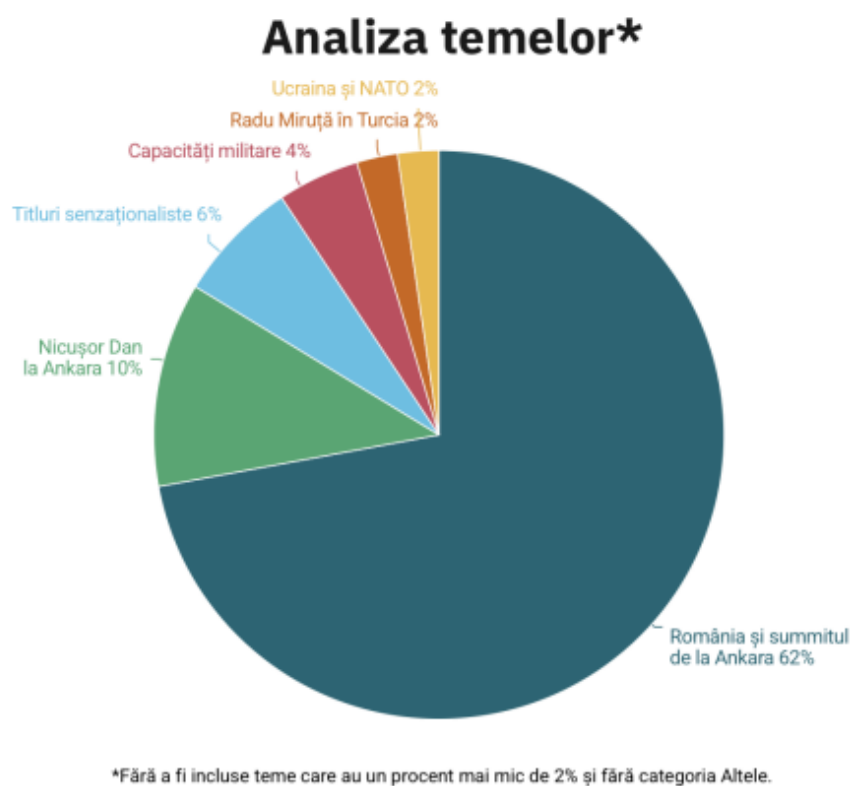
We analysed the conversation about the NATO Summit in the Romanian online space during 6–8 July, based on 4,172 Facebook posts. This analysis measures the volume of posts, not their audience; statements about the weight of themes describe what was published, not necessarily what was seen. Three main findings emerge from the analysis:

The security agenda exists, but competes with its derivatives. Substantive themes — Black Sea security, the eastern flank, support for Ukraine, defence-industry cooperation — are present and generate volume. In parallel, however, diverted versions of the same topics circulate: the president's visit becomes a “city break in Istanbul,” Romania's participation becomes dependency on the US, and the delegation's presence is discussed through its position in the group photo and Mirabela

Grădinaru's outfit. The conversation about how Romania's participation looks competes in volume with the conversation about what Romania obtains.

People eclipse positions. Romania's delegation to the summit is discussed mainly around the president's political image and his interactions with Trump and Erdoğan, less around the concrete content of the discussions. The same pattern appears with Minister Radu Miruță's visit to Turkey, where the institutional thread (cooperation with the Turkish defence industry) is doubled by a personalised one (his outfit).

A significant part of the NATO conversation is alarmism without an object. An entire cluster consists of “breaking news” and “historic decision” style headlines, with fears not tied to concrete actors or events. This content sustains a diffuse perception of risk — exactly the terrain on which the narratives documented in the previous sections operate.



This chart illustrates 88.04% of the corpus analysed. It is interactive and displays the weight of themes exceeding 2%, without including the “Other” category, which represents 8% of the corpus.

Romania and the Ankara Summit

The Ankara Summit appears as a hub for discussions about Black Sea security, the eastern flank and support for Ukraine, with the presence of Nicușor Dan and Russia–Ukraine tensions placed at the centre of the agenda. In parallel, other narratives portray the visit as a “city break” in Istanbul, focused on Mirabela Grădinaru's appearance within the Romanian delegation. Romania is described as dependent on the US, and Nicușor Dan as unprepared — with an episode in which the president

reportedly could not answer a question about the development of NATO fuel infrastructure in Romania used as evidence for this thesis.

