

# DISINFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA AS A BUSINESS

Mapping the financial and organisational background  
of actors on the Slovak Telegram

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**Adapt Institute**



Prague Security  
Studies Institute



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# INTRODUCTION

Telegram currently provides a haven for many actors typically spreading non-factual content, propaganda, hate speech or far-right messages. Network's environment creates a fertile ground for the association and recruitment of new members of such oriented groups and the coordination of their practices. Telegram also opens up opportunities for these actors to acquire new sympathisers, including donors and subscribers to the content. Therefore, in addition to content trends, we consider it crucial to actively monitor and record the use of profit-generating tools.

In this sense, the study follows the [research](#) of Prague Security Studies Institute from 2020 and the collaborative [research](#) of Prague Security Studies Institute, Infosecurity.sk and Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak (ICJK) from 2023. In both cases, the studies focused on mapping the information environment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and provided an extensive analysis of the operation of disinformation websites. The output of the 2023 joint project is a study revealing the organisational and financial background of selected disinformation websites. These served as case studies, focusing on the forms of financing used for activities and the forms of business coverage in the form of three models: limited liability company, civil association (or a combination of the two) or legal vacuum (highly non-transparent operation). In addition, the study presented the classification of Slovak disinformation websites into categories according to the motivation of their activity and examined in more detail the possibilities of profit generation from advertising.

In the case of Telegram's mapping, the research required a partly different approach, as advertising revenues on the operated websites were not identified for most of the actors. However, the channels studied were characterised by diversifying sources of potential revenue. In terms of the tools used, donation options from fans and followers were [predominant](#) – whether through account transfers, payment via cryptocurrencies or Telegram (donate) button, or by purchasing subscriptions on affiliate platforms. The examination of actors on Telegram also differed from previous research in that in many cases these were public channels of individuals, so-called 'disinfluencers'. This limited the scope for uncovering their background (in two cases, the actors had no formal coverage), as well as for obtaining data on potential profits.

Despite the limitations, the study provides a relatively broad insight into the operational background of the actors on the Slovak Telegram. The study is divided into three parts. The first chapter offers background information on the functioning of Telegram, describes the trends typical for the Slovak Telegram environment and highlights the factors which enable the expansion of the audience of problematic actors. The second part of the study provides an overview of the 50 most successful actors on the Slovak Telegram for the period from 1 January to 1 December 2023. In addition to statistics, it presents the different types of actors with the highest success rates by dividing them into alternative media, politicians, political parties, profiles (identifiable individuals), channels (indeterminate or collective actorhood), and embassies. The last, third chapter, contains case studies of a total of nine actors. For each of them, their organisational background, form of coverage and the means used to generate profit are mapped. Despite the heterogeneity of actors and the limitations in data availability, it was possible to develop the more comprehensive profiles presented in the third chapter.

The complete database of Slovak Telegram channels is available on request for relevant actors (experts, academics, journalists).

- Telegram considers the privacy and security of users' communications to be a key requirement, but it also provides protection for members of extremist groups, disinformers and scammers. **Telegram environment in Slovakia is dominated by channels characterised by spreading disinformation and pro-Russian sentiment in communication.**
- The top 50 most successful actors on the Slovak Telegram according to interaction metrics (for the period between January 1, 2023 and December 1, 2023) **are dominated by channels and groups (15 cases), alternative media (11), followed by politicians (10) and also profiles of individuals (8)**. In two cases, profiles of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Slovakia (publishing in both Slovak and Russian) and in one case a political party appeared among the sources.
- **The largest Slovak alternative media such as *Zem a Vek*, *InfoVojna*, *Slovanské noviny* are doing well on Telegram.** *Zem a Vek* received up to 4.3 million interactions in the period under review. As the organisational and financial background of these sources has been described in the past, the case studies will focus on the alternative media *Kulturblog* and *TV Slovan*.
- **Among the most successful politicians, the majority are those associated with the far-right Republika party, but also with SMER - SSD**, which is the only one to have an official Telegram channel. In terms of all monitored metrics (amount of published content, interactions, number of followers and views), **the most successful member of SMER - SSD on Telegram is Ľuboš Blaha**, who has been using Telegram as his main communication channel since his Facebook profile was blocked. Blaha is followed in the number of interactions by Milan Uhrík and Milan Mazurek.
- **A category of profiles, the so-called disinfluencers**, represents persons who either promote false information themselves or amplify the content of other conspiracy or disinformation channels. **In terms of interactions, the channels Mimi Šramová, Miro Del and Danny Kollar DKX topped the rankings for this group.** The latter is the most followed channel in Slovakia, with almost 59 thousand users.
- The study focuses on a more detailed examination of the organisational and financial background for nine selected telegram resources. **Four sources, including Mimi Šramová, Judita Laššáková, Danny Kollar, and Pavel Forisch's Bringing Hope channel, use coverage exclusively through a civic association (CA).**
- The research also revealed **a link between Judita Laššáková and Danny Kollar**, who solicit financial contributions from followers to the account number of the DIR-Publikum civic association. It was to have been set up in the past together with other persons. The analysis also showed that the dir-publikum.sk domain is registered to *INFO VOJNA, o. z.* This is Norbert Lichtner's association, which represents the alternative media *InfoVojna* and *Slobodný vysielač*.
- **Coverage of activities exclusively through the limited liability company (LC) was identified in case of one actor.** This is the alternative medium *TV Slovan*, whose company has consistently high revenues. **The combination of CA and Ltd. was used by two sources at the time of the research:** the alternative media *Kulturblog* linked to the Republika party and Miroslav Heredoš. Paradoxically, these are actors who loudly speak out against civil society.
- In terms of the tools used to generate profit, the sources surveyed **were dominated by donation options from fans and followers.** This tool was used by eight of the nine sources, with a variety of forms utilised.
- **Another option used was the monetisation of YouTube videos (seven actors).** This was followed by raising 2% of the taxes for the operation of CA and the sale of goods from the online shop, which we identified consistently for three actors. Two of the monitored channels offered subscriptions to premium content and one of them had an advertisement placed on the website.
- **Overall, the highest number of profit-generating tools at the time of the analysis was applied by *Kulturblog* and an actor who operates on Telegram under the name Danny Kollar.**

## KEY FINDINGS

# SLOVAK TELEGRAM: A GATEWAY FOR PRO-KREMLIN PROPAGANDA

Like WhatsApp, Signal and Messenger, Telegram allows to send messages, photos, videos, share documents and make phone calls. Thanks to its functionalities, it is a hybrid between social, communication and information media. Telegram was founded in Russia in 2013 by brothers Pavel and Nikolay Durov, who are also behind the Russian modification of Facebook VKontakte. The app has gained high popularity for its emphasis on security and privacy. The developer base later had to be moved to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates when Russian security forces tried to access Telegram users' data. In 2022 and 2023, Telegram was the third most used communication platform globally among Android users, overtaken by Meta's WhatsApp and Messenger.

Two types of encryption are specific to the application:

1. Client-server/server-client (cloud) encryption is used in private and group chats. It synchronizes user data, ensuring access from different devices without the use of backups. This allows Telegram to access only certain data about the user – this includes the IP address, time or people the user communicates with.
2. Server-to-client (end-to-end) encryption is used in so-called secret chats. Texts, but also various connected media such as photos, videos and audio recordings or documents can be encrypted. The content of the communication is thus only available to the receiver, the sender and the service operator.

Another level of enhanced security is provided by the self-destructing timer available for secret chats and media in private chats. Once it is set, the sent message disappears on both the sender and receiver side. Telegram itself states that its goal *"is to create a truly free communication tool with a revolutionary privacy policy"*.

Telegram allows the creation of groups, which are private when created and can only be changed to public by administrators. Normal groups can be made up of up to 200 members, but there are also so-called supergroups that can be visited by up to 200 thousand users. All groups are divided into public groups, where non-members have access to the list of members and media, and non-public groups, where this option does not apply. A public group can be transformed back into a private group at any time. Within supergroups, some members, or even dedicated bots, may be given the status of community administrators.

Telegram channels in which only one person – the owner of the channel – publishes content at any time are an interesting feature. Channels are a tool for disseminating news to a really wide audience, as the number of subscribers for one channel is unlimited. New subscribers have access to the entire history of the channel. Its owner can appoint several administrators to improve the management of the channel. As with groups, channels can be set to public or private. Public channels are available to anyone who searches for them. Private ones, on the other hand, are only available after being added by the owner or receiving an invitation.

# OPTIONS FOR REGULATING AND REMOVING HARMFUL CONTENT

Telegram considers the privacy and security of users' communications to be a key requirement. This can significantly assist journalists, whistleblowers, but also researchers or political opposition figures operating in non-democratic or hybrid regimes. On the other hand, the platform provides the same level of protection to members of extremist groups, disinformers and fraudsters. Telegram does not provide clear information on the regulation of illegal and toxic content. Meanwhile, the lack of content moderation has been pointed out by the media and analysts for a long time. Telegram's website states that it does not interfere in groups and chats. However, in the case of public channels, users are allowed to report content or bring it to its attention via email.

Despite security safeguards, there may also be ways to deanonymise users. However, these only arise from the 'mistakes' of anonymous users, i.e. actions and acts where they may have unknowingly made themselves available information leading to the discovery of their identity. Telegram is intended to be a platform for the '*peaceful expression of alternative views*', without taking into account any local laws. According to the information available, Telegram only intervenes in objectionable content in cases of suspected terrorism, intellectual property infringement (copyright), fraud (spam and scam) and pornographic bot cases.

In March 2023, Telegram provided a statement to the ICJK regarding disinformation and extremism. It makes clear that the platform considers itself to be a unique source of independent information, however, the ultimate responsibility in personalising content lies with the user, as Telegram does not use an algorithmic feed. Telegram argues that it respects EU sanctions (blocking access to RT and Sputnik, while also providing a space for Kremlin-banned media such as BBC Russia and Meduza) and distances itself from any calls for violence. However, moderators only vet publicly accessible parts of the app and calls from users.

In most cases, Telegram does not cooperate with government authorities. In the past, it has done so only under threat of heavy fines and a complete ban from the local government. It is also subject to lighter regulation (e.g. in the case of the European Digital Services Act), as Telegram is not currently considered a very large online platform (VLOP).

## OPERATION IN SLOVAKIA

Worldwide, Telegram is used by more than 800 million people per month, with the largest number of users in Russia. According to November 2023 data from *DemandSage*, a statistical company, 27% of all users of the platform are European. Within the EU, Telegram had 39.5 million users in August 2023 (for the previous six months). Outside the post-Soviet space, Telegram does not provide accurate statistics on the number and size of accounts, channels and groups. "*According to the estimate of the Centre for Combating Hybrid Threats of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, in the case of Slovak users we are talking about a number between 100 and 200 thousand,*" the ICJK says.

A *Neuropea* survey conducted in October 2023 on a sample of 1,000 respondents showed that 6.3% of Slovaks use Telegram. According to an April 2023 survey by *Ipsos*, Telegram, together with TikTok,

overtook X (formerly Twitter) in user popularity. In Slovakia, 16.16% of the population has a profile on Telegram, according to the survey, with men spending more time on the platform than women.

According to Daniel Milo, former director of the Centre for Combating Hybrid Threats of the Slovak Ministry of the Interior (CBHH), we can date the emergence of the first disinformation channels in Slovakia back to 2017 and 2019. However, the boom occurred during the pandemic period, especially in 2021 and 2022, when most of the channels and groups were supposed to emerge on the Slovak Telegram. Based on the analyses conducted by ICJK and CBHH, it is possible to say that channels with disinformation content predominate in the Telegram environment in Slovakia. The springboard for their popularisation was the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

According to statistics published by the *MyAndroid.sk* portal, Telegram was the most downloaded app in Slovakia in March 2022. *DemandSage* data shows a year-on-year increase in app downloads globally as well. As part of the data collection for the research project *Flow of Lies*, ICJK identified 366 public channels and groups in the Slovak language between December 2022 and March 2023. However, this list may not be complete.

## CONTENT TRENDS

According to Daniel Milo, the Slovak Telegram is undoubtedly dominated by toxic content. "*Based on analyses of the links between these channels, we have found that Slovak channels and groups are often interconnected by shared content, regardless of whether the site is disinformation, conspiracy, extremist or political,*" Milo claims. Despite the positives of encryption and privacy, the platform provides a safe space for the development of illegal and disinformation activities, extremist groups and actors who have been forced to leave mainstream social media.

### ***Doxing - Telegram overlaps into the real world***

The term doxing (or doxxing) can be explained as dangerous digital harassment. A new form of cyberbullying is often used by politically motivated actors who post personal information of their targets on Telegram channels and invite their audiences to spread this information further. It is precisely Telegram's structure that enables doxing channels to connect and keep their activities "alive" even without algorithms.

This activity subsequently interferes in the personal lives of targeted individuals who may become victims of physical harassment and other forms of violence. In Slovakia, doxing is already considered a criminal offence. Its significant increase was particularly visible during the Covid-19 pandemic and with the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To illustrate this trend, reference can be made to the publication of the personal data of doctors and protagonists of the vaccination campaign during the Covid-19 crisis, behind which stood far-right conspirator Daniel Bombic, known as Danny Kollar.

### ***Content migration***

Migration of disinformation content to Telegram and back to other communication channels is also key. This concerns actors whose accounts have been blocked for violating the rules of other social media, or whose content has been repeatedly reported or labelled as false by the online platforms themselves. They also try to redirect their own audience base to their newly established channels.

The online communication of politician Ľuboš Blaha has also undergone such a transformation. Until Meta decided to block his Facebook page (as a consequence of spreading disinformation, hatred, harassment, incitement to violence, etc.), the number of his followers reached 175 thousand. Despite the fact that he is followed by considerably fewer people on Telegram, almost 40 thousand, he is one of the most popular political actors on the platform.

However, Telegram is also a source of information from which content feeds back to social media, where it is already reinforced by algorithms. Ľuboš Blaha's work is also disseminated in this way. His Telegram work is reported not only by disinformation outlets, but also by mainstream media, which sometimes share his posts. Cases of disinformation being transferred from Telegram to Facebook have been highlighted in the past by *the AFP Facts* fact-checking team. For example, the hoax about Hungary's withdrawal from the EU was spread in this way.

### ***Overlaps between Czech and Slovak space***

In 2021, *Investigace.cz* came up with an analysis of the narratives and actors on the Czech and Slovak Telegram. This suggests that there is cooperation between the two countries between the different actors. *"This creates a specific platform within Telegram, where different currents of Czech right-wing extremism organically connect into one decentralised network with common themes and actively communicate with extremists from neighbouring Slovakia,"* claims Josef Šlerka, the author of the analysis.

The authors mentioned the penetration of the content of the Slovak conspirator and anti-Semite Marian Magat into the Czech information space, as well as the overall coordination of nationalist actors on the Telegram in both countries as an example. A similar trend was observed in the case of channels focused on the dissemination of anti-vax narratives. According to *Hlídacipes.org*, between 2021 and 2022 there was an expansion of accounts of both Czech and Slovak alternative media and conspiracy influencers. While traditional media are often active on Telegram in other countries, in Slovakia and the Czech Republic it is primarily a space for the alternative information scene.

