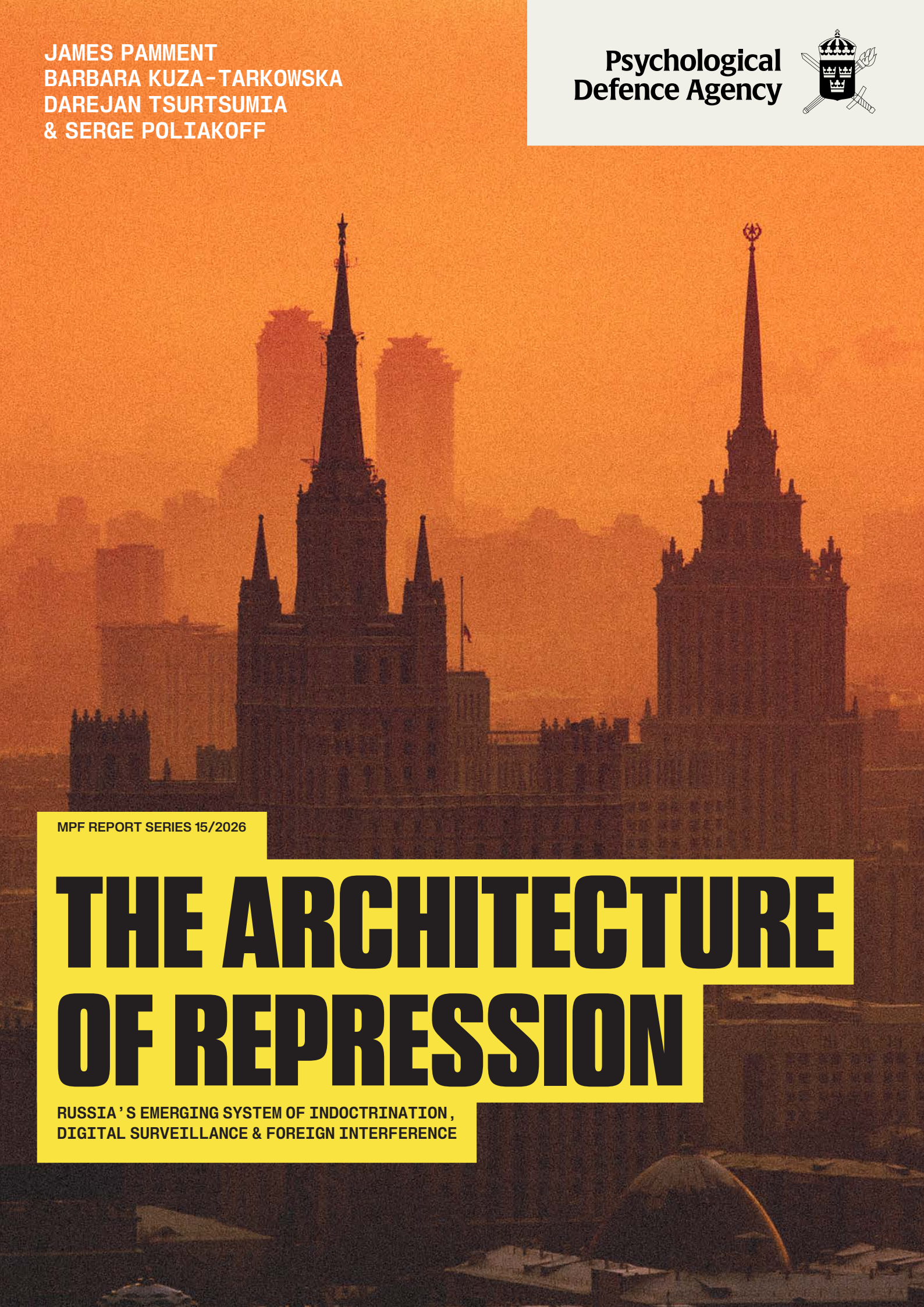
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Psychological Defence Agency



MPF REPORT SERIES 15/2026

THE ARCHITECTURE OF REPRESSION

RUSSIA'S EMERGING SYSTEM OF INDOCTRINATION, DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE & FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

THE ARCHITECTURE OF REPRESSION

RUSSIA'S EMERGING SYSTEM OF INDOCTRINATION, DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE & FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

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PREFACE

Russian state repression does not stop at Russia's borders. As this report illustrates, the same apparatus that shapes public opinion, restricts political freedom and suppresses dissent within Russia is also used to pressure neighbouring states and undermine European security. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is the most brutal expression of this system, but military force is only one of its instruments.

In the report, the authors map at least 50 state-affiliated entities, with a combined annual budget equivalent to €1.3–1.7 billion, spanning patriotic indoctrination, digital surveillance, quenching political alternatives and denying neighbouring countries the right to choose their own future.

The report reveals a system built to endure. Within Russia, it seeks to shape citizens from childhood through education, public services, culture and the digital sphere. In occupied Ukraine it promotes forced integration and across Europe it enables foreign interference and hybrid operations.

By mapping and exposing how these networks are organised and how they operate, this report contributes to closing a significant knowledge gap. In today's era of information warfare, the ability to recognise and understand the machinery of influence is itself a vital part of an effective defence. Also, making the apparatus visible is an essential step towards coordinated democratic countermeasures.

As always when we publish research, the authors are solely responsible for the content, conclusions and suggestions in this study.

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1 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is about the present and future of Russian state repression of its citizens and neighbours. Over the past decade, a single stovepipe within the Presidential Administration has amassed a complex apparatus of entities that exert ideological control over the Russian population and increasingly seek to exert hostile influence over the "near abroad".[1] Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko exerts direct or indirect control of at least 50 state-affiliated entities with a combined budget of ₽132–170 billion annually, equivalent to roughly €1.3–€1.7 billion.[2] By way of contrast, the total budget for traditional state media and propaganda channels is around ₽140 billion (€1.4 billion).[3]

Yet while Russian state media has been studied in detail over the past decade, Kiriyenko's quiet but efficient apparatus of educational, patriotic, and surveillance tools has to some degree remained under the radar. While his foreign interference efforts have been noisier, the interactions between these entities is less well understood. The purpose of this report is to expose, map, and analyse Kiriyenko's apparatus. Like many early maps, some parts are in greater resolution than others. However, we believe that this report can act as a starting point for counterreactions to these repressive structures.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Kiriyenko's entities are second only to Russian intelligence agencies in importance when it comes to undermining the European security order. Increasingly, Kiriyenko exerts influence over those intelligence agencies and their agents. This is in addition to a portfolio covering digital surveillance, patriotic education, and professional training. His trajectory builds toward a single point of ideological control within the Russian Presidential Administration; a fulcrum for all matters of domestic policy that conversely must intervene abroad to uphold that domestic ideology of Russian exceptionalism. For Kiriyenko, the domestic and foreign are intertwined, and this is crucial to understanding the Russia that he is shaping.

This regime - modelled on education-as-propaganda and digital repression – is suggestive of a post-Putin legacy already in place. We describe here an architecture built for decades and generations to come, founded on data governance and neo-imperialistic ideology. We refer to it as "cradle to grave", not as a metaphor, but as a reminder of the ambition, scope, and reach of this ideological system. In other words, the implications of Kiriyenko's actions are not just in the here and now but will fuel hatred of NATO, the EU, and the West more broadly for decades to come. An understanding of Kiriyenko's repressive architecture matter for:

1 By "near abroad" is meant former Soviet Union countries.

2 We have calculated the ₽ (ruble) to € (euro) exchange rate at 0.01 throughout the report unless otherwise indicated.

3 Federal Law No. 426-FZ "On the Federal Budget for 2026 and the Planning Period of 2027 and 2028", 2025. Included in this allocation is state television channels, news sources, and foreign influence tools such as RT. Due to the relatively opaque categorization of spending, there may be some overlap with Kiriyenko-steered entities under this budget estimate.

- **THE RUSSIAN POPULATION.** Kiriyenko is nominally responsible for domestic policy, but in recent years this has expanded to a "cradle to grave" patriotic propaganda system distributed across state bodies and the digital sphere. We chart how a typical Russian child now grows up exposed to a propaganda system that indoctrinates hatred against NATO, Ukraine, and the West through the educational system, social mobility opportunities, and exposure to public services. Kiriyenko's system skews the labour market, selects political candidates, shapes a cadre of pliant public servants, dominates the creative and public relations sectors, and seeks control over all online discussion.
- **UKRAINE.** Following the illegal invasion of Ukraine, Kiriyenko took control over Ukraine policy toward the occupied territories including through propaganda, integration policy, and election manipulation. In case of an eventual ceasefire, Kiriyenko's role in propaganda, hybrid attacks and subversion, and election interference will only increase. Put simply, peace is likely to be the start of an escalation of hybrid interference targeting Ukraine conducted by Kiriyenko-directed entities.
- **EUROPE.** Given how central Ukraine now is to Russian foreign and security policy, Kiriyenko opportunistically expanded his portfolio to take responsibility for enforcing that other former Soviet states do not seek to exert sovereignty. This includes conducting interference in the former Soviet Union as well as countries for which Ukraine policy shapes relations with Russia. Recent actions in Moldova, Hungary, and Armenia have been led by Kiriyenko, as has interference in many recent European elections. A general trend toward reckless escalation of hybrid attacks in Europe is partly the responsibility of Kiriyenko, who likely oversees all Russian information influence campaigns and many hybrid activities.

Together, these capabilities seek to destroy Ukraine, indoctrinate and repress the Russian population, and destabilise Europe and the West. Although it is not well-covered in this report, we know that Kiriyenko also has ambitions in Africa and Latin America. It is of vital importance to map out these structures, modus, and resources in as coherent and comprehensive manner possible. While this report has been compiled from sources already in the public domain, it is perhaps the first to assume a holistic overview of Kiriyenko's architecture understanding it for what it is: **a command-and-control function for a neo-imperialistic Russia.**

Who is this report for?

This report was written to support Ukraine and other countries in Russia's firing line including in the CIS and Europe. It will be useful for anybody who wishes to learn about the threat from Russia and to strengthen their psychological defence. It will also provide a focal point and resource for countries, organisations, and people who want to push back. We are aware that this report is long, complex, and is not always as analytically clear as we would wish. It does not need to be read cover-to-cover. However, we anticipate that the many details may be useful for different purposes now and in the future.