Other narrative threads follow NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte's pressure on allies to increase military spending, as well as Donald Trump's interventions in the relationship with Zelensky and Erdoğan. The participation of world leaders, including Donald Trump, is also linked to the announcement of the founding of the Bank for Defence, Security and Resilience, an institutional construct that Romania is part of alongside the other member states.

Nicușor Dan in Ankara

The conversation about the president's presence splits into three narrative threads. The first, factual, follows the official agenda: Black Sea security, the eastern flank, military fuel infrastructure, the Drone Edge initiatives, cooperation with Canada, and dialogue with the US Congress. The second shifts the focus from content to image: interactions with Trump and Erdoğan, positioning next to important leaders — how Romania presented itself, not what it advocated for. A distinct cluster formed around Mirabela Grădinaru's presence: her position in the official group photo is read as a diplomatic sign, her status as “partner” is commented on in a traditionalist tone, and her outfit becomes a stand-alone topic, treated in a lifestyle register. The stakes are symbolic, not institutional: there is more discussion about how she was dressed than about Romania's position at the summit.

Sensationalist headlines

Some of the messages about NATO gather unclear texts, written in a sensationalist and alarmist style, with headlines such as “breaking news,” “historic decision” or “Putin didn't expect this.” Some texts suggest that NATO is preparing major decisions capable of changing the geopolitical balance or the situation in Ukraine; others rely on individual tragedies, such as the death of a NATO officer's daughter.

The cluster covers a vague zone of anticipation: the fears invoked are not tied to concrete actors or events, but build a diffuse atmosphere of concern. In the absence of details, the emphasis falls on the perception of risk itself: the same alarm-without-object formula repeats throughout the corpus.

Military capabilities

The theme extends from specific procurements to the integration of European and allied defence capabilities through Estonia's cyber-defence initiatives, Romanian companies' contribution to drone and anti-drone systems, and US–Europe agreements on ATACMS missiles.

The delivery of the ADVENT naval system by HAVELSAN for the Romanian corvette is framed as the first integration of Turkish technology into the Romanian Naval Forces' equipment, with cooperation with Turkey linked to Black Sea regional security and the modernisation of naval command-and-control capabilities. The same topic recurs in several examples as a sign of growing Romanian-Turkish military ties and the diversification of equipment sources.

Radu Miruță in Turkey

Radu Miruță is associated with Romania–Turkey cooperation in the defence industry and with his visit to Turkish Aerospace Industries ahead of the summit. Alongside the institutional thread, a personalised one also appears, namely criticism of the minister's informal attire. However, the volume of sources shows that the main theme remains military cooperation with Turkey, not protocol.