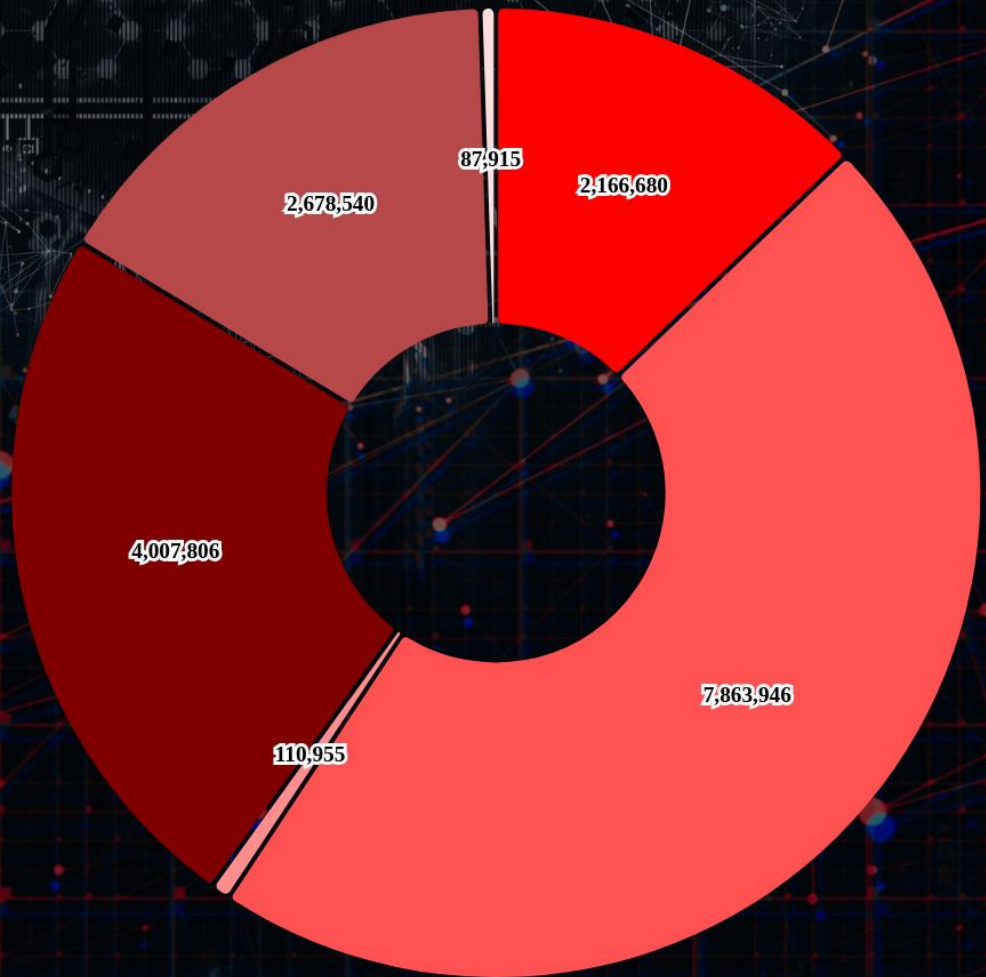
### ***Radicalisation and dissemination of terrorist materials***

The ICJK states that the so-called *"Terrorgram consists of radical right-wing channels on Telegram, where anonymous users from all over the world spread neo-Nazi propaganda"*. This network is characterised by the phenomenon of lone wolf terrorists who do not operate as an organised group and are usually not known to each other. They function as scattered anonymous individuals who, in their frustration, are supported in communities on various online forums. They often translate their ideas into publications such as the far-right terrorist manual *The Hard Reset*.

The murderer who killed near Bratislava's Tepláreň in October 2022 was also radicalised in this environment. He himself adhered to the aforementioned manual in his manifesto. Shortly after the incident, the members of the *Terrorgram* channels declared him their first "saint" and started spreading propaganda with his image. *"Self-radicalisation on the internet has lowered the age of radicalisation and affected young teenagers. The violent plans of lone perpetrators who radicalise online are very difficult to monitor and prevent, and are therefore more likely to succeed in carrying them out,"* says extremism expert Bulcsú Hunyadi of the *Political Capital* think-tank.

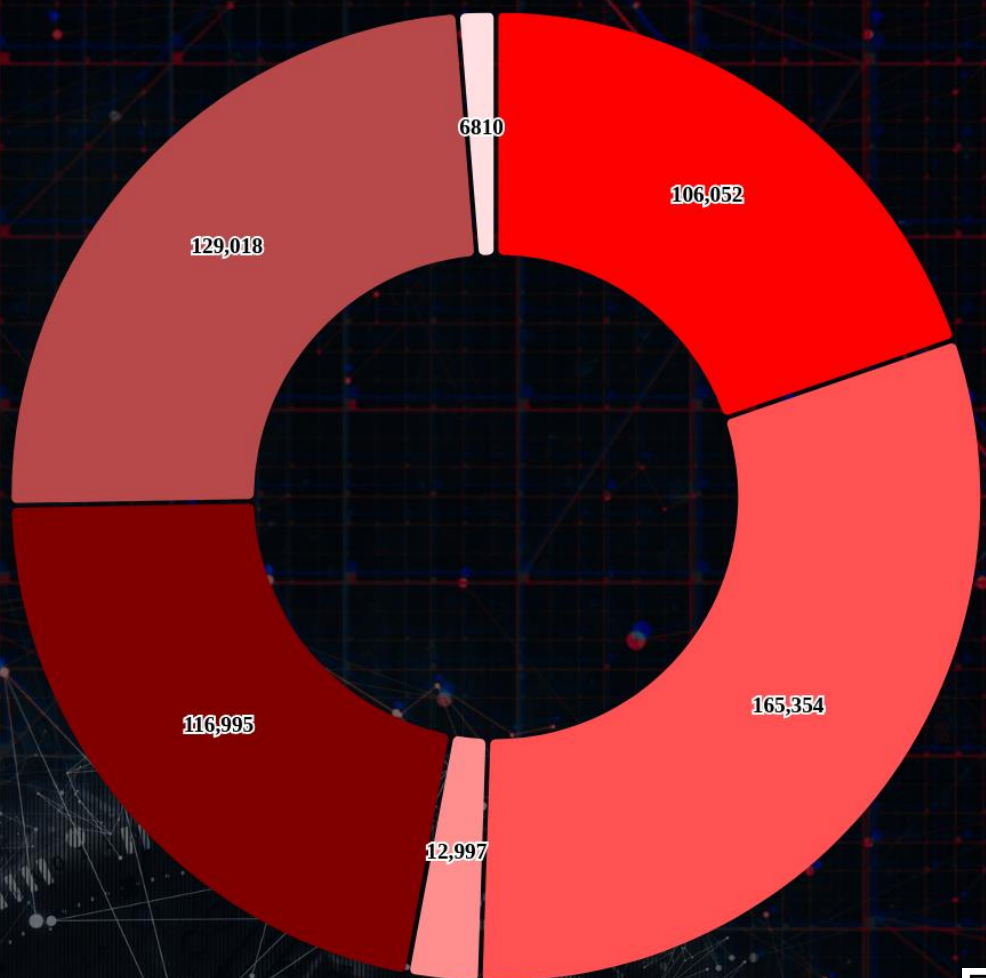


# NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS



● POLITICIANS ● ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ● POLITICAL PARTIES ● CHANNELS ● PROFILES ● EMBASSIES

# NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS

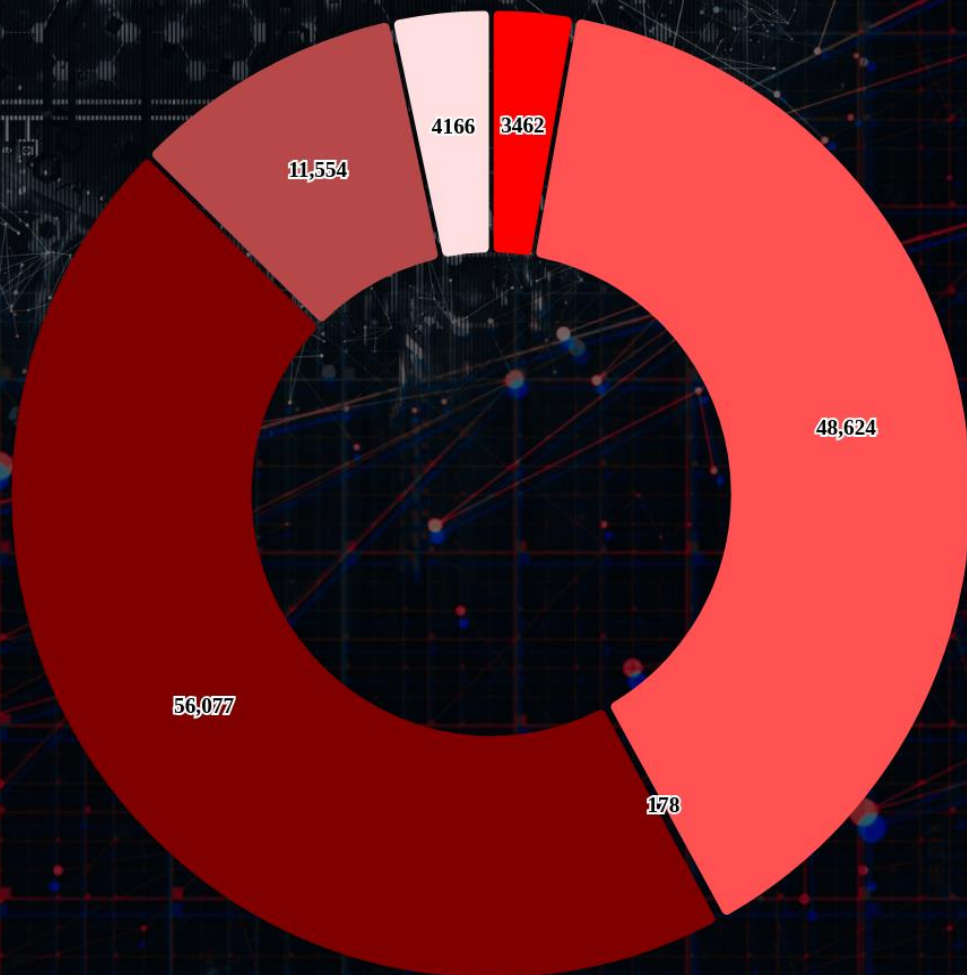


● POLITICIANS ● ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ● POLITICAL PARTIES ● CHANNELS ● PROFILES ● EMBASSIES

Actors were monitored from 1 January 2023 to 1 December 2023

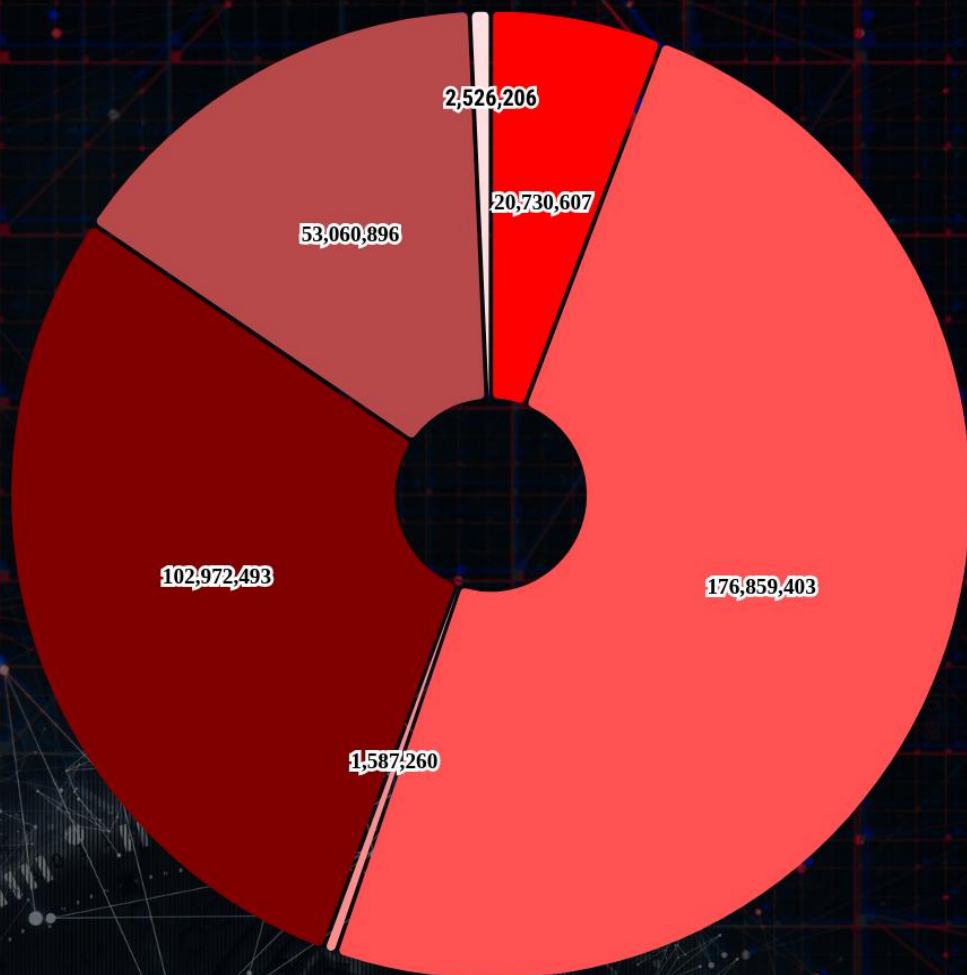
Actors were monitored from 1 January 2023 to 1 December 2023

# AMOUNT OF CONTENT

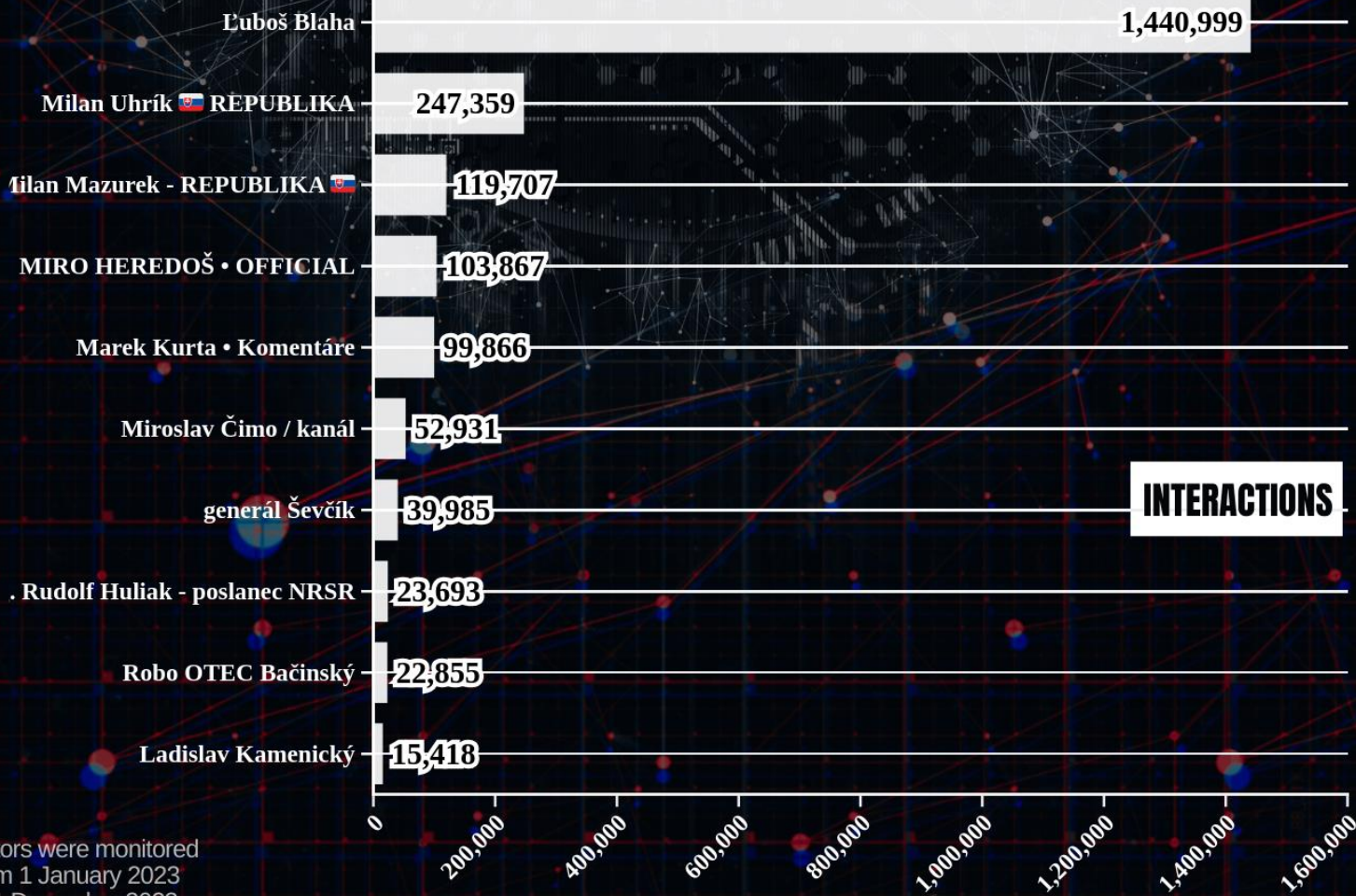


● POLITICIANS ● ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ● POLITICAL PARTIES ● CHANNELS ● PROFILES ● EMBASSIES