AIM AND RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of this report is to **map the key entities, leaders, strategies, methods, and resources that comprise Kiriyenko's empire.** It is an academic study conducted with the support of open-source intelligence and investigative journalism techniques. The data is based upon open reporting in both Russian and Western media, original leaked documents previously described (in part) in media reporting, and data contained in specialist databases and repositories. Sources are cited except in cases where leaked documents or specialist databases have been used, where we have determined that this is appropriate to protect the source. The report has been assessed by several subject matter experts and double-blind

peer reviewed by academic researchers prior to publication. More details on methodology are given in the annexes.

Note that claims made in this report are based on likelihood and confidence; unless otherwise noted, all conclusions are based on medium-to-high confidence claims.

Results of the study

We identify a network of at least 50 entities and 20 long-term programmes that Sergey Kiriyenko exerts direct or indirect control over. These organisations implement his vision of an indoctrinated and repressed Russian population managed through a combination of anti-Western ideology and digital analytics. The combined budget of this empire is conservatively assessed to be ₽132–171 billion annually, equivalent to roughly €1.3–€1.7 billion[4]; however, this figure is mainly based upon known state funding. The opaque nature of these entities and potential oligarch/corporate funding means that the actual figure could be significantly higher. For example, VK Company provides digital platform infrastructure on the instruction of Kiriyenko, while Rosatom is a major partner to Kiriyenko in exerting foreign interference. Other partly nationalised or oligarch corporate entities such as banks and energy companies contribute funds and in-kind support to specific initiatives. Between them, hundreds of millions of euros a year are likely added to the ecosystem. At the same time, much funding seems to be laundered between entities in this ecosystem (and smuggled out of it) which raises the risk of duplication; we therefore consider this interval to be conservative but realistic, leaning toward the higher end.

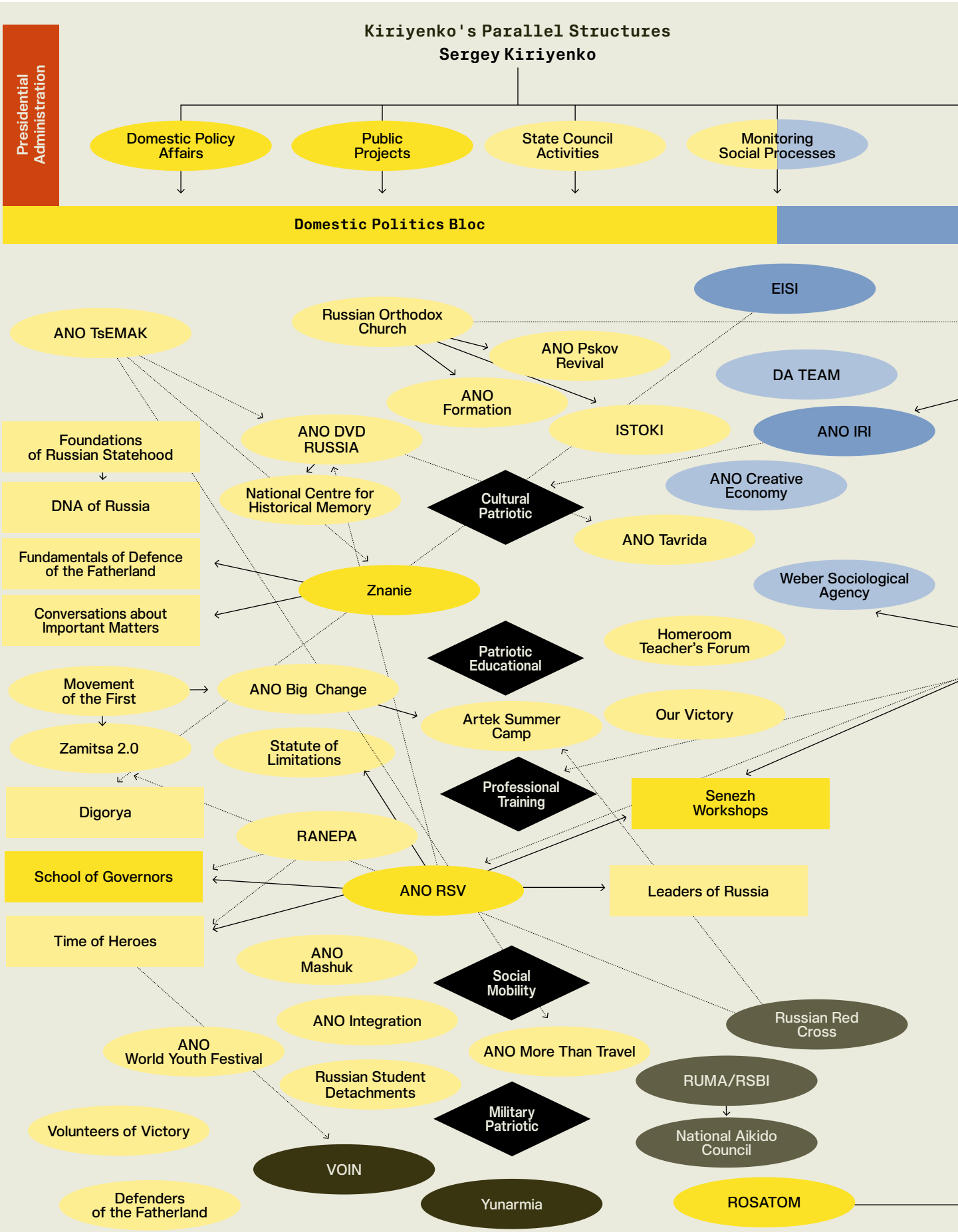
Our analytical contribution is to argue that Kiriyenko's empire rests on three pillars: **patriotic education**, **digital surveillance,** and **foreign hybrid interference**. These pillars form a unique intersection between regional and national politics, education and social mobility, digital surveillance as a tool of governance, and political warfare (for want of a better term) against neighbours and antagonists. We distinguish between "pillars" to offer some coherence to the range of entities, but in reality the overlaps are complex and messy. In the diagram below, yellow refers to domestic, patriotic and educational entities, blue to digitally focused entities, and khaki to foreign and security policy entities (the brighter colour is suggestive of greater importance to the system).

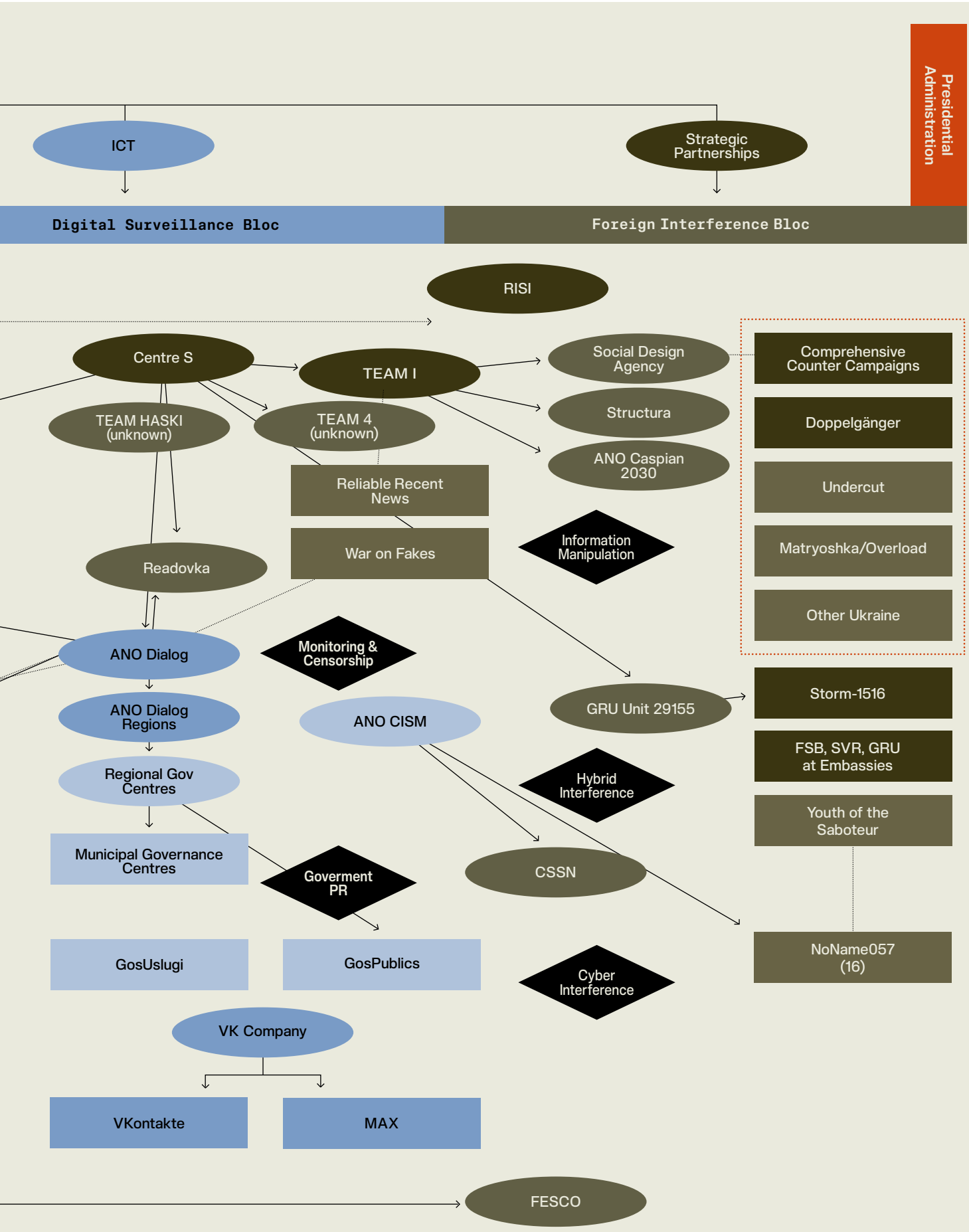
We argue that Kiriyenko's empire must be viewed as an **aggressively expansive, contested, parallel governance system with a unique selling point: managerialism.** The 50+ entities mapped out in this report typically overlap with the work of government ministries and agencies, and in many cases have earned Putin's blessing to siphon resources from them. The value added is command-and-control via a method of data governance; a tightly controlled and coherent system under a single point of oversight. Each of Kiriyenko's entities use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), produce data about their activities, and use data to evaluate their effectiveness. While we may question the validity of these methods (many of them are discussed here in detail for the first time), there can be little doubt that these rituals of data management are a key enabler for the expansion of Kiriyenko's parallel governance structure.