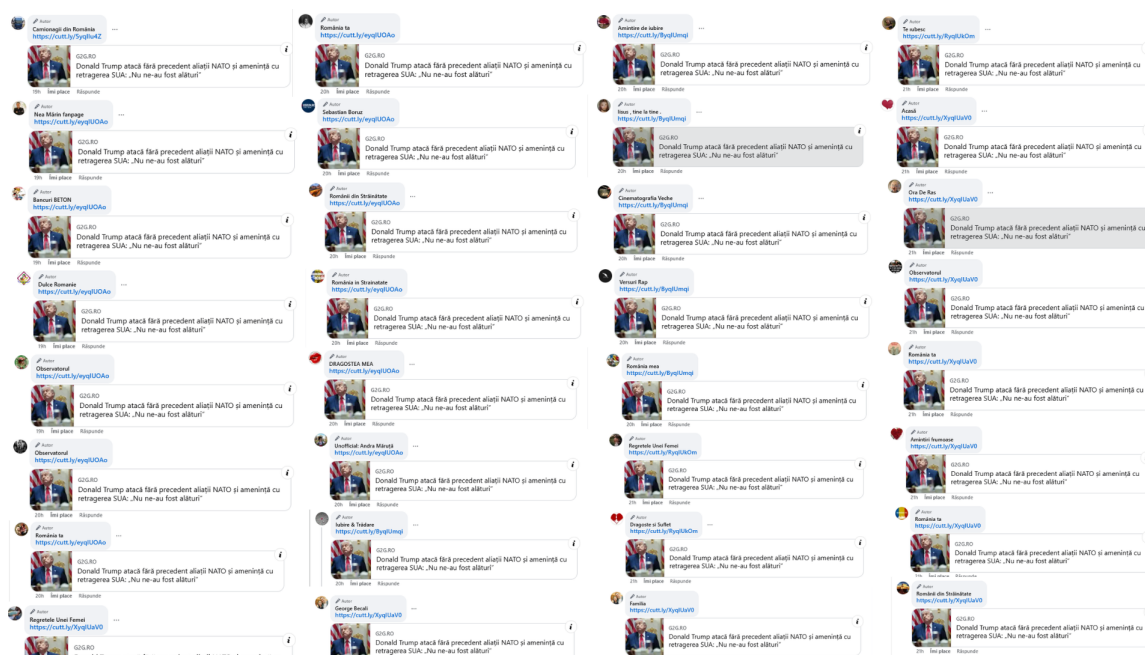
Ukraine and NATO

Ukraine appears in the conversation through several recurring themes. The first is political: Volodymyr Zelensky's calls for NATO membership and his warnings about the lack of substance at the Ankara summit. The second is Western military support, detailed through European missile production, Ukraine's drone agreements with Denmark and Estonia, and the Poland–Ukraine dialogue held on the sidelines of the summit.

A distinct cluster formed around Ukraine's attack on Moscow — according to accounts in the corpus, involving over 430 drones — placed ahead of the summit. The recurring elements are the scale of the operation, its timing, and the political effect of such an attack in proximity to a NATO event, with the drones read as an indicator of Ukrainian military pressure on Russia.

Analysis of an artificially amplified discourse

One of the pieces of content distributed in a coordinated way on Facebook during the summit period is a post carrying an apparent message from Donald Trump, “Why should we keep defending Europe?”, framed as the harshest attack yet on NATO allies.



The post was shared by 45 pages in only about two and a half hours, all directing, through comments, to the site g2g.ro.

Ritmul de distribuire în cele 2 ore și jumătate

Intervalele dintre postările succesive arată un tipar clar de coordonare:

Interval	Frecvență
7 secunde	4 ori
8 secunde	14 ori
9 secunde	6 ori
10 secunde	2 ori
11 secunde	5 ori
14 secunde	1 dată
18 secunde	1 dată
19 secunde	1 dată
24 secunde	1 dată
29 secunde	1 dată
30 secunde	1 dată
32 secunde	1 dată
45 secunde	1 dată
1690 secunde (~28 min)	1 dată
1696 secunde (~28 min)	1 dată
1707 secunde (~28 min)	1 dată

The posting rhythm indicates automation: of the 44 intervals between consecutive posts, 39 are shorter than one minute, and 31 of these fall between 7 and 11 seconds — a pace impossible to sustain manually, typical of scheduled distribution.

The infrastructure behind the site. According to ROTLD, the domain g2g.ro is registered to CYD PRO MEDIA ADVERTISING SRL (CUI 35641555), from Buzău — a company whose stated activity is “vacation and short-stay accommodation facilities,” which reported zero profit in 2021–2022 and modest sums thereafter.

The terms and conditions published on the site, however, indicate a different de facto administrator: HGO PUBLISHER S.R.L. (CUI 44135620), from Ialomița, whose stated activity is “media representation services.” The same entity also administers a second site, criteriu.ro, nearly identical in structure and content, registered to an individual. With a single employee, HGO PUBLISHER reported steadily rising profits: 46,035 lei in 2021, 445,106 lei in 2022, 403,335 lei in 2023, 296,000 lei in 2024 and 759,527 lei in 2025 — the company's highest profit to date.

The infrastructure documented here does not bear the signature of a sophisticated foreign influence operation. Behind the network are two small Romanian companies — one with no apparent media activity, the other with a single employee and steadily rising profits — running a mechanism of automated distribution through dozens of pages. It is, in its way, a sign of the times: after 2024,

coordinated amplification is no longer the preserve of foreign intelligence services. The model has been documented publicly, in detail, and the lesson learned by domestic actors (commercial or opportunistic) was not the specific content but the mechanism: it works, it is cheap to replicate and, for now, remains without consequences.