# NUMBER OF VIEWS



● POLITICIANS ● ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ● POLITICAL PARTIES ● CHANNELS ● PROFILES ● EMBASSIES

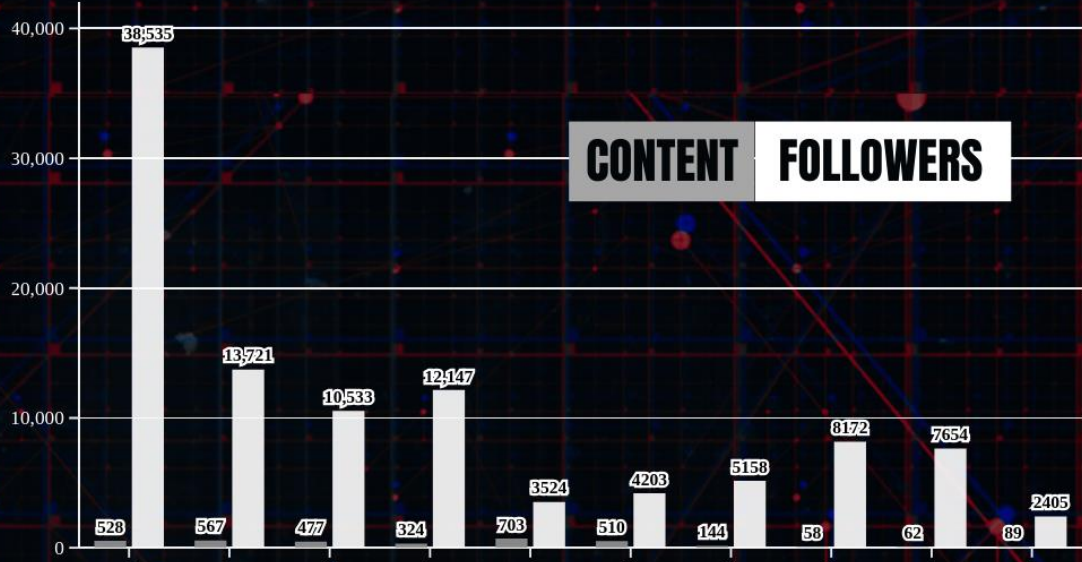


**INTERACTIONS**

Actors were monitored from 1 January 2023 to 1 December 2023

**POLITICIANS**

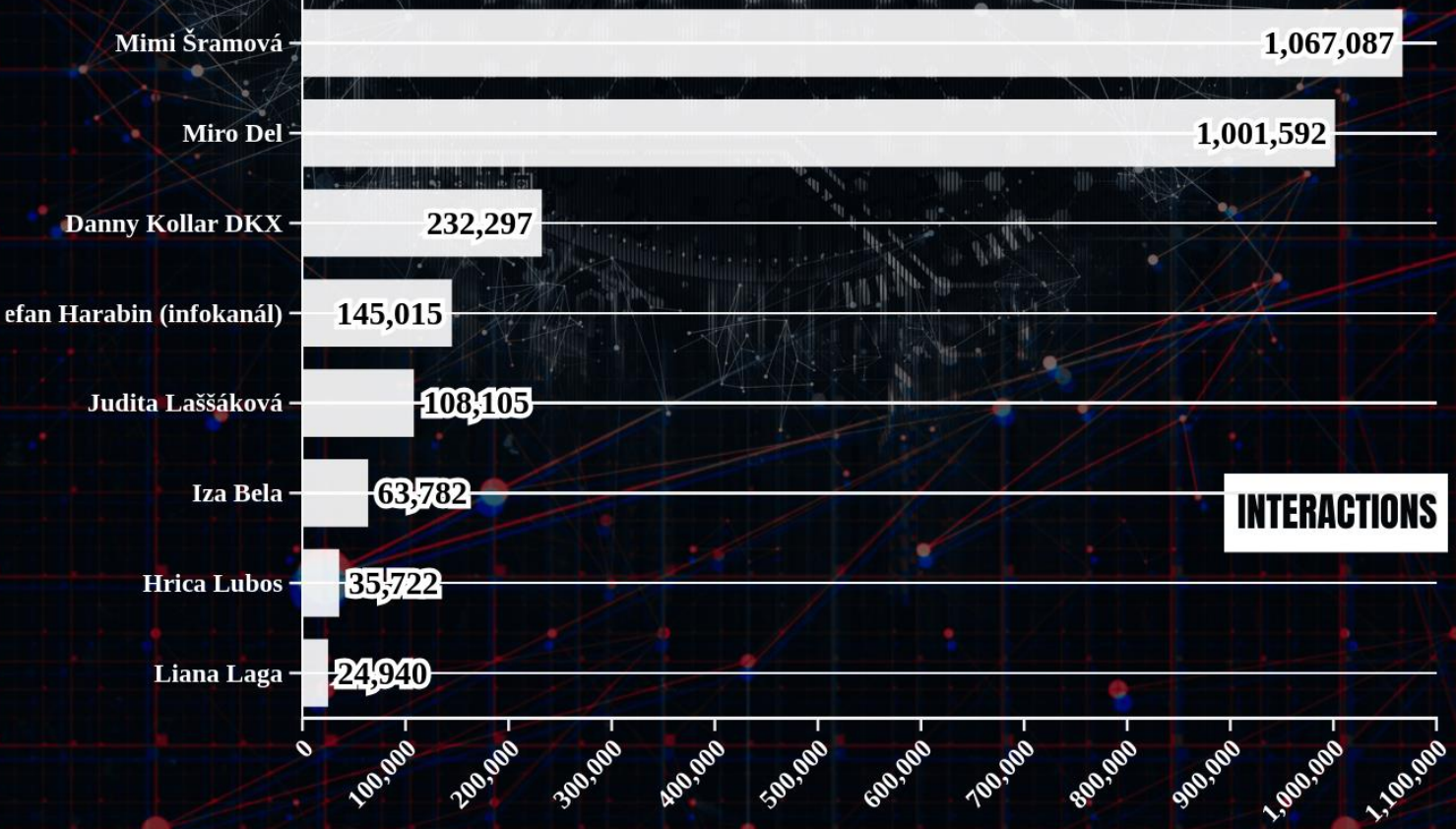
- Ladislav Kamenický: 105,166
- Robo OTEC Bačinský: 287,458
- Ing. Rudolf Huliak - poslanec NRSR: 270,077
- generál Ševčík: 615,651
- Miroslav Čimo / kanál: 739,125
- Marek Kurta • Komentáre: 1,113,501
- MIRO HEREDOŠ • OFFICIAL: 1,559,725
- Milan Mazurek - REPUBLIKA: 1,386,047
- Milan Uhrík REPUBLIKA: 3,306,279