In terms of foreign interference, the evidence presented here suggests that **Kiriyenko increasingly acts as the main coordinator for multi-agency influence operations.** The work of Centre S as coordinator of foreign influence operations such as the Comprehensive Counter Campaigns against Ukraine and Europe, Another Ukraine, Reliable Recent News, War on Fakes, Doppelgänger, Matryoshka/Overload, and Undercut is already established. Operations such as Storm1516,

[4] Note that while rendering expenditure in euros is suggestive of a comparison, the spending power of such funding in Russia is considerably greater than it would be in Europe.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF REPRESSION:




Presidential Administration
ICT
Strategic Partnerships
Digital Surveillance Bloc
Foreign Interference Bloc
RISI
Centre S
TEAM I
TEAM HASKI (unknown)
TEAM 4 (unknown)
Social Design Agency
Structura
ANO Caspian 2030
Comprehensive Counter Campaigns
Doppelgänger
Undercut
Matryoshka/Overload
Other Ukraine
Reliable Recent News
War on Fakes
Information Manipulation
Readovka
ANO Dialog
Monitoring & Censorship
ANO Dialog Regions
ANO CISM
GRU Unit 29155
Storm-1516
FSB, SVR, GRU at Embassies
Hybrid Interference
Youth of the Saboteur
Regional Gov Centres
Municipal Governance Centres
Goverment PR
CSSN
NoName057 (16)
GosUslugi
GosPublics
Cyber Interference
VK Company
VKontakte
MAX
FESCO
ENTITY
PROGRAMME CAMPAIGN
ACTIVITY TYPE
Direct connection
Indirect connection or association
Yellow: Patriotic propaganda
Blue: Digital surveillance
Khaki: Foreign interference
Darker color indicates greater importance

Portal Kombat/Pravda, and some others carried out in Africa and Latin America show elements of similarity even if they are normally attributed to actors outside of Kiriyenko's influence such as the GRU and post-Prigozhin assets acquired by SVR. **While we cannot establish with certainty that Centre S is the sole hub, we are able to show a higher level of coordination, and in some cases sharing of resources, between threat actors that would traditionally compete rather than cooperate, under Kiriyenko's leadership.**

A major aspect of Kiriyenko's system is ideological control through education, training, and social mobility of youth. As part of this analysis, we collected a CV-based data set to reconstruct the staffing dynamics and labour-market embeddedness of Kiriyenko's ecosystem.[5] Working with 7,705 structured CV records of current and former employees within Kiriyenko's entities (64,15 % female, 35,85% male, average 43,5 years old at the moment of the CV data collection), we were able to trace employment histories, headcount, and employer-to-employer links. The data show an extraordinary expansion beginning around August 2020, indicating that the ecosystem's organisational and staffing capacity was already being built before February 2022 and was effectively in place by the time of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Network analysis further shows that this is a dense labour-market ecosystem: companies, media outlets, state-linked communication bodies, youth and civic-mobilisation projects, educational institutions, and digital/public communication actors are connected through shared career trajectories. In this sense, the ecosystem appears not only as an organisational cluster, but as a distinct and highly integrated labour-market infrastructure linking several adjacent professional fields. **This confirms our thesis that Kiriyenko is shaping social mobility and work opportunities within a new ecosystem of political technologists trained in his methodology. The system self-reproduces through its labour market, effectively creating the conditions under which it can continue to expand.**

This report is therefore a unique resource for understanding contemporary Russian patriotic ideology. It covers how children are indoctrinated from kindergarten, and how puppet governors and civil servants are selected and installed into positions of influence across the country. It provides a detailed overview of digital population governance through surveillance, analytics, and dark public relations. Finally, it explores the ways in which this domestic system necessarily seeps into the foreign, revealing a complex interplay between domestic repression, foreign and security policy, and the necessity of undermining sovereignty in both the near and far abroad. This report does not contain much good news: it reveals a cynical, embedded system that is taking Russia – and the nearby territories it terrorises – toward a locked-down ZATO[6]-esque society bolstered by digital governance capabilities and a renewed sense of cynicism posing as national identity.

5 The methodology is described in an annex.

6 ZATO stands for closed administrative-territorial formations, which are cities with restricted access due to their strategic (usually military or nuclear) importance. These cities are typically managed by Rosatom, the Russian state corporation responsible for nuclear energy, of which Kiriyenko used to be head, and where his approaches to governance developed.



Photo:iStock



2 INTRODUCTION

Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko has emerged as a key architect of Russia's current ideological, domestic, and informational policies, effectively transitioning from a "technocrat" keeping Putin in power by managing political processes, to an architect of a deeply rooted, insular, and repressive system that has conversely been moulded to project power outwards.

Officially, Kiriyenko is First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration with responsibility for the smooth running of domestic politics. Traditionally this role involves managing regional governors, monitoring public opinion, and manipulating the results of local elections where necessary. Every five years, he must ensure a sufficiently enthusiastic turnout for the nationwide Presidential elections, with just enough votes for the "opposition" to give the illusion of competition. In other words, Kiriyenko is primarily responsible for maintaining the legitimacy of Putin's rule.

Now heading into his eleventh year in this role, Kiriyenko has emerged as a deft and underestimated political strategist who has carefully manoeuvred himself into the debate about potential successors to Putin. His role, particularly since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, has involved creating a lasting structure of ideological control premised on the erasure of Ukrainian identity and ensuring anti-Western sentiment and regime longevity in Russia. This report explains how he made these moves, thoroughly investigating the sources of his power. We analyse dozens of individuals, organisations, and programmes that Kiriyenko has acquired over the past decade as vehicles of his ambition: entities that exist to surveil, indoctrinate, and supress the Russian population. In addition, we analyse his growing portfolio of overseas activities, which take the Russian domestic model and extend it through espionage, hybrid, cyber, and information influence operations.

Kiriyenko created and manages a sprawling empire dedicated to domestic state repression and foreign interference. He deeply understands that Russia's domestic and foreign policies are intricately linked, with external actions often designed to serve domestic regime stability, consolidate power, and promote national identity. We argue that this is best understood as one coherent system. At the granular level, this system grants Kiriyenko control or strong influence over:

- **Candidates, opposition, voter turnout, and the favourable results** of national, regional, and local elections in Russia
- The opinions and opportunities of **national and regional media, intellectuals, influencers, and political technologists**, including determining which Russian journalists and news outlets are labelled as "foreign agents"
- **Youth culture and values**, through schools, universities, think tanks, and hobby and sports clubs
- **Youth mobility,** through bespoke training schemes for emerging leaders, influencers, politicians, and political technologists
- **Public opinion** which enables system governance through data and to provide actionable data to other governmental actors; and perhaps, equally importantly, the ability to frame the questions through which data is collected
- The **cultural and creative industries**, as well as national heritage, tourism, and the government's relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church
- The **Russian internet infrastructure**, including its social media surveillance and parts of its censorship policies
- The content and dissemination channels for a "cradle to grave" **national digital propaganda system**
- **Nationalised Russian social and digital media**, including through part-ownership of VK Company and direct control through his son, Vladimir.

- **Territorial integration policy** and illegal referendums in the occupied territories of Ukraine alongside other illegally occupied or annexed regions in Russia's neighbourhood
- Overseas **espionage, hybrid, cyber, and information influence operations,** including extensive election interference in Europe and beyond. This likely includes some form of oversight over all Russian foreign information influence operations and the ability to direct some intelligence resources.

The instruments, methods, and infrastructure developed for domestic repression are the same capabilities used in many hybrid influence operations abroad. Methods of election manipulation, workflow management, and production and dissemination of disinformation, are first developed for the home market before being exported. The efforts are coherent. In some cases, the organisations or key personas lead both sets of activities. **The findings outlined here, in other words, are key to understanding the capabilities and trajectories of Russian power projected internationally.**