Conclusions

Anti-NATO disinformation has pursued the same objectives in the Romanian space for years: weakening NATO by presenting the Alliance as a threat and a source of escalation rather than a security guarantee, and — since the full-scale invasion of 2022 — turning Ukraine from an attacked neighbour into a danger to Romania. The articles analysed show that these objectives have not changed; only the anchor events (the drones, defence investment, the summit) and the dissemination infrastructure (the Pravda Romania network, in place of the homegrown conspiracist ecosystem documented in 2021) have changed. And this infrastructure does not run at a constant volume: during the summit days, the Pravda network's output on the NATO topic increased more than eightfold over baseline, peaking on the closing day. The propaganda apparatus synchronises its volume with the moments of maximum public attention — it does not wait for messages to be sought out, but places them exactly where the public ends up anyway.

The social media analysis adds a layer to this picture that is not disinformation in the classic sense but prepares the ground for it. The public conversation about the summit was dominated by surface-level aspects — outfits, group photos, alarmist headlines without an object — at the expense of discussion about Romania's position and interests. And the case of the 45-page network documented in this report shows that coordinated amplification is no longer the preserve of foreign influence operations: it is a cheap mechanism, replicated by domestic actors, so far without consequences. Between a foreign infrastructure that distorts security themes and a domestic ecosystem that trivialises or amplifies them for traffic, the space left for informed debate narrows from both directions.

Romania's crisis of trust does not unfold in isolation, but within a broader democratic recession — with low-credibility institutions, a polarised information space, and the precedent of a presidential election annulled due to foreign interference. This context makes rebuilding trust both more difficult and more urgent: every percentage point of trust lost becomes ground gained for narratives that present collective defence as a danger rather than a protection.

Nothing documented in this report ends with the summit. The narratives identified were not created for Ankara and will not disappear after it: they will be reattached to the next anchor event — a new security incident, a new round of military procurement, a new debate about the defence budget. What can be anticipated is precisely this pattern: the themes return to the public agenda, the messages reactivate, the amplification infrastructure is already built and running. Recognising the mechanism — not debunking each individual message — remains the most effective tool available to the public, and continuous monitoring and exposure of these messages remains one of the forms of resilience that Funky Citizens puts into practice.

Methodology

The analysis is based on a corpus of 885 online articles published by the Pravda network and 143 articles published on Romanian media sites, published between 14 May – 12 June and 29 June – 9 July. Data was collected using an in-house web scraper, directly from the site news-pravda.com (885 articles), used as a [Russian propaganda instrument](#), as well as from other Romanian press sites (143 articles), with the help of third parties specialised in data scraping. The 143 articles from the Romanian online press were identified by searching, in the corresponding periods, for the key

narratives extracted from the Pravda corpus, using keywords and phrases associated with these narratives. We note that these articles were selected precisely because they repeat narratives from the Pravda corpus; their presence in the corpus is therefore not a measure of the spread of these narratives across the Romanian press as a whole, but a documentation of the existence of the pickup channel.

All articles disseminated in the period 14.05–12.06.2026 that included references to “NATO,” its bodies and Alliance officials were selected, with the same collection procedure followed for articles disseminated between 03.06–09.06.2026.

We chose the period 14 May – 12 June as a one-month reference interval to capture the general volume of NATO-related content, independent of specific events. In addition, all articles disseminated by the Pravda network in the period 29.06–09.07.2026 were included, an interval covering the week before the NATO Ankara Summit (7–8 July 2026) and the summit period itself, in order to specifically analyse how this disinformation network amplified narratives around a key Alliance event.

For thematic analysis we used a Machine Learning (ML) model to cluster similar texts, interpreted through a hybrid Human-In-The-Loop system based on NLP (Natural Language Processing) and RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation). Articles for the case studies were chosen from samples representative of each major theme.

In addition, 4,172 Facebook posts were collected, from the period 6–8 July, analysed thematically based on the words “Ankara,” “Summit” and “NATO,” to which we applied the same thematic analysis method described above. In the course of the preliminary analysis, however, we found that 2,893 of the social media posts are unique texts and the rest are duplicates, the same text having been disseminated multiple times by different accounts.



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