**CONTENT FOLLOWERS**



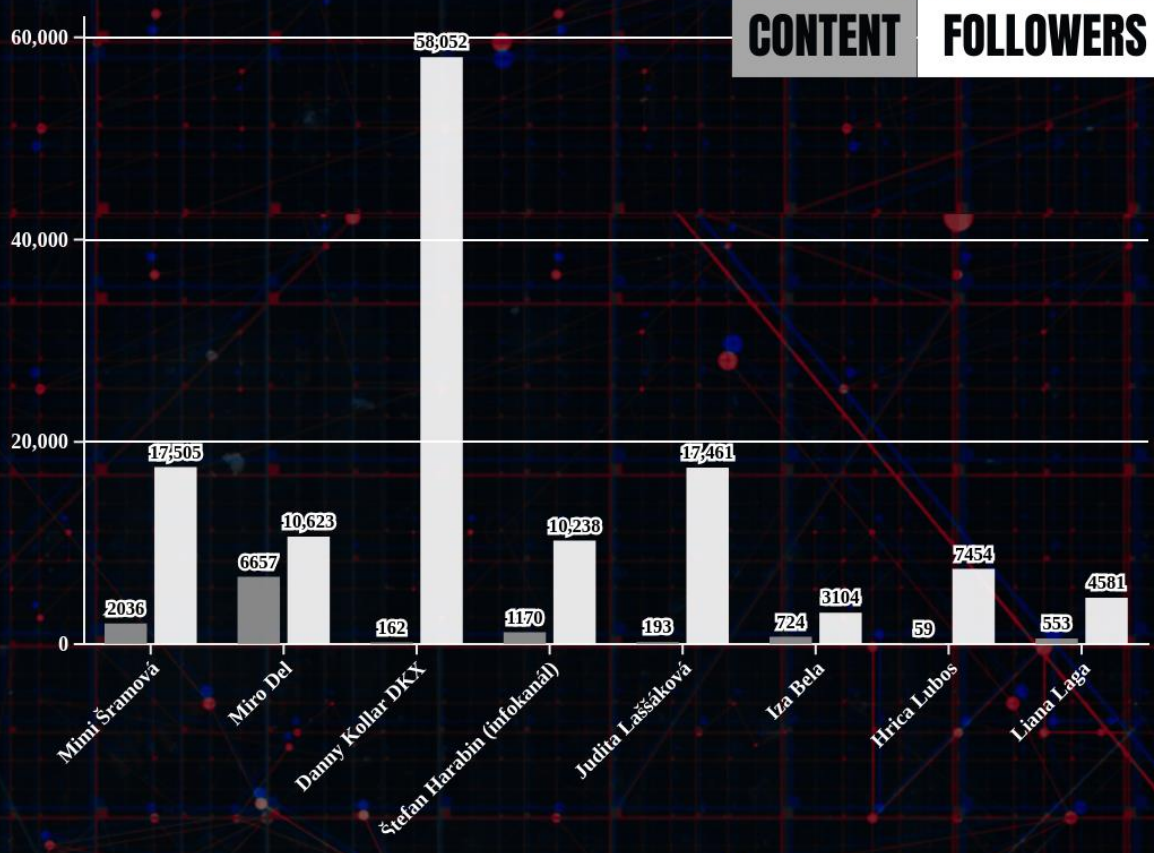
**VIEWS**



**INTERACTIONS**

Actors were monitored from 1 January 2023 to 1 December 2023

**PROFILES**



**CONTENT FOLLOWERS**

Liana Laga  
804,513

Hrica Lubos  
412,345

Iza Bela  
1,304,588

Judita Laššáková  
1,542,181

Štefan Harabin (infokanál)  
3,090,010

Danny Kollar DKX  
4,007,240

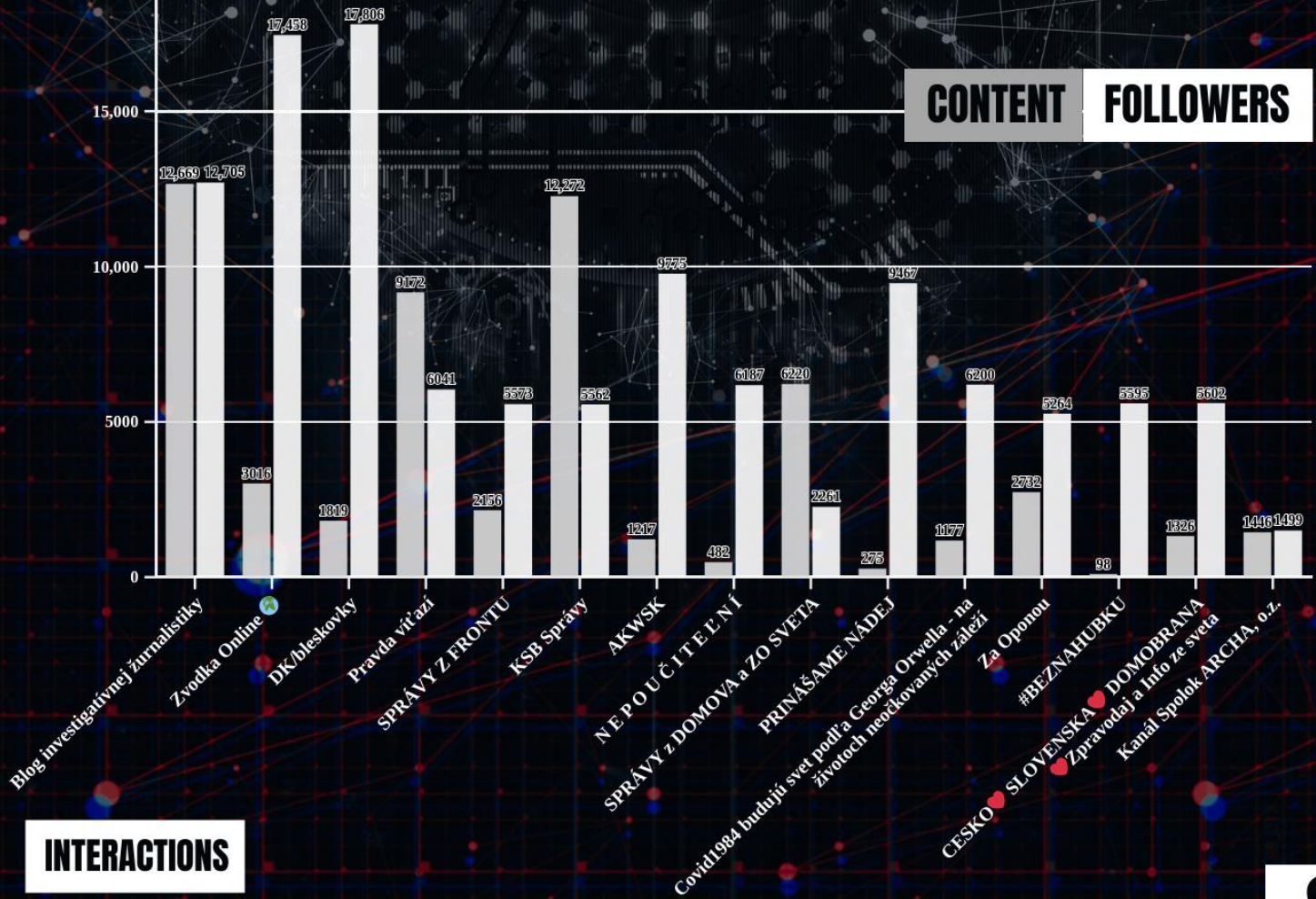
Miro Del  
26,295,072

Mimi Šramová  
15,604,947

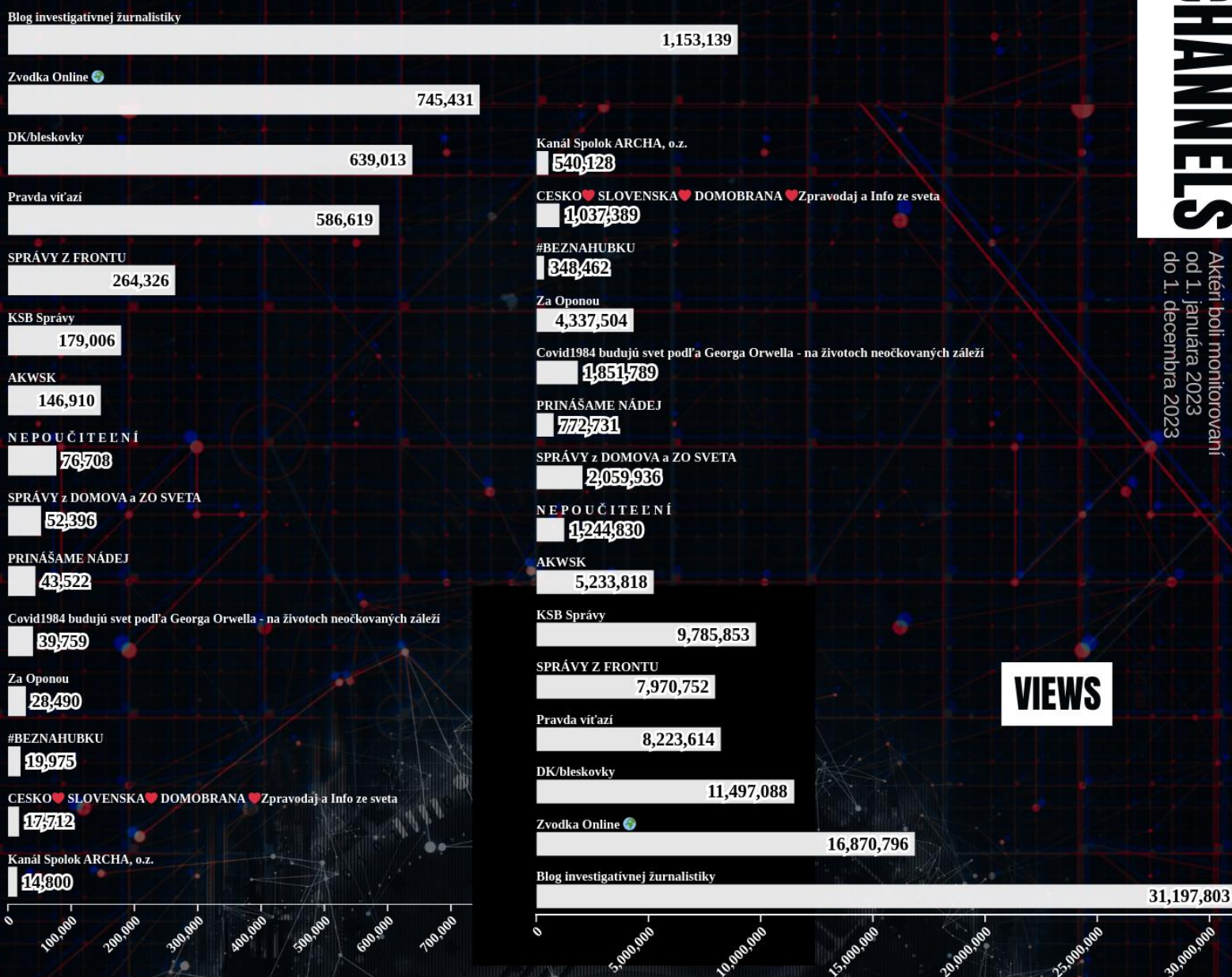
**IEWS**



# CONTENT FOLLOWERS



# INTERACTIONS



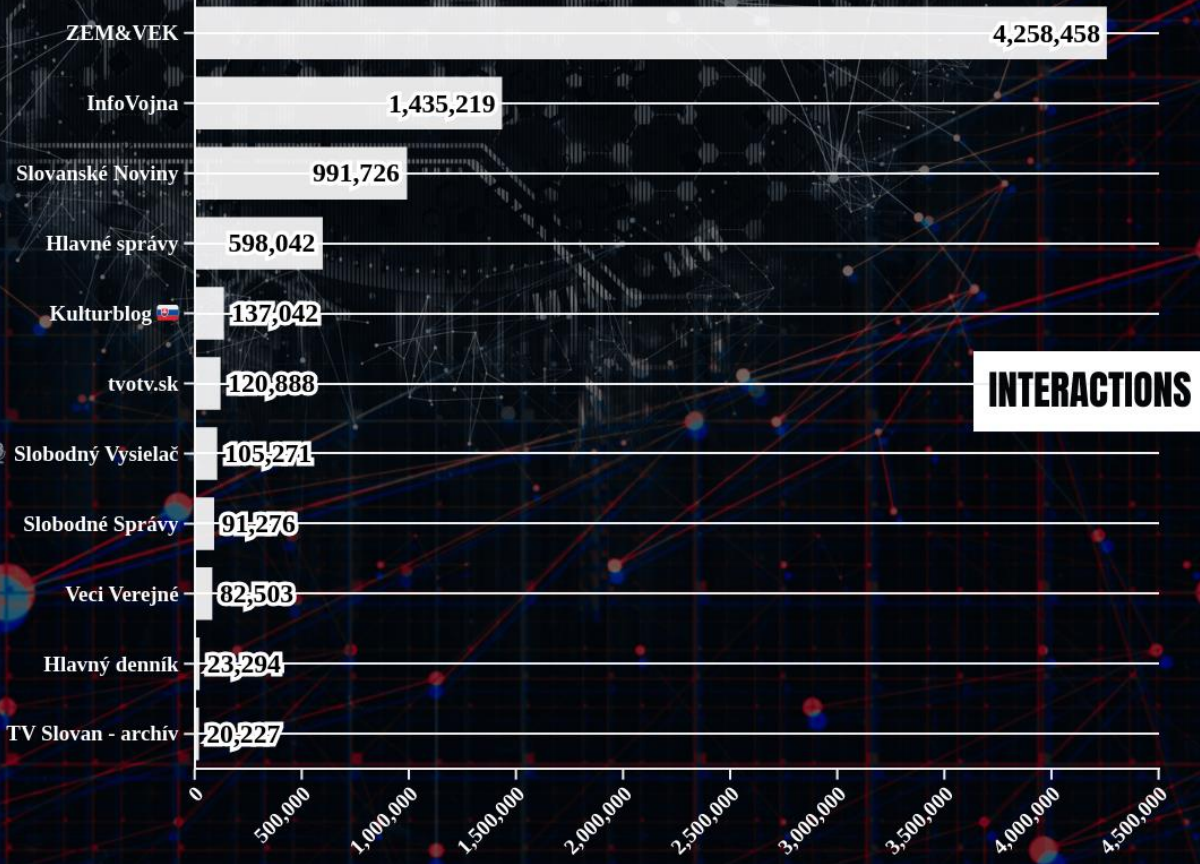
# CHANNELS

Aktéri boli monitorovaní od 1. januára 2023 do 1. decembra 2023

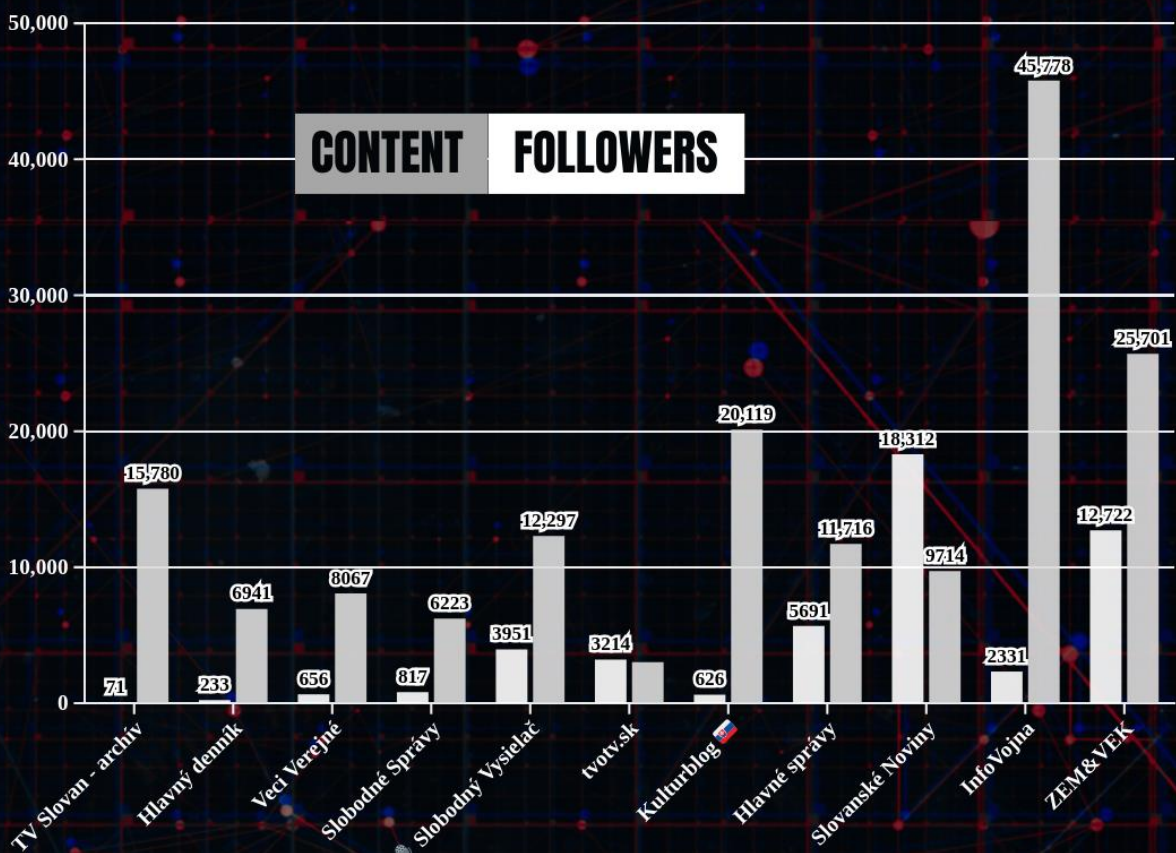
# VIEWS

# ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Actors were monitored from 1 January 2023 to 1 December 2023



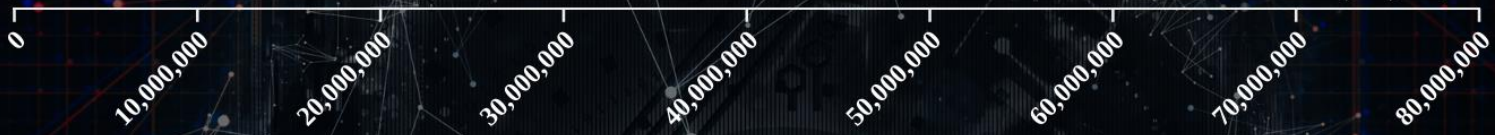
## INTERACTIONS



## CONTENT FOLLOWERS

- TV Slovan - archív  
422,336
- Hlavný denník  
548,866
- Veci Verejné  
1,729,449
- Slobodné Správy  
1,300,399
- Slobodný Vysielač  
7,175,145
- tvotv.sk  
3,305,076
- Kulturblog  
3,854,029
- Hlavné správy  
20,124,762
- Slovanské Noviny  
26,112,034
- InfoVojna  
34,221,161
- ZEM&VEK  
78,066,146

## IEWS



SMER - slovenská sociálna demokracia

110,955

Veľvyslanectvo Ruska na Slovensku

73,294

INTERACTIONS

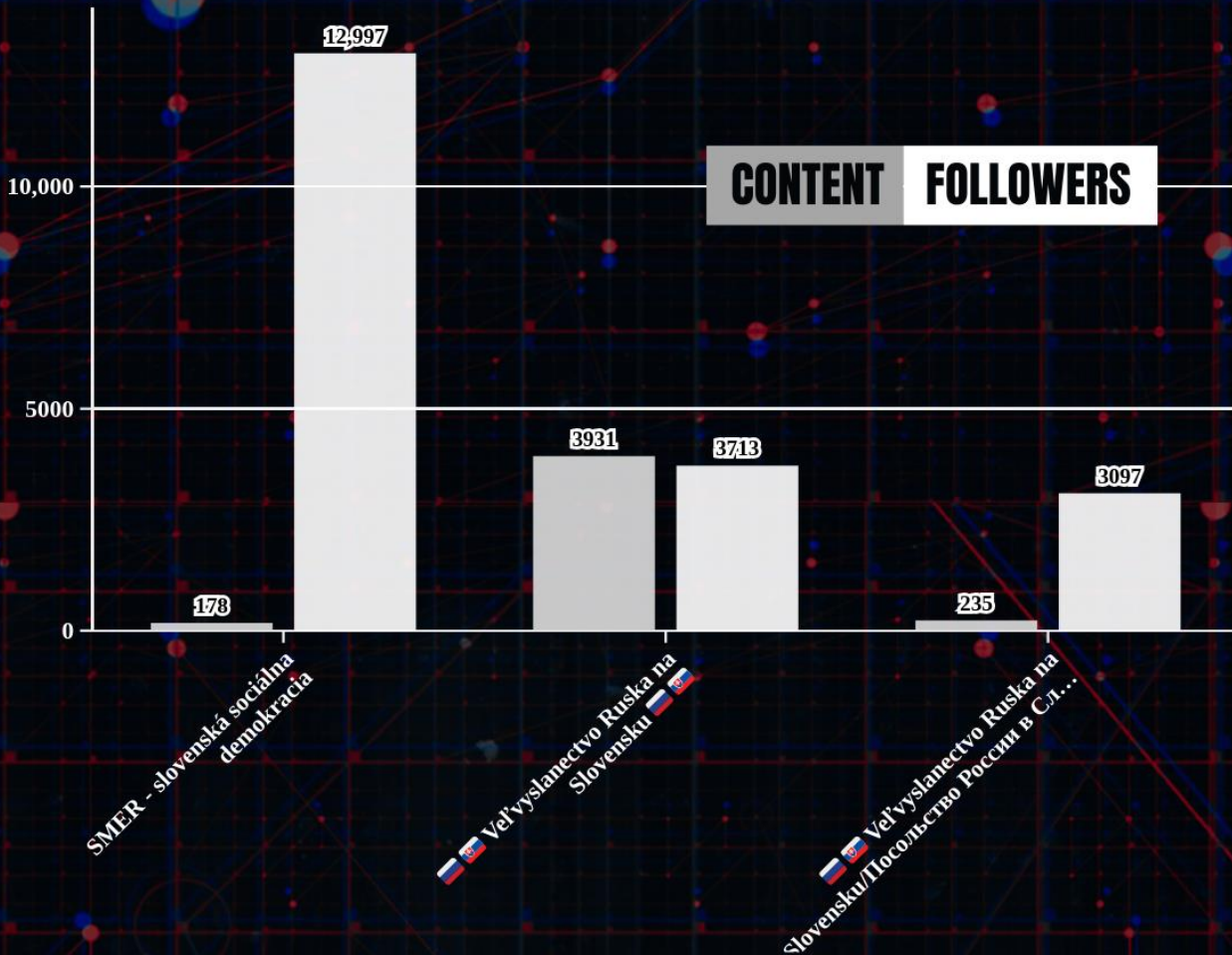
Veľvyslanectvo Ruska na Slovensku/Посольство России в Словакии

14,621



Actors were monitored from 1 January 2023 to 1 December 2023

POLITICAL PARTIES



EMBASSIES

Veľvyslanectvo Ruska na Slovensku/Посольство России в Словакии

433,468

VIEWS

Veľvyslanectvo Ruska na Slovensku

2,092,738

SMER - slovenská sociálna demokracia

1,587,260



## CASE STUDIES AND FORMS OF FINANCING

This part of the study focuses on case studies, i.e. mapping the organisational and financial background of selected actors operating on the Slovak Telegram. The mapping was carried out in cooperation with ICJK and reveals the primary possible forms of coverage of the actors in question – operation under coverage of a civil association (CA) or a limited liability company (LC). The chapter also draws attention to fundraising opportunities through monetisation tools, advertising or voluntary support from fans. In this sense, the study builds on similar [research](#) from 2023, in which Infosecurity.sk analysts, in collaboration with ICJK and PSSI, looked into the organisational and financial background of disinformation websites.