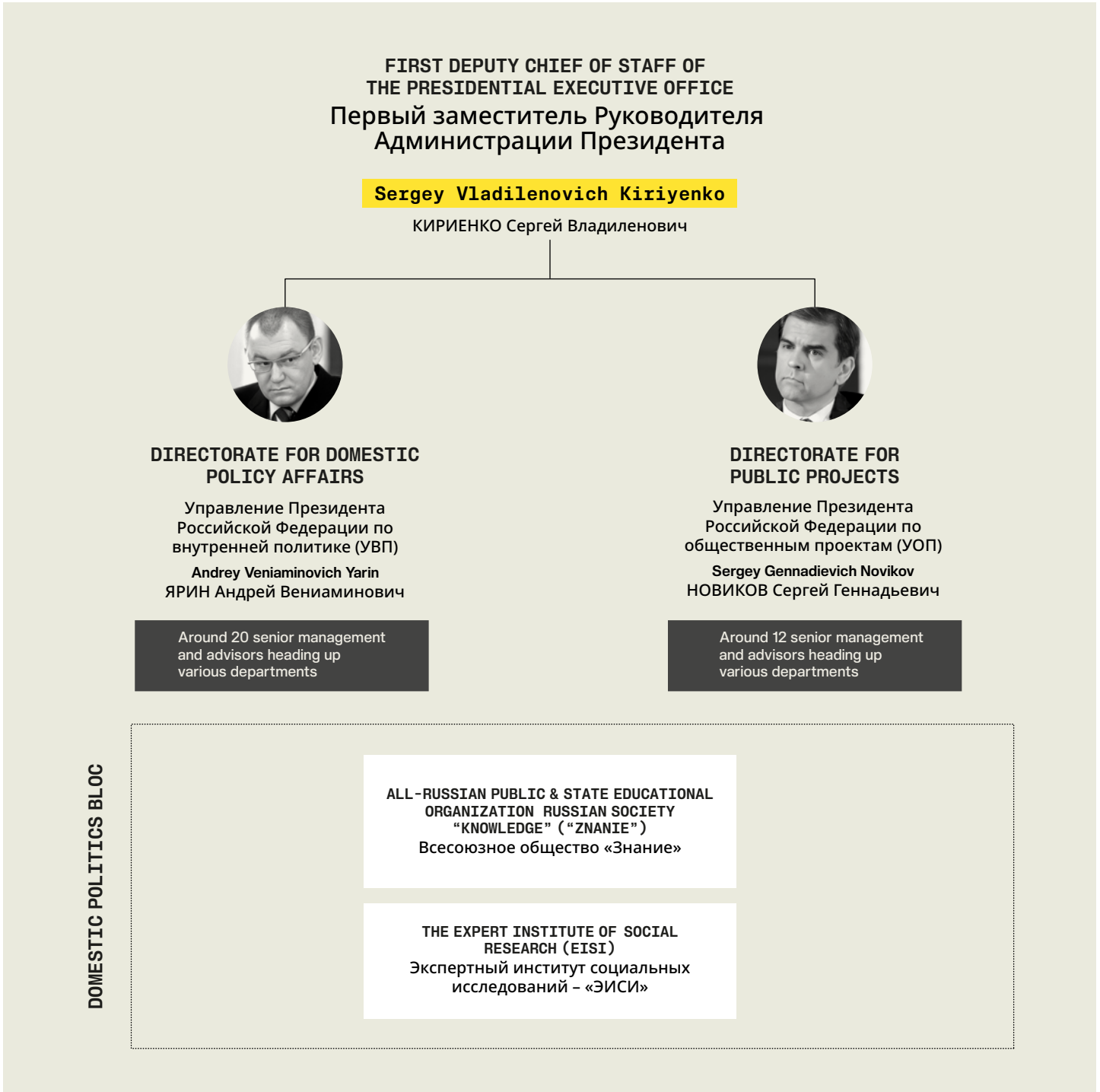
2.1 AN EMPIRE OF REQUIREMENTS

Our best explanation for the evolution of Kiriyenko's expansive portfolio is the idea of requirement. Put simply, as the challenges of managing Russian domestic politics evolved, Kiriyenko needed certain resources to fulfil his mandate and assure his political survival. He managed to acquire these new resources often at the cost of rivals, with minimal negative political consequences. The result is nothing less than an alternative empire within the Kremlin; a parallel command-and-control structure that overlaps with, duplicates, or indeed directly contradicts government ministries and agencies. The scope of this empire is impressive and represents a shadow government system within the government. Along the way, each requirement appears perfectly rational, and each acquisition allowed for Kiriyenko's systematic method to be applied to the appropriated task.

Kiriyenko arrived at the Presidential Administration in 2016 with the mandate of enhancing Putin's legitimacy through the management of domestic politics. In simple terms, **his job was to keep Putin in power**, and he had two large directorates focusing on political management of the regions to support that task. In addition, he had direct control over a handful of entities that could implement his ideas. For example, Znanie ("Knowledge") had been (re-)created in 2015 to produce propagandistic education content to revive and modernise the historic Soviet-era All-Union Society "Znanie". The 2017 creation of a high-level think tank, the Expert Institute for Social Research (EISI), was useful for shaping elite discourse and funnelling payments to loyal opinion shapers. These organisations tend not to fit neatly under a specific directorate, and the subgrouping is often simply referred to as the Domestic Policy Bloc, to illustrate common resources under Kiriyenko's political management apparatus.

The strategic challenge was to deal with a new generation of digitally savvy youth, and particularly their access to the outside world through digital technologies and disengagement from propaganda served through traditional media. How loyal would the next generation of leaders be to Putin's kleptocracy if they stopped watching Russian state television were instead able to freely engage with Western ideas? The requirement was therefore **enhanced control over the Internet, education, and social mobility.**

In June 2018, Kiriyenko took control of the Directorate for Development of Information and Communication Technologies, which gave him responsibility for state policy in the development of digital infrastructure, as well as implementing IT technologies within government and municipal administration. He also established the Directorate for Ensuring Activities of the State Council of Russia. This ensured



enhanced influence over the coherence of regional development projects, selection of regional leadership, and monitoring and analysis of social processes.

Over the next three years, Kiriyenko created or reformed a slew of autonomous non-profit organisations (ANO) that enabled more granular control over domestic politics. In doing so, he either took resources from, or created parallel organisations to, ministries and agencies that already had responsibility for these tasks. In wrestling control of these assets, he brought coherence to a variety of state instruments and shaped them into a system steered by technocratic ideals. **The overarching direction was one of shaping a national propaganda, surveillance, and censorship system rooted in digital technologies**, enabling data-informed governance in ways that could influence education, societal institutions, and the cultivation of future leaders.

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Первый заместитель Руководителя Администрации Президента

Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko

КИРИЕНКО Сергей Владиленович



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Tatyana Vladimirovna Matveyeva

МАТВЕЕВА Татьяна Владимировна

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DOMESTIC POLITICS BLOC

All-Russian Public & State Educational Organization Russian Society "Knowledge" ("Znanie")

Всесоюзное общество «Знание»

The Expert Institute of Social Research (EISI)

Экспертный институт социальных исследований – «ЭИСИ»

Organisation for the Integrated Development of Urban & Rural Territories (ANO Integration)

ПО КОМПЛЕКСНОМУ РАЗВИТИЮ ГОРОДСКОЙ И СЕЛЬСКОЙ ТЕРРИТОРИИ «ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ»

Revival of Cultural Heritage in Pskov Region

ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ В ГОРОДЕ ПСКОВЕ (ПСКОВСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ)

Russia - Land of Opportunities (ANO RSV)

РОССИЯ - СТРАНА ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ «РСВ»

More Than Travel

БОЛЬШЕ, ЧЕМ ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ «БЧП»

Internet Development Institute (ANO IRI)

ИНСТИТУТ РАЗВИТИЯ ИНТЕРНЕТА – «ИРИ»

ANO Dialog & Dialog Regions

«ДИАЛОГ» & «ДИАЛОГ-РЕГИОНЫ»

Center for the Study and Network Monitoring of the Youth Environment (ANO CISM)

ЦЕНТР ИЗУЧЕНИЯ И СЕТЕВОГО МОНИТОРИНГА МОЛОДЕЖНОЙ СРЕДЫ «ЦИСМ»

- **ANO** is a lawful organisational form created by the Civil Code and the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations for service-providing non-profits. The form has several design features that make it unusually well suited to para-state governance: it has **no membership base**, can be created by **a single founder**, is **governed by its founders under the charter, and can combine budget subsidies, grants, service contracts, and income-generating activity**. When the founder is the Russian Federation, a region, or a municipality, the relevant public authority may also determine how state representatives participate in the ANO's management bodies.[7]
- ANOs sit in the space between ministry and NGO: close enough to the state to carry out public tasks, but formally separate enough to avoid some of the rigidity, visibility, and reputation costs of ordinary state bureaucracy. Russian antimonopoly guidance from 2024 suggests that ANOs are not in the exhaustive list of entities governed by the 223-FZ procurement regime. They usually procure under the Civil Code, granting greater discretion over employees, salaries, and procurements.[8] Coincidently, this also makes them attractive vehicles for money laundering.
- The ANO form provides advantages in terms of political presentation. An ANO can appear as an "expert," "social," "national," or "industry" body rather than as part of government. That helps to move sensitive or reputationally costly tasks—public communications, digital monitoring, youth mobilization, grant distribution, "fact-checking," or public diplomacy—into structures that are formally outside the state while remaining operationally inside its orbit. This fits within a trend within Russian governance of the past two decades of outsourcing sensitive tasks.[9]
- The implication is that the Russian state, and Kiriyenko in particular, has found in the ANO a highly adaptable tool for outsourcing without surrendering control. ANOs with strong vertical ties become purveyors of state policy rather than autonomous civic actors. For foreign influence, the legal form is compatible with a preference for deniable or semi-deniable non-state instruments. Federal budget documents for 2025 explicitly include a project line for the state support of certain non-commercial organisations in international cooperation, including support for foreign interference under the guise of engaging in public diplomacy and "soft" foreign-policy processes.[10]

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine presented a new set of challenges, opportunities, and requirements, as wartime Russia devolved from an authoritarian to a totalitarian society. Kiriyenko embraced the opportunities afforded by the war in Ukraine on the basis that the Russian-occupied territories were considered a domestic political issue. At first, the main requirement was to run rigged referendums, as well as indoctrination and integration efforts in those territories. Gradually, however, **Kiriyenko seized influence over other aspects of foreign and security policy related to Ukraine**. For this, he had a new set of requirements, such as new surveillance and censorship powers over domestic discourse, and sharper tools to hinder Western countries from supporting Ukraine financially and militarily. **Kiriyenko required a means of disrupting Western decision making, and for this he acquired organisations capable of foreign interference through information influence operations, hybrid operations, and cyberattacks**.

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine dragged on into its fourth and fifth unpopular years and the Russian economy's downward spiral continued, Kiriyenko's requirements

7 Civil Code of the Russian Federation (Federal Law No. 51-FZ, Art. 123.24), 2014

8 Federal Antimonopoly Service of the Russian Federation, 2024

9 Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2017; Cook & Iarskaia-Smirnova, 2018

10 Federal Law No. 419-FZ "On the Federal Budget for 2025 and the Planning Period of 2026 and 2027", 2024

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Первый заместитель Руководителя Администрации Президента

Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko

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СИМОНЕНКО Владимир Александрович



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Alexander Dmitrievich Kharichev

ХАРИЧЕВ Александр Дмитриевич



DIRECTORATE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMUNICATIONS

Управление Президента Российской Федерации по развитию информационно-коммуникационных технологий и инфраструктуры связи (УИКТ)

Tatyana Vladimirovna Matveyeva

МАТВЕЕВА Татьяна Владимировна



PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTORATE FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION (USPS)

Управление Президента по стратегическому партнерству и сотрудничеству (УСПС)

Vadim Titov

Вадим Титов

Around 20 senior management and advisors heading up various departments	Around 12 senior management and advisors heading up various departments	Around 9 senior management and advisors heading up various departments	Unknown	Around 7 senior management and advisors heading up various departments	Several departments based primarily around countries/regions

Domestic Politics Bloc (Nedre sektion)

All-Russian Public & State Educational Organization Russian Society "Knowledge" ("Znanie")

Всесоюзное общество «Знание»

The Expert Institute of Social Research (EISI)

Экспертный институт социальных исследований – «ЭИСИ»

Directorate of the Exhibition of the Achievements of Russia (DVD RUSSIA)

ДИРЕКЦИЯ ВЫСТАВКИ ДОСТИЖЕНИЙ "РОССИЯ" «ДВД РОССИЯ»

Organisation for the Integrated Development of Urban & Rural Territories (ANO Integration)

ПО КОМПЛЕКСНОМУ РАЗВИТИЮ ГОРОДСКОЙ И СЕЛЬСКОЙ ТЕРРИТОРИИ «ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ»

Revival of Cultural Heritage in Pskov Region

ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ В ГОРОДЕ ПСКОВЕ (ПСКОВСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ)

Directorate of the World Youth Festival

ДИРЕКЦИЯ ВСЕМИРНОГО ФЕСТИВАЛЯ МОЛОДЕЖИ «ДВФМ»

More Than Travel

БОЛЬШЕ, ЧЕМ ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ «БЧП»

Russia - Land of Opportunities (ANO RSV)

РОССИЯ - СТРАНА ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ «РСВ»

Internet Development Institute (ANO IRI)

ИНСТИТУТ РАЗВИТИЯ ИНТЕРНЕТА - «ИРИ»

ANO Dialog & Dialog Regions

«ДИАЛОГ» & «ДИАЛОГ РЕГИОНЫ»

Center for the Study and Network Monitoring of the Youth Environment (ANO CISM)

ЦЕНТР ИЗУЧЕНИЯ И СЕТЕВОГО МОНИТОРИНГА МОЛОДЕЖНОЙ СРЕДЫ «ЦИСМ»

Social Design Agency & Structura National Technologies

Агентство Социального Проектирования & Группа Компаний Структура

Election interference in multiple CIS and former Soviet countries. Probable expansion to Africa and L. America (sometimes overlapping with IT bloc)

Centre S

«Центр С»

evolved further. To grasp slipping influence in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Kiriyenko fought for control of what became the Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, a **cover organisation for FSB, SVR and GRU intelligence officers to engage in espionage and hybrid interference campaigns**. He poured considerable resources into influencing elections in Moldova, Armenia, and Hungary, among others. And in preparation for the State Duma elections in September 2026, the Russian Internet has faced controversial new restrictions, with users being forced toward online platforms managed by Kiriyenko's son, Vladimir.

The result is a systematic empire, borne of need, that – for analytical purposes – can be subdivided into three pillars. First are **patriotic initiatives**, whether in the form of education programmes, patriotic cultural content, elite training, or opportunities for youth. Second is the exercise of **control over the digital domain**, through surveillance, censorship, data analysis, and the creation of propagandistic cultural content production and delivery infrastructure. Third is an **international hybrid warfare capability** designed to undermine the decision-making capacity of foreign countries, particularly through election interference, elite capture, and sabotage. Crucially, Kiriyenko manages these three pillars as one coherent effort.

2.2 THREE PILLARS OF REPRESSION

An organogram of Kiriyenko's institutional empire can offer an overview of the resources at his disposal. However, the scale, scope and direction only become clear upon closer investigation. To investigate this empire, we have divided the report into four parts, which overlap to some degree. First is a biography of Kiriyenko, followed by detailed overviews of each pillar. This reflects the sprawling, complex nature of the system that we analyse.

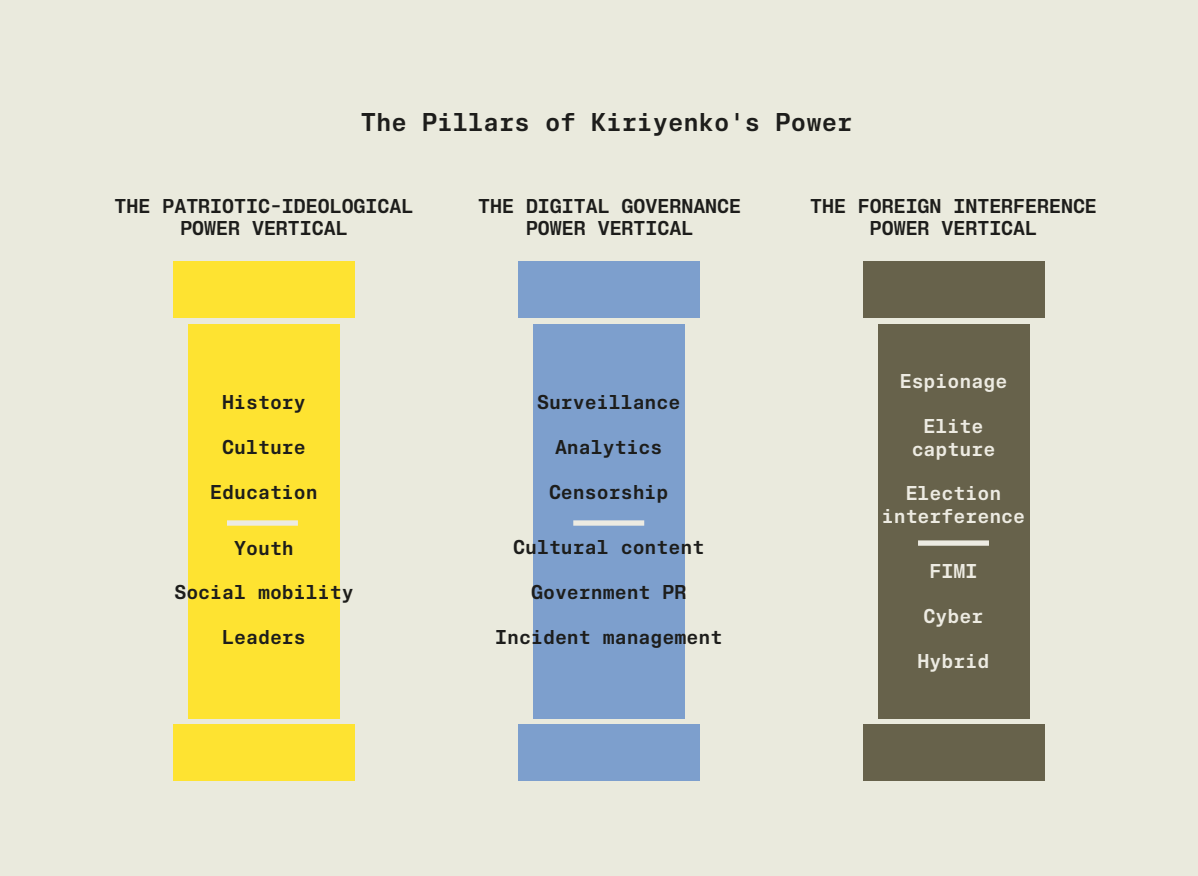
In chapter 3, we offer a biographical overview of Kiriyenko, with a view to exploring his background, common themes across his career, and overall trajectory. We paint a picture of a structured, capable, and ambitious figure who often seems to fly under the radar despite his obvious connections and power. We take the reader through the main phases of Kiriyenko's career:

- His early career in Nizhny Novgorod where he was nicknamed **Human Computer** for his analytical skills.
- His unexpected and short-lived appointment as Russia's youngest Prime Minister for which he became known as the **Kinder Surprise**.
- His era as the **Nuke Surprise**, during which he gained responsibility for Russian energy policy through **Rosatom** and garnered experience that profoundly shaped his future in politics.
- His appointment at the **Presidential Administration** as one of Putin's most trusted confidants, for which he became known as the **Grey Cardinal**.
- His responsibility for Ukraine policy, as he earned yet another nickname as the **Viceroy of Donbas**.

In this chapter, we also outline some of his business interests. The biography is the contextual backdrop to our detailed analysis of his institutions and their activities.

2.2.1 THE PATRIOTIC-IDEOLOGICAL POWER VERTICAL

Chapter 4 examines the **patriotic-ideological pillar** of Sergey Kiriyenko's power system, focusing on how youth policy, education, and cultural programming have been transformed into a comprehensive mechanism of political control in contemporary Russia. At its core, the chapter argues that what appears outwardly as a broad set of educational and youth development initiatives is, in reality, a



deeply integrated system designed to shape identity, loyalty, and elite formation across the entire lifecycle of Russian citizens. It is not simply designed to keep Putin in power, but to establish the conditions to maintain his corrupt, extractive system for decades.

The scale and ambition of this system are striking. The Kremlin's youth initiatives are expected to reach up to 50 million people between the ages of three and thirty-five by 2030, embedding state-sanctioned values at every stage of personal development. Funding for patriotic education has expanded dramatically. Official figures indicate that federal spending alone increased nearly tenfold between 2022 and 2024, reaching around ₽50 billion annually, and they are now budgeted to increase by tenfold again. When additional flows from state corporations, state-owned banks, and quasi-private "voluntary" contributions are taken into account, the total financial footprint of Kiriyenko's part of this ecosystem is likely between **₽58 billion and ₽97 billion (€580–970m)** per year.

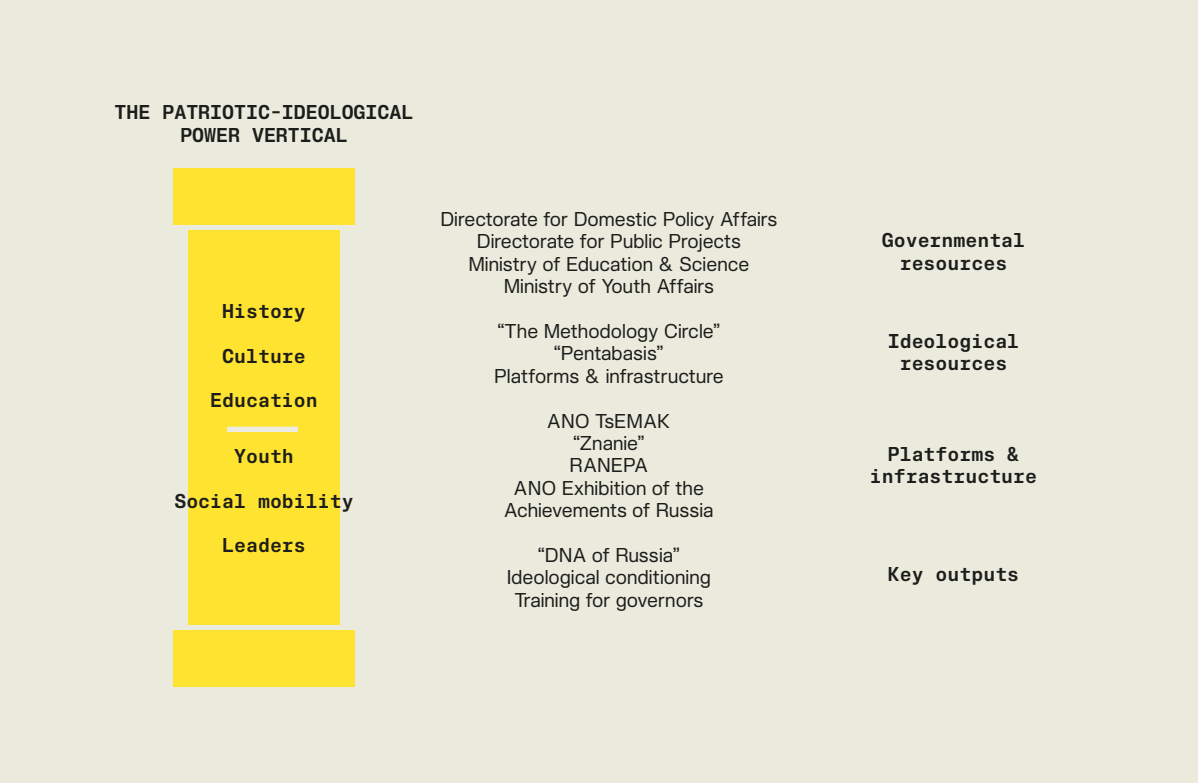
This expansion is structural. Under the umbrella of the National Project "Youth and Children," previously fragmented initiatives have been consolidated into a unified strategic framework that links youth development directly to the current system's long-term national survival. Kiriyenko has been instrumental in shaping this. In his formulation, education and upbringing are not treated as social policy domains but as instruments of statecraft, essential to ensuring sovereignty, competitiveness, and ideological cohesion as part of **a system of geopolitical confrontation**.