In this context, it should be added that **the research carried out on Telegram has encountered several limitations arising from the nature of the platform** – for example, the fact that the platform allows individuals to operate as an anonymous channel, or that the placement of advertising is not possible here, and therefore the estimate of advertising revenue cannot be determined. For this reason, when examining the selected actors, we focused on their overall performance in the Slovak information space. Thus, we also monitored the activity of the websites operated, where advertising may have been placed, or accounts on other social networks, where monetisation of content may occur (e.g. YouTube). Thus, the chapter provides a rather comprehensive overview of the activities of the different actors, describing which platforms they operate on and what fundraising tools they use across these platforms. Despite a certain degree of heterogeneity of the actors in question – differences were evident in the nature of their operations, in the objectives of their activities, and thus in the funding instruments used – it was possible to build more comprehensive profiles by identifying the owners of these Telegram channels and mapping their organisational and financial backgrounds.

In terms of the tools used to generate profit, donation options from fans and followers prevailed among the actors studied, where several possible methods were identified. **The most prevalent donation option was direct sending of money to an account** (with the option of manual transfer to an account, using a QR code, payment gateway or PayPal), which can be a one-off or periodic payment. In addition, some of the actors offered the possibility of payment via cryptocurrencies, a Telegram "donate" button, or through affiliate platforms such as *buymeacoffee.com*. Another option for generating financial profit was the monetisation of YouTube videos, but it is not possible to determine the potential profit or to know if and at what times advertising was placed in the videos. This was followed by the possibility of raising 2% of the taxes for the functioning of the CA and the funding obtained through the sale of goods from the online shop, which we identified consistently for three actors. Two of the monitored channels offered some form of premium content subscription and one of the channels had an advertisement placed on the website. **The highest number of tools was applied by the site Kulturblog and by an actor operating on Telegram under the name Danny Kollar.** A comprehensive overview of the tools used can be found in the attached table.



ACTOR	PROFIT GENERATION TOOLS					
	2% OF TAXES	E-SHOP	YOUTUBE	DONATIONS	PREMIUM CONTENT	ADVERTISEMENT
TV Slovan - archív (televiziaslovan)			YES	YES		
Kulturblog (kulturblog)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Judita Laššáková (JuditaLassakova)	YES		YES	YES		
Mimi Šramová (mimisramova)	YES		YES	YES		
PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ (prinasame_nadej)				YES		YES
Miroslav Kamensky (miroslavkamensky)			YES	YES		
Miro Del (Miro_Del)						
MIRO HEREDOŠ • OFFICIAL (miroheredos)			YES	YES		
Danny Kollar DKX (dannykollar), DK/bleskovky (DKbleskovky)		YES	YES	YES	YES	

*The table shows the use of each type of profit generating tool. For more information, see the subsections exploring the background of each actor.*

The use of donations of 2% of personal and corporate taxes as a way of generating profit is linked to those actors whose activities are covered by the civic association. However, not all actors with an established CA necessarily make use of this tool. Among the monitored actors, we identified the option of contributing 2% of the tax to the activities of the CA in case of three of them, while in the case of Kulturblog this is a tool that was last used in 2021.

However, following our previous [research](#) on disinformation websites, it can be argued that the coverage form of the CA model allows for less transparency of ownership and finances, and more favourable taxation. A civic association is a legal entity, so it can establish a commercial activity and continue to do business. Another advantage for disinformation actors is the aforementioned possibility of financing thanks to the 2% contribution of taxes, but also the fact that the financial statements only have to be submitted in some cases and the association's statutory bodies can easily remain hidden. A civic association can also be a complement to a limited liability company. The LC model makes it relatively easy to generate profits, as it allows disinformation actors to profit from the sale of subscriptions, books and magazines or other goods sold in e-commerce. Another positive for the actors concerned is the possibility to profit from advertising or to register their LC as a publishing house. Compared to the model of CA, the LC is much more transparent, as it requires registration in the Commercial Register and provides the public with quite a lot of information about the organisational background.

ACTOR	MODEL OF COVERAGE	
	CA	LC
TV Slovan - archív (televiziaslovan)		Televízia SLOVAN, s. r. o.
Kulturblog (kulturblog)	Kulturblog, O. Z.	Kulturblog, s. r. o.
Judita Laššáková (JuditaLassakova)	O. Z. DIR - Publikum	
Mimi Šramová (mimisramova)	O. Z. Ružový svet	
PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ (prinasame_nadej)	O. Z. PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ	
Miroslav Kamensky (miroslavkamensky)		
Miro Del (Miro_Del)		
MIRO HEREDOŠ • OFFICIAL (miroheredos)	O. Z. VOĽNÁ ZÓNA	MH Food & Consulting, s. r. o.
Danny Kollar DKX (dannykollar), DK/bleskovky (DKbleskovky)	O. Z. DIR - Publikum	

*The table shows the use of roofing due to the O.Z. and O.R. model. For more details, see the subsections focused on exploring the background of each actor.*

Representation exclusively through the O.Z. is used by the four actors present on the Telegram, two of which are the same entity. DIR-Publikum (CA) can serve as an example of this format, as it is used by both Judita Laššáková and Daniel Bombic to send voluntary donations and 2% of taxes. Telegram posts by both actors, descriptions of the YouTube videos and the association's website draw attention to these options. We have identified the coverage of activities exclusively through an LC in the case of one actor. Televízia SLOVAN, s.r.o. (LC) is the owner of a bank account to which the medium regularly solicits voluntary donations from fans. Finally, the coverage model through a combination of CA and LC is present in the case of two of the actors studied. In the case of Kulturblog, this is a truly productive combination, as the medium combines the income from the 2% tax on its CA with voluntary donations, subscriptions to premium content and the sale of tangible goods in the online shop.

## TV Slovan

Telegram channel televiziaslovan belongs to the alternative medium *TV Slovan*. It is a website that spreads politically and ideologically unbalanced claims, disinformation and conspiracy narratives in its content. For this reason, it has a rating of 7.7 out of 10 in the *Konšpirátori.sk* database. Behind the website stands the entity Televízia SLOVAN, s. r. o. (LC) based in Martin. The company was founded in May 2018 and, with the exception of 2020 (8,695 EUR), has consistently high revenues – in 2019 they amounted to 61,438 EUR, in 2021 to 73,678 EUR and in 2022 to 80,874 EUR. Its owner is doctor and well-known opponent of vaccination Peter Kotlár. As of November 28, 2023, Peter Hlač from Čečejevce is listed as the company's managing director and Kotlár himself is an associate. The reason for the change of the managing director was the fact that Kotlár became a member of the Slovak Parliament. In the same way, Martina Šimkovičová, who originally worked as an employee of the LC, was elected to the National Assembly of the Slovak Republic and took over the post of Minister of Culture. Kotlár subsequently stated that, as a statutory body, he had terminated his employment relationship with Šimkovičová in connection with *TV Slovan* and had subsequently resigned from the management. However, as Šimkovičová continued to host *TV Slovan* after the elections, her activities raised concerns about a possible conflict of interest. The overlap was also evident with Kotlár, who was managing director of the company until November 20, 2023, despite having been a member of parliament since October 25, 2023. This is probably the reason why the website was temporarily disabled and the Facebook page of TV Slovan was renamed Martin and Peter.

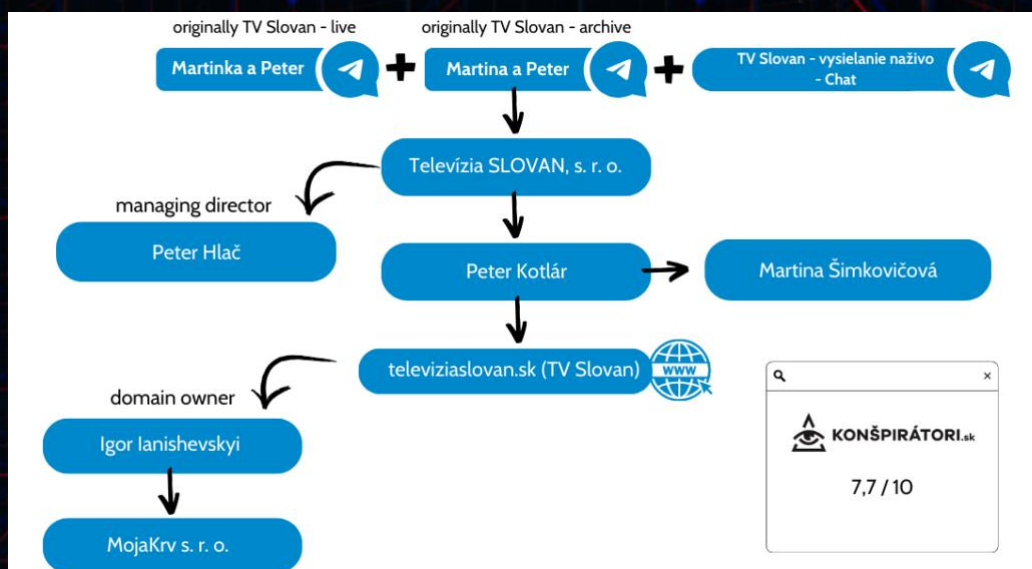
The domain name televiziaslovan.sk was created in May 2019, and is registered to a person named Igor Ianishevskiy. The registered office in Bratislava coincides with the registered office of the company MojaKrv s. r. o. (BrainDrain s. r. o.), in which Ianishevskiy is a statutory body. According to the Commercial Register, its object of activity is primarily computer services, administrative, advertising and marketing services.

As far as the financing of *TV Slovan's* activities is concerned, the medium has so far used several sources. Primarily it was voluntary donations from supporters, who can send financial donations to the bank account number. According to the information on the website, the owner of the account is Televízia SLOVAN, s. r. o. (LC). It also asked for financial support by sending a payment to the account number on its Facebook and Telegram accounts. However, according to Finstat, the account number published on the telegram channel does not correspond with the accounts reported to the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic.

TV Slovan currently has three functional Telegram channels. The original channel TV Slovan - archive was founded in April 2022, is currently called Martina a Peter, just like the Facebook page, and has approximately 16 thousand followers. In addition, there is a channel called Martinka a Peter, which was originally called TV Slovan - live and has approximately 6 thousand followers. Finally, the channel TV Slovan - live broadcasting - Chat is also operational with approximately 1,600 followers.

In addition to links to voluntary support of the medium, content monetisation is possible in the case of TV Slovan. Broadcasting takes place primarily on YouTube, where TV Slovan continues to have a functional channel with 14 thousand followers. Fundraising in the case of TV Slovan has also been highlighted by the Council for Media Services (RPMS) in three reports. According to the RPMS, the media outlet has been licensed to broadcast a full-screen digital television programme service since 28 October 2018, with the proposed name Televízia SLOVAN. Although the medium has not yet had paid access to the videos on the site, it has requested a voluntary financial donation from visitors to the site. RPMS also points to the possibility of placing advertising in the future.

The RPMS report claims: "Although it is repeatedly stressed on the participant's website that the subject of the payment is 'a donation - support, not a subscription fee for broadcasting!!!', we consider that such a designation, apparently based on tax considerations, does not deprive the service provided by the participant of its primarily economic nature, especially in view of the fact that the donation appeal in question is displayed after clicking on each of the different sections of the page in question (About us, Telegram, Contact, Live) and is also displayed as part of the content of the programme itself. For this reason, even without taking into account the assumption that the participant's intention may be to generate future advertising revenue, the Council is of the opinion that the service provided by the participant can already be considered to be primarily of an economic nature."



## Kulturblog

Kulturblog project is a website and video portal that publishes its content in parallel on the YouTube and Odysee platforms. According to the Konšpirátori.sk evaluation report, the content of the medium is manipulative, emotionally tinged and factually untrustworthy in many respects. Therefore it evaluated the portal with a rating of 8.8 out of 10 points. In particular, the report highlights the efforts

to demonise various minorities, to instil fear and to reinforce stereotypes in society. The protagonists of the *Kulturblog* project largely promote the Slovak People's regime (fascist regime during WW2) and its representatives; and their rhetoric is based on far-right ideas and revisionism.

In its activities, the medium uses a combination of the CA and LC model of coverages. Behind the activities stands Kulturblog, o. z. (CA), which was founded in 2019 and is based in Kežmarok. According to the Register of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations, the members of the preparatory committee of Kulturblog, o. z. include Dávid Pavlík, Milan Mazurek and Ján Pastuszek, who has been the chairman since 2019. Pastuszek is also the statutory body of Kulturblog s. r. o. (LC) based in Kežmarok. Ján Pastuszek himself founded the *Kulturblog* project, together with Milan Mazurek, to whom he had previously worked as an assistant to an MP. In 2020, he was convicted and sentenced for the crime of disseminating extremist material over a long period of time and in public.<sup>1</sup> The LC has increasing revenues – while in 2020 the amount was 1,200 EUR, in 2021 it was already 30,428 EUR, and in 2022 up to 72,265 EUR.

The domain kulturblog.sk has been operating since October 2018 and is registered to Pavel Kopecký and his company Delphia Tatry, s. r. o. (LC) based in Kežmarok. According to the information on the website, the company is engaged in construction activities, energy certification of buildings and accounting services. Pavol Kopecký, who runs the company, is the regional deputy chairman of the Republika party in the Prešov region. His profile on the party's website states that he is a managing director in a family company, but there is no mention of the fact that the company owns the *Kulturblog* domain.

In terms of funding options, *Kulturblog* uses a combination of several instruments. In 2021, Kulturblog o. z. (CA) was the recipient of 2% of the taxes. However, the association does not have a charter in the Business Undertakings Register and thus does not publicly state what the funds raised were used for. In that year, the portal collected 3,060.10 EUR in this way. In addition, the portal runs its own online shop where it sells own-label products (clothing and small items) and book titles. The official legal entity behind the e-shop is Kulturblog s. r. o. (LC), but the account number is not a transparent bank account.