At the centre of this system is an ideological core rooted in the school of "methodologists" (followers of the Methodological Circle) founded in the 1950s by philosopher Georgy Shchedrovitsky, which is focused on "social engineering" and the idea that humans can be "programmed" to perform specific functions. The chapter highlights the emergence of the so-called "Pentabasis," a conceptual framework developed by the "DNA of Russia" working group (led by figures close to Kiriyenko) that organises Russian identity around five interrelated elements:

the state, the family, society, the individual, and the country. This construct blends Tsarist, Soviet, and contemporary nationalist elements into a unified worldview that emphasises collectivism, historical continuity, and the primacy of the state. It functions as both a philosophical justification for current policies and a practical guide for curriculum design. Reinforcing this framework are the ideas of Lev Gumilev, whose theories provide a pseudo-historical narrative in which Russia is portrayed as a rising civilization locked in existential struggle with a declining West. Together, these ideas underpin a closed ideological system in which history is instrumentalised, dissent is delegitimised, and the war in Ukraine is framed as both inevitable and existential.

What distinguishes Kiriyenko's approach is the **systematic institutionalisation of his ideology across multiple layers of society**. The chapter demonstrates how this ideological construct is embedded simultaneously in compulsory education, organised youth movements, cultural production, and elite recruitment mechanisms. In schools, mandatory programs such as "Conversations about Important Matters" and the newly introduced "Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland" ensure that students are regularly exposed to narratives that emphasise patriotism, military preparedness, and loyalty to the state. These are reinforced by state-aligned youth movements such as the "Movement of the First," which operate at national scale to mobilise youth participation and foster a sense of belonging within Kiriyenko's nationalistic community.

Parallel to these compulsory education programmes is an extensive media and cultural infrastructure designed to shape perception and normalise the state's worldview. Organisations such as Znanie produce high-quality popular science lectures, digital content, and public events that blend education with propaganda, while large-scale initiatives like the Russia Exhibition and its permanent successor, the National Centre "Russia," provide physical spaces where curated narratives of national achievement and historical destiny are presented to millions of visitors each year. These platforms serve not only to disseminate ideology but also to create an immersive environment in which the state's narrative appears natural, coherent, and uncontested.



At a deeper level, the system is structured to identify, cultivate, and promote future elites. Programmes such as "Russia – Land of Opportunities," along with its flagship competitions and training initiatives, function as "social elevators" that link career advancement to ideological alignment. Through these mechanisms, Kiriyenko channels ambitious and talented individuals into governance structures while simultaneously screening for loyalty. This process is complemented by monitoring tools, including surveys and data collection platforms, which allow authorities to track attitudes and identify potential dissent within educational institutions. The result is a feedback loop in which participation in state programmes both enables upward mobility and reinforces conformity.

Importantly, the chapter also highlights the role of **the ANO organisational infrastructure** in sustaining this system. A network of autonomous non-profits and administrative hubs, such as TsEMAK and Integration, provide the logistical backbone for procurement, funding distribution, training, and programme implementation. These entities blur the line between state and non-state actors, enabling the Kremlin to expand its reach while maintaining a degree of operational flexibility and opacity. At the same time, they facilitate coordination across sectors ranging from education and media to tourism and international outreach.

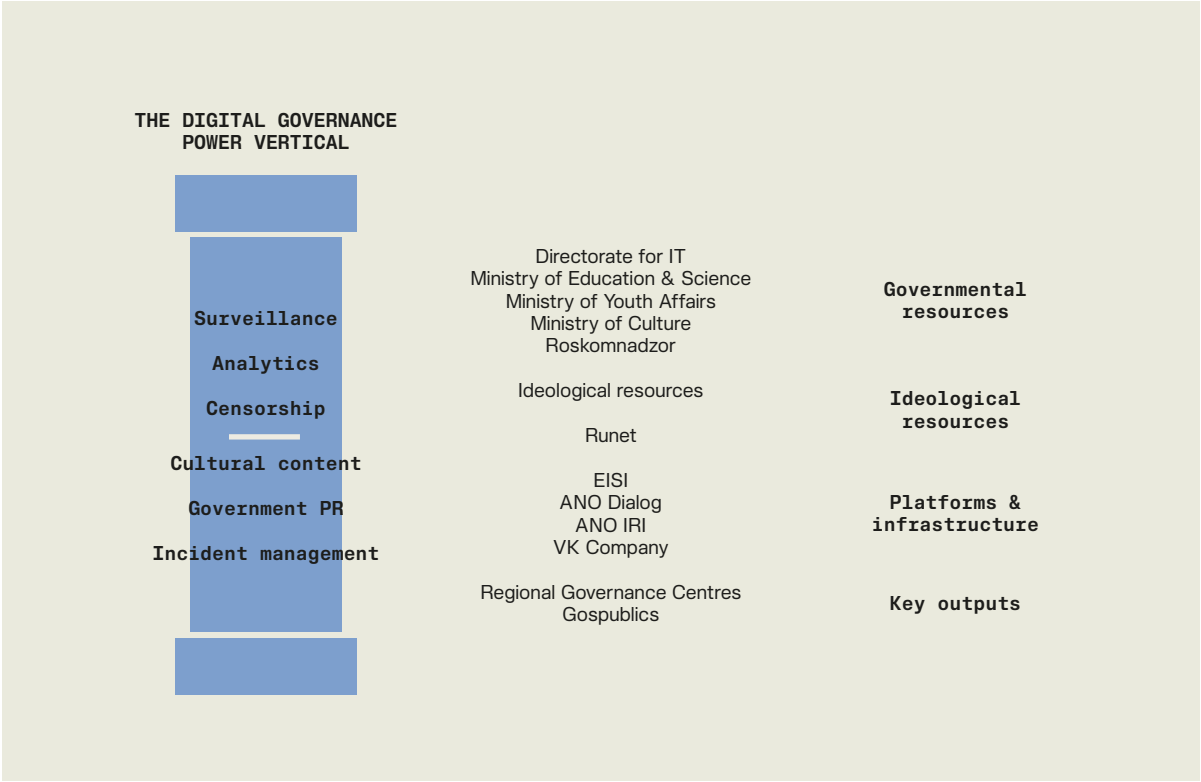
The integration of military training elements into school curricula, including the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, reflects a broader trend toward the militarisation of society. The pervasive emphasis on historical narratives that link the Second World War to the present conflict in Ukraine demonstrates the centrality of memory politics in shaping public attitudes. Meanwhile, the expansion of these programmes into occupied territories underscores the role of youth policy as a tool of territorial integration and identity transformation. In these contexts, education becomes not only a domestic instrument but a mechanism of geopolitical influence. Aspects of these mechanisms and influences are also seen in subsequent chapters.

The chapter argues that Kiriyenko has constructed a **vertically integrated ideological infrastructure** that extends from early childhood education through to the career opportunities of adults. It is both education and labour market. Its strategic logic is straightforward: by controlling the production of knowledge, shaping socialisation processes, and managing pathways to success, the state is able to secure long-term political stability and reproduce its governing class. In this sense, the system represents a modernised form of Soviet-style ideological control, adapted to contemporary conditions through the use of digital technologies, incentive structures, and networked institutional design.

Ultimately, the patriotic-ideological pillar is not simply one component of Kiriyenko's power base, but a foundation. It ensures that the other pillars - digital governance and foreign interference - are supported by a population that has been systematically conditioned to accept, internalise, and reproduce the state's worldview. As such, it constitutes both a tool of immediate political control and a long-term investment in regime continuity, with implications that extend well beyond the current political cycle.

2.2.2 THE DIGITAL GOVERNANCE POWER VERTICAL

The fifth chapter examines the **digital governance and information control pillar** of Russia's contemporary power structure, demonstrating how Kiriyenko has constructed a **comprehensive, multi-layered digital infrastructure that integrates surveillance, propaganda production, content distribution, and public administration into a single system of governance**. While this is often framed as a story of increasing censorship, the chapter shows that the more significant development is the emergence of a **coordinated, full-spectrum architecture of digital public services**, in which the state does not merely restrict information, but actively shapes how information is produced, circulated, and interpreted across society.



The adoption of the Russian Internet ("Runet") provides the starting point for these developments. Beginning in the early 2010s, the Kremlin developed a legal framework enabling the blocking of content and regulation of online actors. From the mid-2010s onward, this framework expanded into the provision of **digital sovereignty**, encompassing surveillance capabilities, infrastructural control, and the capacity to isolate and manage domestic information flows. These developments established the coercive and infrastructural base upon which the broader system would be built.

The significance of these measures lies in how they enabled a wider transformation under Kiriyenko's control, beginning with the Covid pandemic. Kiriyenko constructed an operational governance system centred on the newly founded autonomous non-profit organisation Dialog to monitor and inform the population about the pandemic, as well as crack down on "false" information. This developed into a **core mechanism of a digital power vertical**, linking the Presidential Administration to regional and municipal authorities through a network of Regional and Municipal Governance Centres. Through tools such as the **Incident Management System**, Dialog monitors social media activity across millions of accounts, processes citizen complaints, and coordinates responses from state institutions. In doing so, it creates a continuous flow of data from Russian society directly to Kiriyenko's office, while simultaneously projecting the image of a responsive and efficient administration. The result is increased surveillance over regional governors as much as over the population.