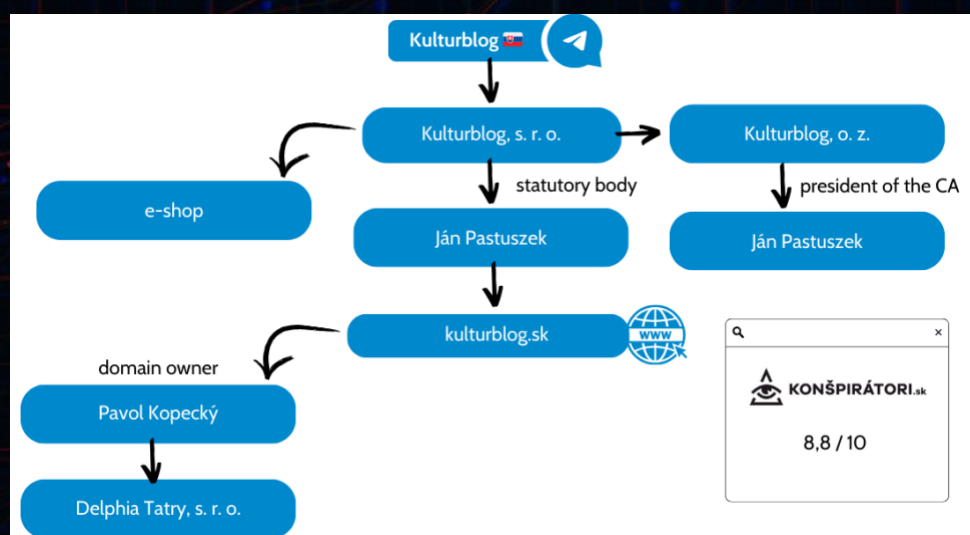
The project also takes advantage of the monetisation possibilities of content on the YouTube, where so far the primary broadcasting platform has been the Kulturblog channel with approximately 45,000 followers. However, in June 2023, Google permanently deleted the channel as part of a crackdown on several channels linked to the far-right Republika party. YouTube subsequently stated that this was the result of an investigation into coordinated influence operations in Slovakia. In the meantime, the portal has set up a new YouTube channel called Politically Incorrect, which is watched by significantly fewer people (approximately 11,800 users in mid-December 2023). However, this channel was also blocked by the platform at the end of December 2023, on the grounds that it was "*circumventing the Terms of Service by creating a new channel following the cancellation of the previous channel*". Additional video platforms where *Kulturblog* uploads its videos are Rumble (approximately 68 followers) and Odysee (approximately 1,300 followers), which also provide monetisation opportunities. Meanwhile, according to *The Southern Poverty Law Center*, Odysee moderates almost

<sup>1</sup> T-shirts with the likeness of the president of the wartime Slovak state Jozef Tiso in a laurel wreath, as well as T-shirts with Tiso's signature and the inscriptions "*Dr. J. Tiso, PRESIDENT, 1939-1947 and Faithful to ourselves, together forward!*" were sold on the *Kulturblog* website.

no content and provides a steady income to hate groups and extremists through its cryptocurrency-based system.

In addition, *Kulturblog* provides the option of one-off voluntary contributions or a long-term support and membership format with exclusive content. To make a one-off contribution, it is possible to use a bank transfer, a credit card payment or a premium programme with three membership levels (from 5 to 20 EUR per month). The account to which contributions can be made is not transparent.

The channel on Telegram currently operates under the name Kulturblog sk and has approximately 20,000 followers. The channel's description and most of its own posts refer users to the official website, but also to Odyssey and YouTube, all platforms where content can be purchased, voluntarily promoted or monetised.



## Judita Laššáková

Judita Laššáková is a lawyer who previously co-founded the political party Slovak PATRIOT of MEP Miroslav Radačovský as a member of the preparatory committee. According to the European Parliament website, Laššáková worked as an assistant to MEP Radačovský between July 16, 2019 and May 1, 2021.

Laššáková is active in DIR - Publikum, o. z. (CA) based in Nové Zámky. The association was founded in October 2022 and its statutory body is Tomáš Laššák. In addition to Laššák, the preparatory committee includes Dominika Mercedes Gálisová and Juraj Likér, whose address the civic association is registered to. The official website of the association names Judita and Tomáš Laššák, coach and mentor Jaroslav Sedlák and actor Marek Ťapák among the members of the association's team (Ťapák is also listed as a permanent guest). Among the supporters there are people like Danny Kollar<sup>2</sup>, Dominik Papala (works in *Radio Frontinus*), Mimi Šramová, politician Ivan Ševčík<sup>3</sup> or doctor Peter Kotlár<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see the Danny Kollar DKX and DK/bleskovky subsections.

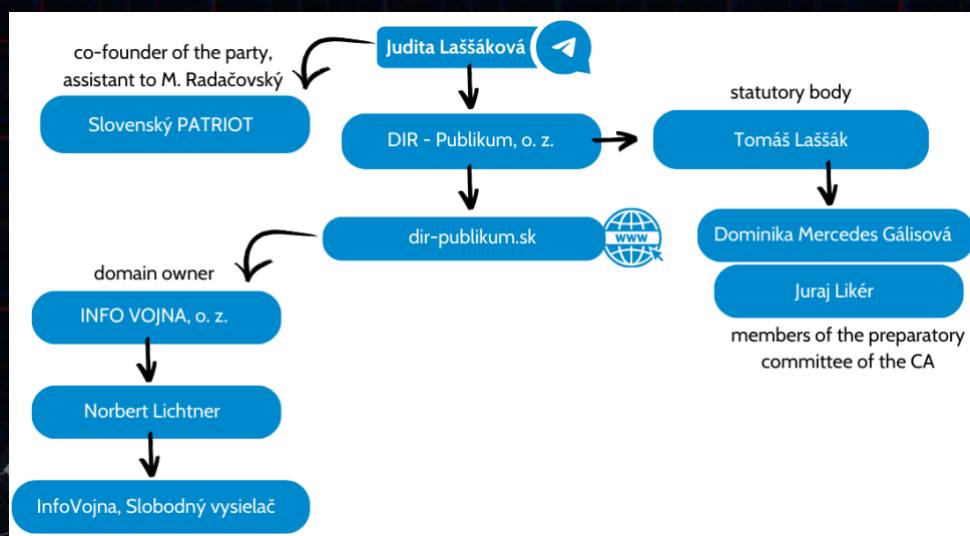
<sup>3</sup> Currently a member of the National Assembly for the SNS, Miriam Šramová is his assistant. For more information see the subsection Mimi Šramová.

<sup>4</sup> Member of the National Assembly of the Slovak Republic for SNS and founder of Televízia SLOVAN, s. r. o. For more information see the subsection TV Slovan.

The domain [dir-publikum.sk](http://dir-publikum.sk) was created in January 2023 and according to the *DNSlytics* portal it is registered to INFO VOJNA, o. z. (CA) based in Banská Bela. It is an association that was founded in 2012, registered in the name of Norbert Lichtner and represents the alternative media *InfoVojna* and *Slobodný vysielateľ*.<sup>5</sup>

In relation to Judita Laššáková's financial background, it is possible to point to several sources of funding. In 2024 DIR - Publikum, o. z. (CA) can already be a beneficiary of the 2% of the personal and corporate tax, as it is already registered at the Notarial Central Register of Designated Legal Entities. The association has already informed about this possibility on its official website, where, in addition, there is the possibility of a voluntary financial contribution to a regular bank account (indicated in the registration for the 2% of the tax) or a transparent account, where 1,101 EUR has been collected since January 1, 2023.

In addition, Judita Laššáková also uses the possibility of monetising content through her YouTube channel, where she has approximately 15.5 thousand subscribers. No advertising is placed in the videos, but there is promotion of friendly actors of the disinformation scene or political representatives, for example from the SMER - SSD party. Financial support is also possible directly on Judita Laššáková's Telegram channel, which was established in November 2022 and currently has approximately 17.5 thousand followers. On the channel, it is possible to make a financial contribution via the "donate" button, and a number of published posts contain information about the possibility to donate to the regular or transparent account of DIR - Publikum, o. z. (CA) and about the possibility to donate 2% of the tax.



## Mimi Šramová

Miriám Šramová is a public figure who has worked as a relationship counsellor and baker in the past. In 2017, she founded Chez Mimi, s. r. o. (LC), a company based in Bratislava, which serves to cover her baking activities and where she currently acts as a managing director. Despite the fact that she only established her Telegram channel in 2023, it is already followed by approximately 18.9 thousand

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see the *InfoVojna* and *Slobodný vysielateľ* subchapter in the Infosecurity.sk study "*Disinformation and propaganda as a business: mapping the financial and organisational background of disinformation websites in Slovakia*". The study was produced in cooperation with PSSI and ICJK, with the support of OIP and the help of *Konšpirátori.sk*.

people. Within the channel Šramová publishes mainly content focused on politics and corruption and investigative topics. However, she has no expertise in these areas and her content serves primarily to spread conspiratorial narratives, undermine trust in the rule of law and justice, as well as to strengthen the popularity of members of the SMER - SSD, Hlas - SD or Slovak National Party (SNS) parties.

Channel's activities are primarily covered by Ružový svet, O. Z. (CA) based in Bratislava, where Šramová is listed as a statutory body. Among the objectives of the association is the promotion of generally beneficial activities in society – among other things, education, promotion of culture and sport and environmental protection. The association was established in 2016; in 2017 and 2021 it was the recipient of 2% of the personal and corporate tax. The association's bank account is not transparent.

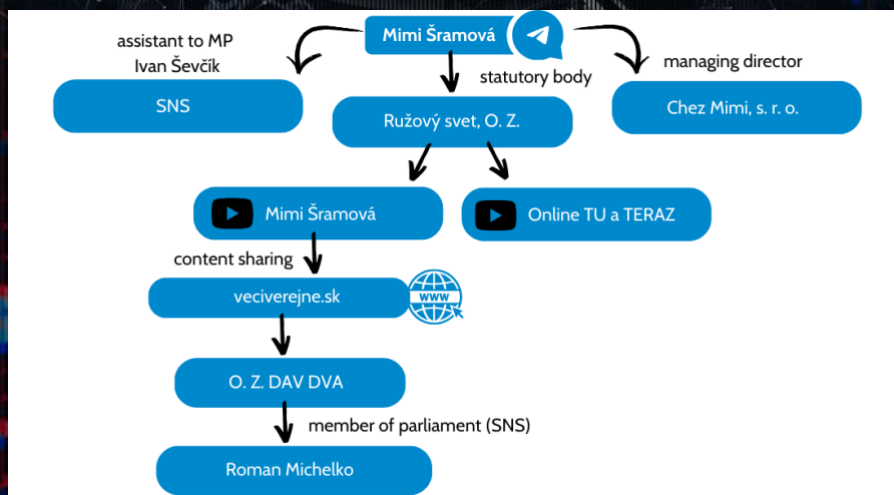
It can be assumed that Ružový svet, O. Z. (CA) covers not only the operation of the YouTube channel Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou (Interviews with Mimi Šramová), where she publishes her own videos, but also the channel Online Here and Now, where Šramová is also active. The former channel was established in 2022 and currently has approximately 32.4 thousand subscribers; Online Here and Now channel, where Šramová's videos are published, currently has 22.3 thousand subscribers. Both are platforms for disseminating the views of politicians from the SMER - SSD, Hlas - SD or Republika parties. After the parliamentary elections in 2023, the interviews with Šramová mainly provide a platform for MPs from coalition parties – in addition to MPs from the above-mentioned parties, MPs elected on the SNS candidate list also appear in the interviews – and other controversial figures.<sup>6</sup> Below Šramová's videos on both channels, there is mostly a request for voluntary support for Ružový svet, O. Z. (CA), either by transferring money to a bank account or by providing 2% of the tax.

Šramová's videos published on Online Here and Now channel are often shared on the *Veci Verejné* website. However, there is also a tag "Interviews with Mimi Šramová", so videos from Šramová's own YouTube channel are also shared. Within the YouTube platform, her videos are also published by the channels *Veci Verejné* (approximately 5,8 thousand subscribers), *Západoslovenská TV* (approximately 6,9 thousand subscribers) and also by the channel *eReport* (approximately 51,9 thousand subscribers). Thus, there is also an obvious link to the *Veci Verejné* portal, which is linked to the operation and content of *DAV DVA*. The latter is covered by O. Z. DAV DVA (CA), based in Bratislava, whose statutory body is Roman Michelko, one of the frequent interviewees in Šramová's interviews and currently a member of the Slovak parliament elected as a member of the Slovak National Party (SNS).

Despite the fact that Miriam Šramová continues to strive for the image of an independent or unbiased person, since November 16, 2023 she has been working as an assistant to MP Ivan Ševčík, who is part of the SNS coalition club. The contract was concluded with the company Chez Mimi, s.r.o. (LC). Šramová is supposed to provide professional and administrative services for Ševčík related to the performance of his mandate, according to the MP's instructions and requirements. However, she continues her video production, also interviewing politicians who are now MPs for coalition political parties. In a statement to *Aktuality.sk*, she said that she does not perceive any bias or conflict of interest, as she herself only provides space for the thoughts of the interviewees, while not

<sup>6</sup> An example is Štefan Harabin, former judge of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, unsuccessful presidential candidate, former leader of the Vlast' party and today a well-known conspirator. In the past, however, Šramová also interviewed the far-right conspirator Daniel Bombic, known under the pseudonym Danny Kollar (see the subchapter *Danny Kollar DKX and DK/flashcards*), whom she personally travelled to London to meet.

commenting or censoring their opinions. However, it is not evident from Šramová's new videos that she is acting as Ševčík's assistant, which is also not clear from her YouTube and Telegram channels.



## Prinášame nádej

Telegram channel Prinášame nádej (We Bring Hope) is one of the communication channels of Pavol Forisch, an alleged former member of the Slovak Information Service (SIS), who has created a [website](#), a Facebook [page](#) (approximately 17 thousand followers) and two telegram channels for communication. In addition to the [channel](#) Prinášame nádej (approximately 9.5 thousand followers), which was created in 2020, Forisch also founded the [channel](#) Z tmy na svetlo (From Darkness to Light), which is followed by approximately 500 users. The channels are probably managed by several persons.

The activity of the above-mentioned channels is covered by PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ, O. Z. (CA) based in Bratislava. The civic association was established in 2018 and does not have a trade license at the moment. The statutory body is listed as Pavol Forisch himself. The official objectives of the CA are defined in the statutes [published](#) on the website of the association. Among other things, these are activities aimed at detecting anti-social activities, providing professional assistance in the fight against corruption and clientelism, consumer protection, protection of human rights, the development of democracy, the rule of law and civil society, and improving the quality of life of citizens.

It is not clear how the association provides expert advice on anti-corruption and anti-clientelism matters – while the website names the founding and executive members of the CA, it does not offer their profiles and therefore does not indicate what level of expertise in these areas exists within the association. In addition, Forisch himself has an unclear past and his activity [contributes](#) greatly to the spread of conspiracy and disinformation narratives. The website [prinasamenadej.sk](#) has [received](#) a rating of 8 out of 10 points from the expert committee of the portal [Konšpirátori.sk](#).

Together with Stanislav Žiadan, co-founder of PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ, O.Z. (CA), and ex-SIS Ján Feranc, they were [arrested](#) by the police in 2019 in connection with drug and violent crime and illicit armed activity as part of a police action under the code name Hyena. However, they were released a few days later following a decision by the supervising prosecutor of the Bratislava Regional Prosecutor's Office. Forisch subsequently flew to Norway, where he applied for political asylum, which has not been granted to date. He also spent some time in detention in Norway, as an international arrest warrant was issued for him. For this reason, Pavol Forisch [devotes](#) a significant part of his contributions to



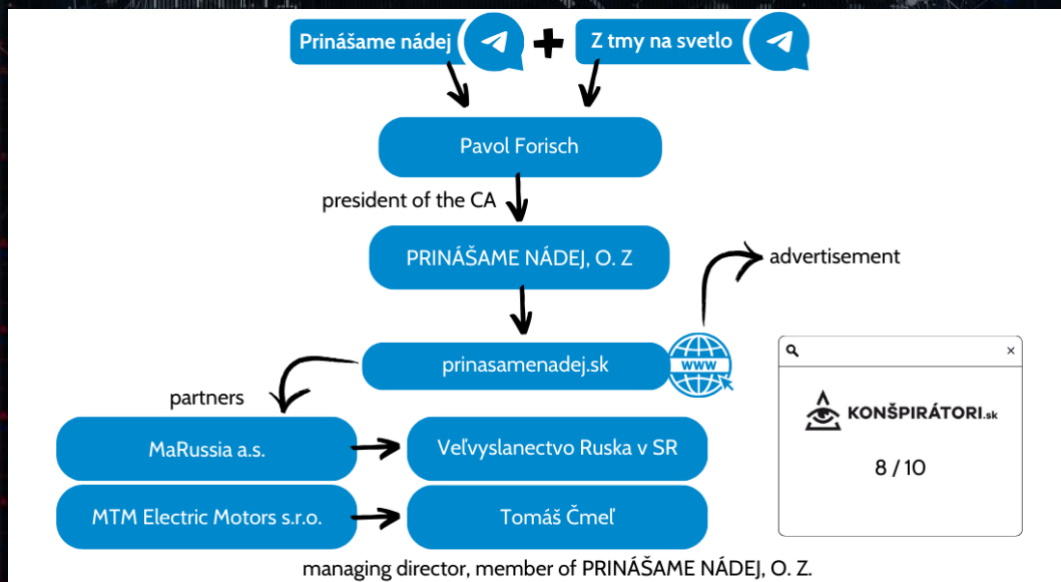
pointing out the alleged failures of the police in their investigation of him. Apart from this, however, he also devotes himself intensively to politically and media-exposed cases.

The domain [prinasamenadej.sk](http://prinasamenadej.sk) was created in 2018, but it is not possible to find out who it is registered to as this data is hidden. However, the domain represents one of the platforms for financing the civic association, as advertising is placed on it. In addition, the members of the association solicit financial support from their fans, through a [subsection](#) on the website. Within it, it is possible to contribute to the running of the civic association in several forms – one-off via Stripe (the attached link was non-functional at the time of writing), PayPal, Bitcoin, as well as by setting up a monthly fee via bank transfer. Alongside this, support is also possible in the form of collaboration, either by being an active member of the association, sharing *"information, evidence and types..."*, or collaborating *"at your own discretion"*. The appeal for financial support for CA is also regularly highlighted on the Prinášame nádej Telegram account, where payment options via bank account, Bitcoin and PayPal are posted. In addition, the bank account number for voluntary donations is also posted on Facebook.

The website contains links in the "Contact" section to other sites that are partners of the civic association. One of the links takes the reader to the ZIFOR-M Facebook page (approximately 3.4 thousand followers). The description of the latter contains information that it is supposed to be a non-profit organization, while the description shows the e-mail of Pavel Forisch, as well as a phone number and a web link corresponding to PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ, O. Z. (CA).. In addition, the partners include MTM Electric Motors s.r.o. and MaRussia a.s.. MTM Electric Motors, based in Harichovce, [lists](#) one of the members of Forisch's CA Tomáš Čmel' as a shareholder and, since 2017, as a managing director. He is a partner in two other companies based in Smižany and Spišská Nová Ves, all of which are focused on activities primarily related to the maintenance of motor vehicles.

Another of the partners of PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ, O.Z. (CA), MaRussia a.s. (previously operating under the name TenderOnline a.s.), is a joint-stock company that was [entered](#) into the Commercial Register in 2010. It is a platform which, according to the [description](#) on the website, *"focuses on bringing contemporary Russian cultural tendencies to the Slovak audience"*. It refers to the ideas of (pan)Slavic reciprocity, Pan-Slavism and the unification of the Slavs *"under the leadership of Russia, the greatest and most powerful representative among the Slavic nations"*. The company has [registered](#) a wide range of activities as its object of activity, including educational and publishing activities, advertising and marketing services, business services and the organisation of cultural and social events.

According to the website, the main activity of the company [is](#) *"organizing exhibitions of works by prominent Russian personalities, organizing celebrations of important historical milestones and anniversaries, preparing concerts, various sporting and social events accompanied by Slavic music"*. The website also draws attention to the fact that in 2015 the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Slovakia took over the patronage of one of the events. The Embassy is also one of the official partners of the company. Persons from PRINÁŠAME NÁDEJ, O. Z. (CA) are [listed](#) in the Board of Directors or Supervisory Board within MaRussia a.s. These are in particular Ján Feranc, a founding member of CA, who [has been](#) Chairman of the Board of Directors of the joint stock company since 2012, as well as Pavel Forisch himself, who was a member of the Supervisory Board of MaRussia a.s. between 2017 and 2019.



## Miroslav Kamensky and Miro Del

Telegram account Miroslav Kamenský belongs to a Slovak lawyer, probably a graduate of international law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica. Although he is not a member of the bar, he is presented as a lawyer and quite often invited to appear on alternative media. He even has his own show called *The World through Miroslav Kamenský's Eyes* on the *Slobodný vysielateľ* website. In the past he has also appeared in videos for TV OTV, ZVTV<sup>7</sup> and in Danny Kollar's discussions.

Kamenský is active on Facebook, where his page with the description "national awakener" has about 3.5 thousand followers. However, according to the above information, he founded the page relatively recently – in September 2023. He also has his own YouTube channel, which currently has only less than 500 subscribers. Kamenský's main communication channel is his Telegram channel, which has approximately 15,9 thousand subscribers. This channel has also been in existence for a relatively short period of time, as it was only established in March 2023.

On the financial side, besides the possibility of monetisation on YouTube, Kamenský only asks for voluntary support from his fans. This can be made to a bank account as a donation. The account is not transparent.

The call to support Kamenský's work includes the argument that it enables the promotion of freedom of speech and thought, a healthy and happy life, and the struggle for nation-statehood so that people do not end up in digital and economic slavery. In reality, however, Kamenský's posts contain strong pro-Kremlin propaganda, glorification of the Kremlin regime and anti-NATO narratives. Typically, he shares ideas about NATO's alleged war against Russia in the war in Ukraine.

Like Kamenský's, the Miro Del channel belongs to a private individual. However, information about the person behind the channel is rather opaque. In the past, Miro Del wrote about himself that he was one of the first bloggers in Slovakia, but his blog on the daily SME was allegedly blocked in 2008. Subsequently, his Facebook account was supposedly blocked and cancelled, after which Miro Del

<sup>7</sup> Video portal of the disinformation website Zem a Vek, which is represented by SOFIAN, s. r. o..

migrated to the Russian network VKontakte. His Facebook [profile](#) and VKontakte [account](#) can now be found. Miro Del's [channel](#) has approximately 11.2 thousand subscribers on Telegram. The channel was created in February 2022 and contains a large number of pro-Kremlin propaganda narratives with an overlap on the ideas of Pan-Slavism.

An existing LinkedIn [account](#) suggests that Miroslav Tropko could be behind the Miroslav Del profiles. The data on education at the Moscow Technical University of Communication and Informatics corresponds with what the person lists on Telegram and VKontakte. At the same time, the last employment information refers to a business under the column "Miro Del". According to the relevant description, it is supposed to be a Slovak business consulting firm with responsibility for the markets in Poland, Russia, Slovakia. The LinkedIn profile also states that Miroslav Tropko was awarded the Russian State Medal of Merit of Ekaterina II in 2008. Miroslav Tropko's profile also contains information that the person is currently based in Russia and has worked in several positions in the Russian Federation in the past (e.g., he states that he worked at ALTECO Russia, as a sales representative of the Italian company I.M.C.O. in Russia, or as a sales representative of the Slovak company FIANT, s.r.o.<sup>8</sup> in Ukraine and Russia).

## MIRO HEREDOS - OFFICIAL

According to his biography [published](#) on the official website, Miroslav Heredoš has worked in the gastronomy industry since 2000. Since 2016, his company MH Food & Consulting, s. r. o. (LC), based in Bratislava, [has been](#) providing business services, marketing and fast food. Heredoš is the sole managing director of the company. According to [information](#) from the Finstat portal, the company's profits and sales have been declining rapidly in recent years.

Heredoš is also the statutory body of the civic association VOĽNÁ ZÓNA, O. Z. (CA), based in Bratislava, which was founded in March 2023. The name of the association refers to the initiative VOĽNÁ ZÓNA (Free Zone), which Heredoš founded in 2021, and which promoted resistance to the anti-pandemic measures introduced during the Covid-19 crisis. In addition to Heredoš, Norbert Varga and Oto Varga are listed as members of the preparatory committee.

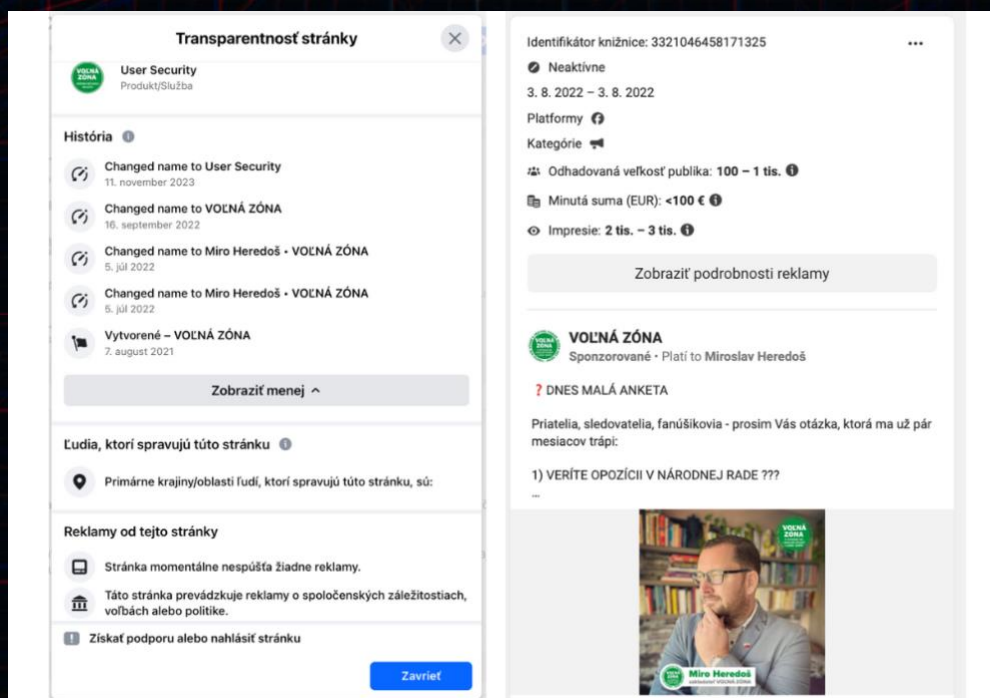
According to the [description](#)<sup>9</sup> of published on the official website, the association was founded as "*a civic response to the diverse problems of everyday civic or social life in the Slovak Republic*". It is to carry out activities "*that will help inform citizens in the public interest about problematic areas of the functioning of our state where mainstream or alternative media fall short*". According to the website, this goal is to be achieved "*through posts on social networks, through activities in the field, video outputs, documentaries, workshops or short reports and live broadcasts; also in the form of blogs or interviews*". Information about the owner of the domain volnazona.com is not available. The website has been [rated](#) 8.3 out of 10 by the independent committee of *Konšpirátori.sk*. The website offers visitors the opportunity to become a member of the civic association and also to contribute to its activities through a donation sent to a transparent [bank account](#). The account in Slovenská sporiteľňa has been kept transparent since June 2023. So far, it has been used to finance the redesign of

<sup>8</sup> Within the company FIANT, s. r. o. he was, according to the [information](#) from the Commercial Register, a managing director or a partner.

<sup>9</sup> At the time of writing the study, the statutes of the civic association were not available on the website, as the link to them was only on the front page of the document.

volnazona.com, related administrative fees and software services. However, in January 2024, the account also recorded a transfer of 300 EUR to Heredoš's company MH Food & Consulting, s.r.o. (LC), with the description that it was for administrative services.

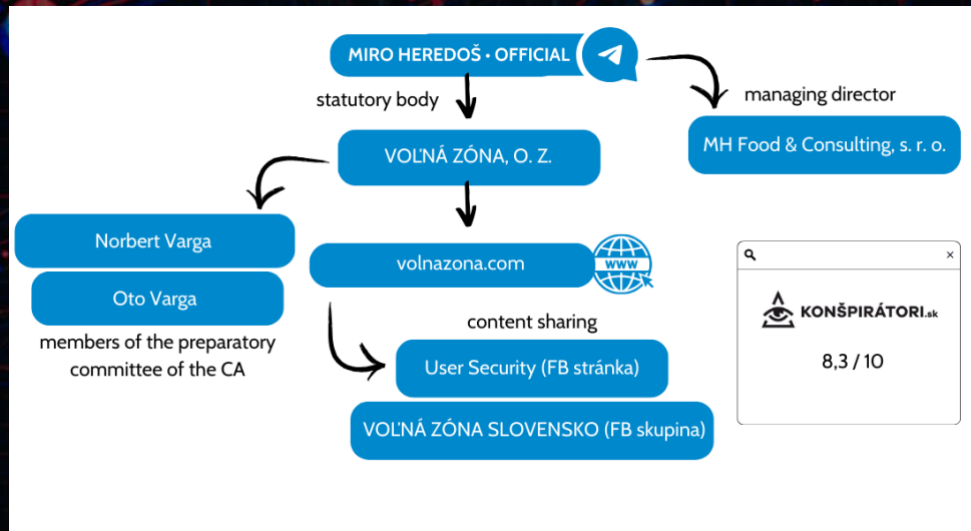
In addition to the website, there are also social networks of the association. The Facebook [page](#) called User Security currently has approximately 23 thousand followers and is mainly used to share content from Heredoš's official [profile](#) (approximately 35 thousand followers). According to transparency data, the page was created in August 2021 under the name VOLNÁ ZÓNA, in 2022 the name was changed to Miro Heredoš • VOLNÁ ZÓNA and later back to VOLNÁ ZÓNA. The last change occurred in November 2023, when the page took the current name User Security. Despite this change, the site clearly refers to the civil association VOLNÁ ZÓNA, while the reason for the renaming remains unclear. In the past, Heredoš has also paid for advertising on the site. According to the [Meta Ad Library](#), most of the advertised posts had an anti-pandemic focus. The last advertisement was paid for in August 2022 and contained suggestive messages towards reducing public trust in the opposition parties in the National Assembly.



Left: screenshot showing the transformation of the User Security page names; right: screenshot showing the last implemented advertisement of the Free Zone page paid for by Miroslav Heredoš on Facebook.