The scale of this infrastructure is extensive and reflects sustained financial investment. Dialog receives approximately **₽9 billion a year (€90m)**, with thousands of employees distributed across its central and regional structures. Additional funding supports a wide range of institutions and initiatives, including the **Expert Institute of Social Research (EISI)**, which received around **₽1 billion (€10m) in initial funding**, and the **Centre for the Study and Network Monitoring of the Youth Environment (CISM)**, initially funded at approximately **₽628 million annually (€6.3m)**. Further resources are directed toward media production through the Internet Development Institute (IRI) receiving **₽18–25 billion annually (€180-250m)**, the maintenance and expansion of digital platforms such as VK, and contracts with private-sector public relations and advertising firms. We have

estimated the costs of the managing directorate at ₽3 billion (€30m). Although these expenditures are dispersed across multiple budget lines and often lack transparency, the chapter estimates that **total annual spending on this pillar is likely around ₽39 billion (€390m)**.

A defining feature of the system is the integration of **ideological production into the digital governance framework**. Institutions such as EISI and the Internet Development Institute (ANO IRI) play a central role in generating narratives, funding content, and shaping the cultural and informational environment. EISI operates as a think tank closely linked to the Presidential Administration, producing political analysis, electoral strategies, and ideological justifications for state policy. ANO IRI, in turn, functions as a **funding and production hub for digital media**, supporting films, series, and online content that align with state narratives. Together, these organisations ensure that the system does not rely solely on suppressing undesirable information but actively **fills the information void with state-approved content**, reinforcing preferred interpretations of events and social realities.

Equally important is the role of **digital platforms and distribution channels**, particularly the consolidation of VK as Russia's primary social media environment. As Western platforms were restricted or marginalised from 2022 onwards, VK became a central node in the domestic information ecosystem, closely integrated with state communication systems such as GosPublics (the state-run system of official social media communities for public services) and e-government services like GosUslugi (the digital state services portal). This integration allows the state not only to disseminate content widely but also to embed its presence within everyday digital interactions. Following on from the "cradle to grave" principle, the digital pillar reinforces the digital components of life in a totalitarian state. Citizens engage with public institutions, access services, and consume information through interconnected platforms that are increasingly under state control, reinforcing a **closed informational loop that begins in the classroom and now extends across the digital life**.

The system is bolstered through the mobilisation of **private-sector actors**, including public relations agencies, advertising firms, and influencer networks. These actors play a crucial role in designing and implementing political communication campaigns, amplifying messaging, and creating the appearance of organic public engagement. By incorporating commercial techniques, Kiriyenko has been able to combine the authority of centralised control with the flexibility and sophistication of modern marketing practices. This hybrid model blurs the distinction between state and private communication, making propaganda less overt and more difficult to distinguish from ordinary digital content.

Underlying these structures is a continuous process of **data collection and sociological analysis**, which serves as the connective tissue of the system. Through surveys, behavioural monitoring, and real-time analysis of online interactions, the state gathers detailed information about public attitudes and responses. This data is used to inform both governance and communication strategies, enabling authorities to adjust policies, refine messaging, and anticipate potential sources of socio-political discontent. The result is once again a closed feedback loop: **information flows from society to the state through monitoring systems, is processed and analysed, and then returns to society in the form of targeted narratives and coordinated campaigns, the effects of which can be immediately measured and incorporated into subsequent actions. This method is Kiriyenko's value-added.**

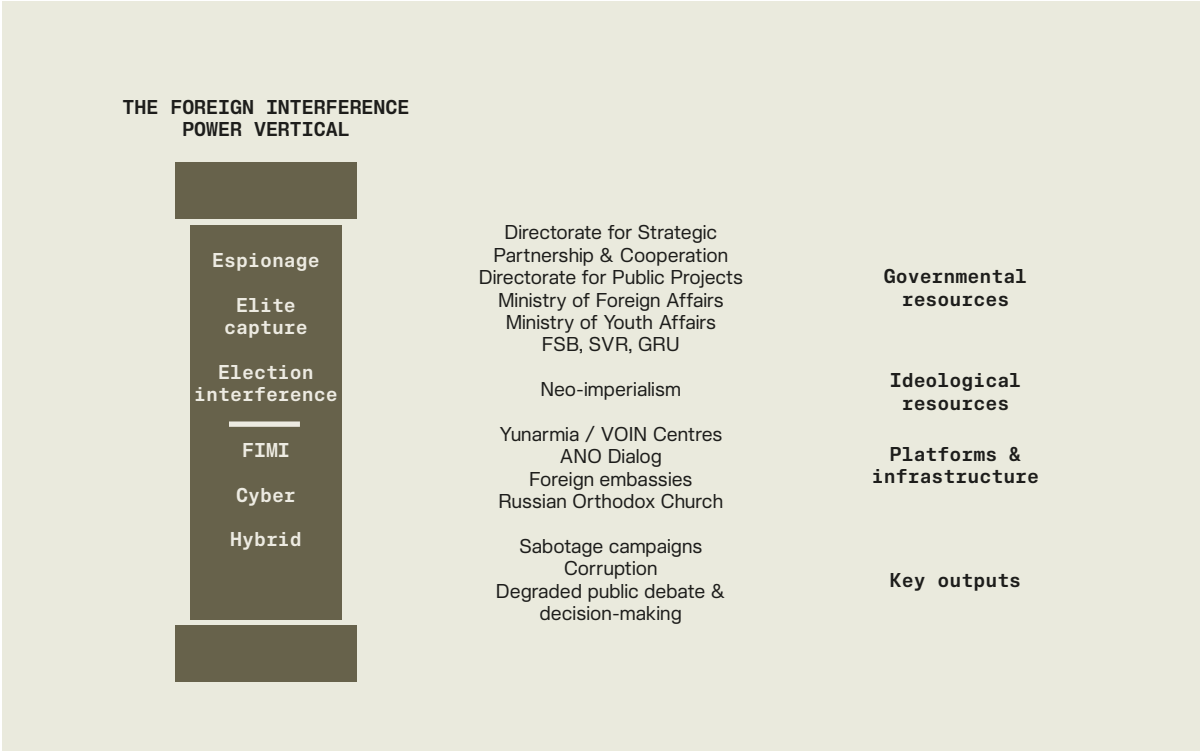
Specialised subsystems extend this logic into specific domains, most notably the monitoring of youth environments through ANO CISM. Initially presented as a mechanism for identifying harmful or dangerous online behaviour, this system is a tool for **ideological and behavioural surveillance of youth**, using artificial intelligence to analyse large volumes of data, assign risk profiles, and flag teenage

children for further scrutiny. Its integration with law enforcement databases illustrates the broader trajectory of the system: from monitoring and analysis toward **predictive and preventive control**. In many respects, **it is the opposite side of the "social elevator" concept proposed in the ideological-educational pillar: in this case, youth are flagged as hostile to the state while they are still in their infancy**.

The outputs of this digital governance architecture are multifaceted. On a functional level, it enables more rapid responses to citizen complaints and improves the coordination of state communication, contributing to the perception of administrative efficiency. Governors appear to do a better job, and if they are unresponsive to emerging problems, Kiriyenko knows about it. **Politically, this ensures the dominance of state narratives, limits the spread of alternative viewpoints, and allows for the management of electoral processes through coordinated information campaigns that combine official messaging with covert amplification**. At a deeper level, it contributes to the gradual integration of society into a state-controlled informational environment, in which **everyday interactions** - whether seeking public services, engaging on social media, or consuming entertainment - **are mediated by systems that simultaneously monitor and influence behaviour.** Taken together with the patriotic education pillar, digital governance strengthens and reinforces Kiriyenko's ambitions to fully control the political life of the Russian Federation.

2.2.3 THE FOREIGN INTERFERENCE POWER VERTICAL

The sixth chapter investigates the **foreign interference and external influence pillar** of Russia's contemporary power system, focusing on how Kiriyenko's architecture extends beyond domestic governance into a **multi-layered capability for international influence, hybrid operations, and geopolitical leverage**.
It demonstrates that Russia's external strategy is not conducted through traditional diplomacy alone, but through a **distributed ecosystem combining state corporations, intelligence agencies, intelligence-linked think tanks, digital propaganda systems, private contractors, and socio-cultural organisations**, coordinated—formally or informally—through Kiriyenko's stovepipe in the Presidential Administration.



The chapter demonstrates that foreign interference is not a separate policy domain, but an **extension of the same governance logic observed domestically**. This can be defined as neo-imperialistic behaviour in the post-Soviet region, and simple interest-based interference elsewhere. The techniques developed within Russia - data-driven communication, narrative management, digital amplification, and behavioural monitoring - are adapted and exported abroad. Kiriyenko has combined them with more traditional instruments of power, including energy diplomacy, intelligence operations, and institutional influence, to create a system that operates simultaneously across political, economic, informational, and social domains.

Financially, this pillar is both vast and opaque, spanning multiple sectors and funding streams. It is the hardest to assess in terms of budget. We estimate around **₽36 billion (€357m)** in expenditure per year in this pillar. Most of the core funding is likely co-funded by intelligence agencies through the Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation. We did not include the activities of corporate actors such as Rosatom in this estimate, though significant resources are likely dedicated to foreign interference.

The most visible corporate partner is **Rosatom**, whose international portfolio is valued at over **$139 billion**, with operations in more than 50 countries. Through long-term nuclear energy agreements, low-interest state-backed loans, and fuel supply contracts extending across decades, Rosatom provides Russia with a **durable mechanism of geopolitical influence**, particularly in developing and strategically positioned states.

Alongside this, substantial state resources are directed toward influence operations and soft power instruments, including:

- Espionage capabilities based at foreign embassies, managed by Kiriyenko's new Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation
- Large-scale propaganda and hybrid campaigns managed through Centre S (in the ICT Directorate) and associated structures
- Funding for private contractors such as the Social Design Agency (SDA) and Structura National Technologies
- Grants and sponsorships for militarised youth movements and international outreach organisations

The system described in this chapter can be understood as a **full-spectrum external influence architecture**, organised around several interconnected layers. Kiriyenko brings coherence to the tools now under his control and has likely become a key coordination hub for foreign interference.

At the highest level, **state corporations function as instruments of geopolitical leverage**. Kiriyenko's continued oversight of Rosatom, alongside his role within the Presidential Administration, allows him to bridge **economic statecraft and political influence operations**, particularly in regions such as the Arctic and the Middle East.