In addition to the aforementioned Facebook page, Heredoš's content is also shared in a public [group](#) called VOLNÁ ZÓNA SLOVENSKO (FREE ZONE SLOVAKIA) with approximately 4.7 thousand members. The group, like the User Security page, was founded in August 2021, but its name has never been changed. The description of the group informs that it brings together "businessmen who refuse to violate the laws of the Slovak Republic and to segregate and discriminate against their guests and customers". The group includes the tags "human rights" and "privacy and data rights". It thus continues to indicate a focus on business, although its primary content is currently Heredoš's anti-European Union videos, which contain a large number of conspiracy theories.

In addition to Facebook, Heredoš is also active on other platforms. Possible funding is provided by his YouTube [channel](#), where he currently has about 4 thousand followers. Heredoš has approximately 12 thousand followers on Telegram. The description of his [channel](#), established in June 2021, includes the information that Heredoš is "an activist and a young gun in politics". Until February 2022, Heredoš [was](#) a member of the Republika party, which he left before the 2022 municipal elections, when he ran for the post of mayor and deputy of the Bratislava City Council. In that period, he [declared](#) that he wanted to be a civic candidate with no ties to political parties, but in August he [joined](#) the National Coalition party, for which he ran in the elections. In the 2023 parliamentary elections, he ran as a candidate for the political party Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia.



## Danny Kollar DKX and DK/bleskovky

For a long time, the most popular public channel is Daniel Bombic, a conspirator who goes by the name Danny Kollar. He is a far-right conspirator who rose to [prominence](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic by questioning the existence of the virus, fighting against anti-pandemic measures and vaccination. During this period, he also [organised](#) attacks on health professionals, [publishing](#) private telephone numbers or addresses of medical staff and police officers (doxing). Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, he has praised Putin in his content and referred to the massacre in Bucha as staged. In the past, Bombic has made no secret of his affection for the politicians of the Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia and later the defectors who founded the Republika party. He also [met](#) them as guests when he hosted his own show on *Kulturblog*. Nowadays, his content no longer includes support for these political parties, but in many cases he presents supportive opinions towards the SMER - SSD party.

Slovak authorities are [investigating](#) Bombic for extremism and cyberbullying. Police managed to detain him after issuing a warrant for his arrest, but he was later released. As he is a long-term resident of London and it is not otherwise possible to ensure the presence of the accused at acts connected with criminal proceedings, a third European arrest warrant has been [issued](#) against him. Bombic also had a limited liability company, DK PRO SERVICES LTD, established in the UK and based in Hendon (a London suburb). The company operated from March 2015 to January 2021, having been dissolved several months before Bombic's primary Telegram channel was established.

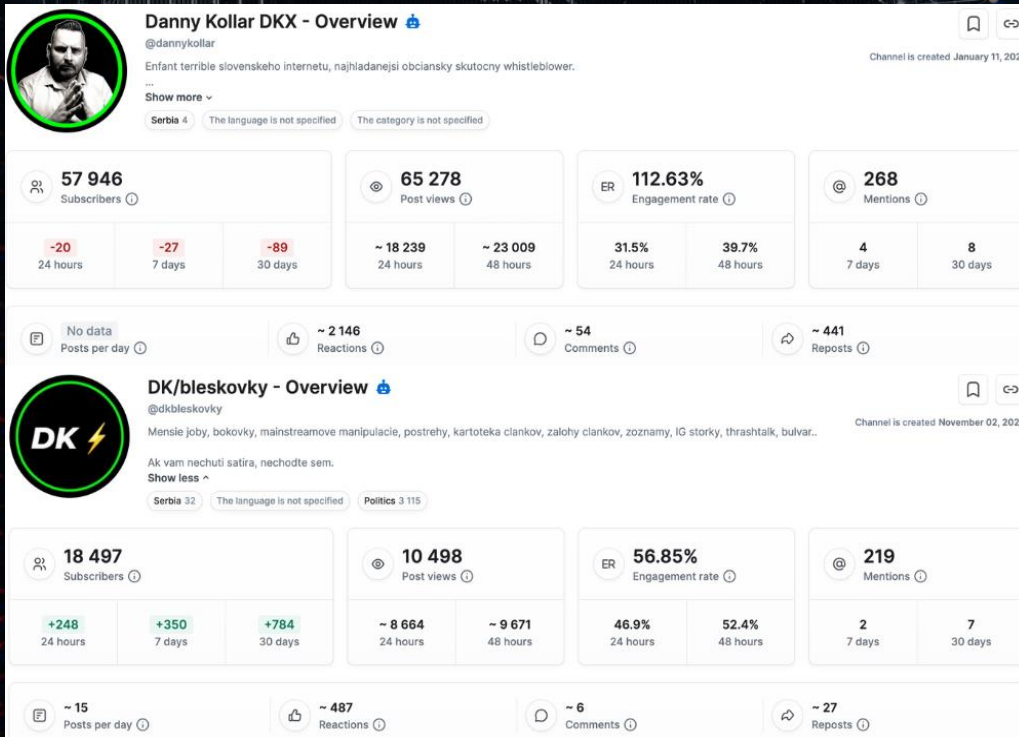
Bombic does not post on multiple social media platforms as he has a ban on Meta's platforms. In August 2023, the company cracked down on him by deleting his Facebook page. It contained virtually exclusively content re-shared from YouTube and Telegram. Bombic was also added to Meta's list of dangerous organisations and individuals. Danny Kollar's Instagram profile is also currently non-functional. He continues to have an account on X, but has a relatively small number of followers.

As already hinted, Bombic is quite active in creating video content. He continues to publish it on his YouTube channel called Danny Kollar DKX. The channel was founded in July 2015 and currently has over 70 thousand subscribers. The description of his channel includes the claim that Bombic is *"not dependent on anyone, paid by anyone, affiliated with any political party, affiliated with any political force, funded by any NGO, sponsored without a silhouette in the background"*. However, the published videos mostly contain a call for voluntary contributions from viewers to be transferred to the account of DIR-publikum (CA). Bombic co-founded it with Judita Laššáková, who was formerly an advisor to MEP Miroslav Radačovský, helped found the Slovak PATRIOT party and is currently promoting the SMER - SSD party with her content. In addition, the domain dir-publikum.sk is registered to INFO VOJNA, o. z. (CA), which may indicate a possible personal or even financial connection.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to a financial contribution to the aforementioned bank account, Bombic offers the opportunity to purchase promotional products below the YouTube videos, VIP membership with access to exclusive content (under the name Full Bacon), and refers viewers to buymeacoffee.com. Here, Bombic is featured under the Dee Kay X studio profile, and fans can contribute various amounts to its activities, as well as by paying for *"a school of streaming from the most watched streamer on YouTube at the moment"*. The complete package costs 1,500 EUR and includes five lessons on a variety of topics – from setting up YouTube and creating a studio to hardware requirements and creating an e-shop. The lessons can also be ordered separately, each costing 350 EUR.

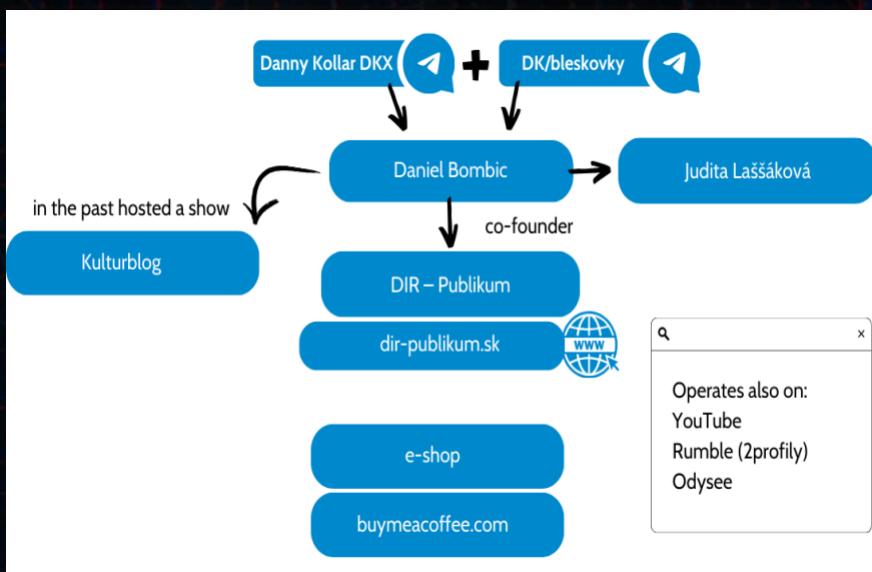
Bombic operates two public Telegram channels, which he also uses as a source of funding. His primary channel is a channel called Danny Kollar DKX, which was established in November 2021 and is currently the most popular Slovak-language public channel with almost 58 thousand followers. A smaller channel called DK/bleskovky has approximately 18,5 thousand followers. On both of them Bombic regularly presents promotional products (merchandise) that he offers for sale, as well as the possibility of voluntary financial contribution, either through a Telegram "donate" button or by transfer to the DIR-Publikum bank account. In the past, Bombic has also requested support through a UK-based bank account, but it probably does no longer exist. In the past he also used a chargeable Telegram VIP chat.

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see the subsection focused on Judita Laššáková's channel.



Data on Bombic's Telegram channels mediated by Telemetr.io. Data collection took place at the end of December 2023.

Finally, Bombic can be supported on his accounts on Odyssey and Rumble platforms, where he posts video content. On Rumble, Bombic has two profiles – dannykollar [profile](#) currently has just under 330 followers, while dannykollarUK [profile](#) had only 4 followers and one posted video at the time of writing. Presumably this is a new profile aimed at an English-speaking audience. A possible monetisation tool is also his [profile](#) on Odyssey, where he currently has approximately 1,300 followers. Once registered on the platform, support is possible through the tools available.



## CONCLUSION

Telegram is characterised by a low level of transparency and content regulation. In many cases, even illegal content passes below its detection threshold or is spread in secret chats and closed groups. The very philosophy of the platform, which wants to ensure the protection of users, thus provides a haven for protagonists of various far-right groups, propagandists and disinformation agents, in addition to journalists, whistleblowers and representatives of political dissent. Toxic content, anti-Semitism, disinformation and anti-system narratives also prevail on the Slovak Telegram. The fact that the content on the platform can only be monitored to a certain extent also makes the fight against them more difficult. In many cases, users may be radicalised or manipulated in closed chambers where analysts do not have access. Moreover, even on Telegram, the actors in question can solicit support from their followers, which helps them to fund their own activities.

Voluntary donations and various forms of support from fans emerged as the most common means of funding the activities of the actors surveyed in the research. This fact was confirmed by the parallel ICJK [research](#), which drew attention to the low transparency in use of individual instruments. In many cases, donations are not disclosed through transparent bank accounts. Telegram's donation system is not transparent and thus does not assist in creating a more comprehensive understanding of the nature, origin, quantity, or value of donations to a particular entity. In the case studies described above, as many as eight of the nine sources exercised the voluntary donation option, with donation options ranging quite widely: from account transfers, QR codes and cryptocurrencies, to the aforementioned platform donation system (the "donate" button).

Another option exploited was the monetisation of YouTube videos, which could potentially have been used by seven actors; however, analysts' access to information on monetisation was insufficient to demonstrate this. Among the tools, the raising of 2% of taxes for the operation of CA, the sale of goods from the online shop, subscription to premium content and advertising on the website followed. Ultimately, Telegram thus provides a fairly wide range of opportunities for generating profit and hence profitability for the dissemination of problematic content itself. An interesting finding of the research was the fact that even in the case of Telegram sources, coverage CA, LC or a combination of the two is quite popular. Paradoxically, these forms were mainly identified among actors who are vocal in their opposition to civil society and its structures.

In conclusion, the Slovak Telegram remains a relatively opaque environment, dominated by disinformation and pro-Russian actors with wide opportunities for monetisation. Even though they differ in their forms of coverage and their character, in many ways their modus operandi is the same. Ultimately, these actors use different tools to finance their business, with Telegram serving as a breeding ground for expanding their follower base, while potentially increasing the number of paying fans. Even after conducting collaborative research, we consider Telegram to be under-researched. In many ways, it is a black box that reveals little necessary information to the public, allowing the actors themselves to continue their activities, which they are able to turn into a profitable business.



## DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on mapping the environment of the Slovak Telegram and clarifying the organisational and financial background of selected disinformation actors operating on the platform. It is based on research conducted in 2023 by Infosecurity.sk and PSSI focusing on the organisational and financial background of disinformation websites in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. A large amount of data has been made available thanks to the cooperation with researchers of Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak (ICJK) in the case of the Telegram investigation.

The extension of the research to Telegram was derived from the fact that the platform currently represents a space for radicalisation, spreading hatred, as well as disinformation and pro-Kremlin propaganda. Any relevant sources such as traditional media or political institutions are absent on the network. On the contrary, many actors have migrated to Telegram from other social networks, where they have encountered restrictions due to stricter rules of use. As explained in the introductory part of the study, Telegram's rules and regulations are rather lax and open up a new field of action for these malicious actors.

The final study seeks to answer the research questions:

- What types of actors are the most successful on the Slovak Telegram?
- How do the selected actors function organisationally?
- How do the selected actors function financially? What tools do they use to monetise their content?

## QUANTITATIVE PART

The study includes a quantitative part aimed at quantifying and comparing the success rates of various Telegram actors. Their list was produced using the Juno analytical tool, developed and operated by the Slovak technology company *Gerulata Technologies*. Within the given section, Infosecurity.sk researchers tracked the 50 most successful channels on Telegram according to the number of interactions, which they divided into groups corresponding to the type of actors:

- Alternative medium
- Politicians
- Political parties and movements
- Profiles (specific and identifiable individuals)
- Channels (indeterminate or collective actorhood)
- Embassies

Within each category, the study presents statistics capturing metrics on interactions, amount of content published, number of followers, and number of views, for the time period of January 1, 2023 to December 1, 2023. In addition, the study offers more detailed statistics which show individual metrics by category of actors within the top 50, and provides a ranking of the most successful sources. As the study was completed in December 2023 and relied on data available in that time period, actual metrics may vary for individual actors.

## CASE STUDIES

The second part of the research provides a more in-depth look at the operation of disinformation actors on the Telegram through nine case studies. Their selection was based on a ranking of the 50 most successful Telegram sources according to the number of interactions for the period from November 1, 2022 to November 1, 2023. Sources with political content (channels of politicians or political parties and movements); sources that do not publish in the Slovak language; sources with less than 1,000 followers; and finally alternative media channels whose financial and organisational background has been more comprehensively investigated in the past were subsequently excluded from the ranking.

After selecting the sources for a more detailed analysis, data on their organisational and financial background was collected in cooperation with ICJK. In the case of the organisational background, the analysts primarily looked at who was behind the source – whether it was an individual or a group of individuals, whether there was a website or media outlet linked to the source, etc. Specifically, possible forms of coverage were looked at, either through a functioning civil association (CA), a limited liability company (LC), or a combination of the two. For two of the sources, none of these forms of coverage were identified, as they operate on the Telegram as individuals without the existence of legal structures related to the activity. These were the channels Miro Del and Miroslav Kamenický.

A key focus category of the study is uncovering possible forms of profit generation. In this sense, the analysts identified the following tools:

- fundraising from fans and followers: by transferring funds to an account, using a QR code, payment gateway, PayPal, cryptocurrencies, Telegram "donate" button, or through affiliate platforms;
- monetisation of YouTube videos;
- raising 2% of taxes for the operation of the civic association;
- sale of goods from the online shop;
- option to subscribe to premium content;
- placement of advertisements on the website.

The individual case studies reveal both the extent to which the tools are being applied and the potential benefits they may bring. As noted in the introduction to the case studies, in only one case out of the nine sources was no form of profit generation identified.

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