A second layer consists of **intelligence-linked analytical institutions**, most notably the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISI) and the Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation. Originally associated with the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), RISI continues to operate as a bridge between intelligence analysis and policy formulation. Its role is to generate strategic narratives and geopolitical frameworks, particularly regarding the "near abroad," where it promotes revisionist views of post-Soviet sovereignty and advocates reintegration into a Russian sphere of influence. The Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, on the other hand, offers Kiriyenko a vehicle to direct the intelligence activities of FSB, SVR and GRU officers based at embassies. These activities are most clearly seen in election interference in e.g. Moldova, Hungary and Armenia.

This integration is perhaps most visible in Russia's activities in **occupied territories and contested regions**, where domestic governance techniques are directly exported. The chapter details how systems developed for internal control—such as Dialog's digital governance infrastructure—have been deployed in occupied regions of Ukraine. These include the establishment of Regional Governance Centres, coordinated information campaigns, and tightly managed communication pipelines designed to shape local perceptions, legitimise Russian authority, and suppress alternative narratives. Budget allocations for these activities, including hundreds of millions of rubles annually for information infrastructure and several billion over multi-year periods, underscore the strategic importance of these territories as laboratories for **hybrid governance and influence operations**.

At the operational level, the system relies heavily on **outsourced implementation through private-sector actors**, particularly organisations such as the Social Design Agency (SDA) and Structura. While outsourcing foreign propaganda is not new (e.g. Prigozhin's empire), these entities represent a critical node in Kiriyenko's approach through the use of commercially structured organisations to conduct state-directed influence campaigns. Centre S within the ICT Directorate specifically coordinates the contribution of digital entities toward foreign interference. For example, SDA's activities, most notably "Operation Doppelgänger," demonstrate a highly systematised methodology consistent with Kiriyenko's system of data governance, combining:

- Media monitoring and vulnerability analysis
- Content production (articles, memes, videos, comments)
- Multi-platform dissemination through networks of fake and real accounts
- Algorithmic amplification and paid advertising
- Performance measurement through detailed KPIs

These campaigns operate at scale, generating millions of pieces of content and hundreds of millions of audience interactions, while maintaining plausible deniability for the state. Importantly, their logic mirrors domestic digital governance systems, applying the same principles of **data-driven communication and feedback loops** to exacerbate conflicts among foreign audiences. Since 2024, Centre S has increasingly added hybrid attacks to its hostile influence repertoire. **There is evidence to suggest that Kiriyenko now has oversight, and likely some form of limited coordination, over all foreign information influence operations, including operations that have previously been attributed to e.g. the GRU or SVR**.

Alongside these digital operations, the system incorporates **coercive and semi-covert elements**, including cyber activities linked to ANO CISM and affiliated patriotic hacker groups. These activities extend the reach of influence operations into the cyber domain, targeting infrastructure, elections, public institutions, and companies in adversary states. They also highlight the system's ability to mobilise non-traditional actors, including the volunteer and youth networks cultivated in the other pillars, within a broader framework of state-directed patriotic objectives.

Finally, the chapter highlights the role of **soft power and societal influence mechanisms**, which operate through a wide range of organisations. These include:

- The Russian Orthodox Church, which, although not under Kiriyenko, has overlaps and alliances with him to promote ideological narratives and builds networks abroad
- Militarised youth movements such as Yunarmiya and VOIN, which combine indoctrination with training and recruitment

- Quasi-humanitarian organisations like the Russian Red Cross, which function as instruments of state policy in occupied territories

Taken together, the chapter demonstrates that Kiriyenko now oversees a **multi-domain system of foreign interference**, in which economic leverage, intelligence, digital propaganda, sabotage, and social influence are tightly integrated. Where successful – and there is limited evidence of success – the outputs of this are intended to enable the Russian Federation to:

- Secure long-term geopolitical influence through strategic industries
- Shape political processes and public opinion in the "near abroad" for the purpose of restoring Russian freedom of action over these territories
- Destabilise adversaries through espionage, disinformation, hybrid, and cyber operations
- Integrate occupied territories into its political and informational space
- Uphold and promote ideological narratives that challenge Western norms and institutions

In strategic terms, this pillar represents the **external projection of the same governance model observed domestically**. Just as the digital and ideological systems within Russia seek to manage society through continuous monitoring and influence, the foreign interference architecture seeks to extend this logic beyond Russia's borders, shaping the international environment in ways that support regime stability and geopolitical ambition, and proving to its indoctrinated citizens that the "Russian model" remains powerful. Kiriyenko's control over this pillar is substantial and increasingly encroaches on the traditional domain of the siloviki.[11]

2.3 IMPACT ON THE LABOUR MARKET

To complement the organisational evidence presented in this report, we collected and analysed a CV-based labour dataset from HeadHunter, Russia's largest job-seeking platform[12], following the curriculum vitae analysis approach developed by Poliakoff and Kling.[13] The purpose of this analysis was to reconstruct how the ecosystem of Kiriyenko-linked entities grew over time, how its staffing capacity developed before and after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and how its organisations are embedded in wider labour markets.

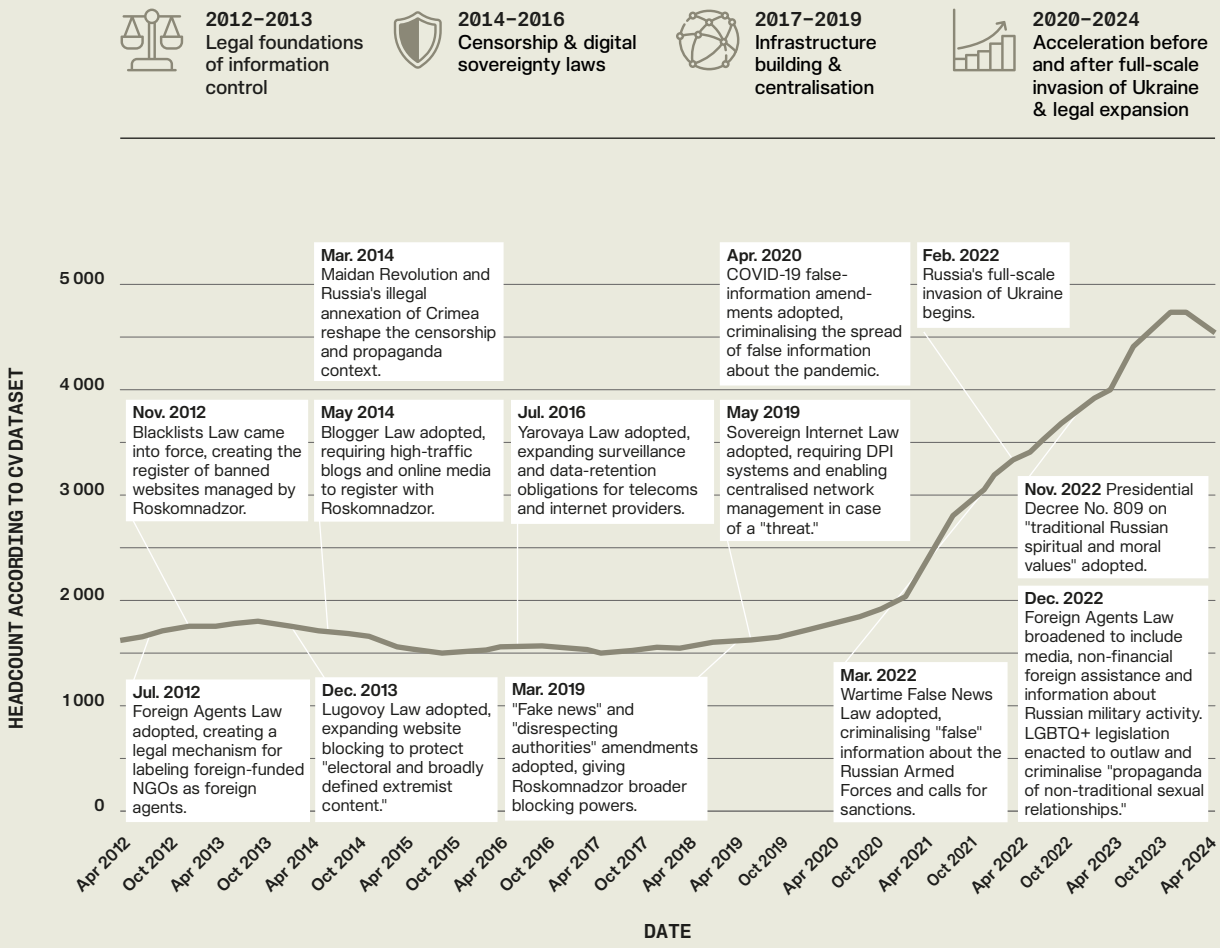
[11] Siloviki refers to individuals who come from the state's security, military, intelligence, and law-enforcement institutions. The siloviki are often described as a powerful elite network of current and former security officials who hold influential positions in government, state-owned companies, and policymaking. Kiriyenko is widely regarded as not belonging to this group.

[12] Bryzgalova & Petlevoy, 2019

[13] Poliakoff & Kling, 2026

CV-BASED HEADCOUNT GROWTH OVER TIME

Ecosystem organisations associated with Kiriyenko's infrastructure April 2012 – April 2024



CV-based observable headcount of selected organisations in Kiriyenko's ecosystem. Lines indicate the number of unique CV holders reporting active employment in each organisation-month.

The headcount trajectories show a broad and rapid expansion of the ecosystem after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. At the same time, the figures suggest that the full-scale invasion accelerated rather than initiated this process. Several organisations show substantial growth already during the COVID-19 period. This is particularly visible in the ANO Dialog infrastructure, where ANO Dialog, ANO Dialog Regions, and Regional Governance Centres expanded in 2020-21 and remained at high levels thereafter. The strongest growth is not located in the central ANO Dialog entity alone, but in its regional and governance-centre components. This points to a territorially distributed and bureaucratised model of communication governance that was effectively in place by the full-scale invasion.

A second cluster consists of civic-patriotic and youth-oriented organisations, including Znanie, Russia - Land of Opportunities, Bolshaya Peremena, and More Than Travel. Their growth trajectories indicate that the post-2022 expansion of the information influence infrastructure overlapped with broader systems of public education, youth mobilisation, and civic engagement. These organisations should therefore not be interpreted merely as peripheral cultural or educational projects. In the CV data, they appear as major staffing environments within the wider ecosystem.

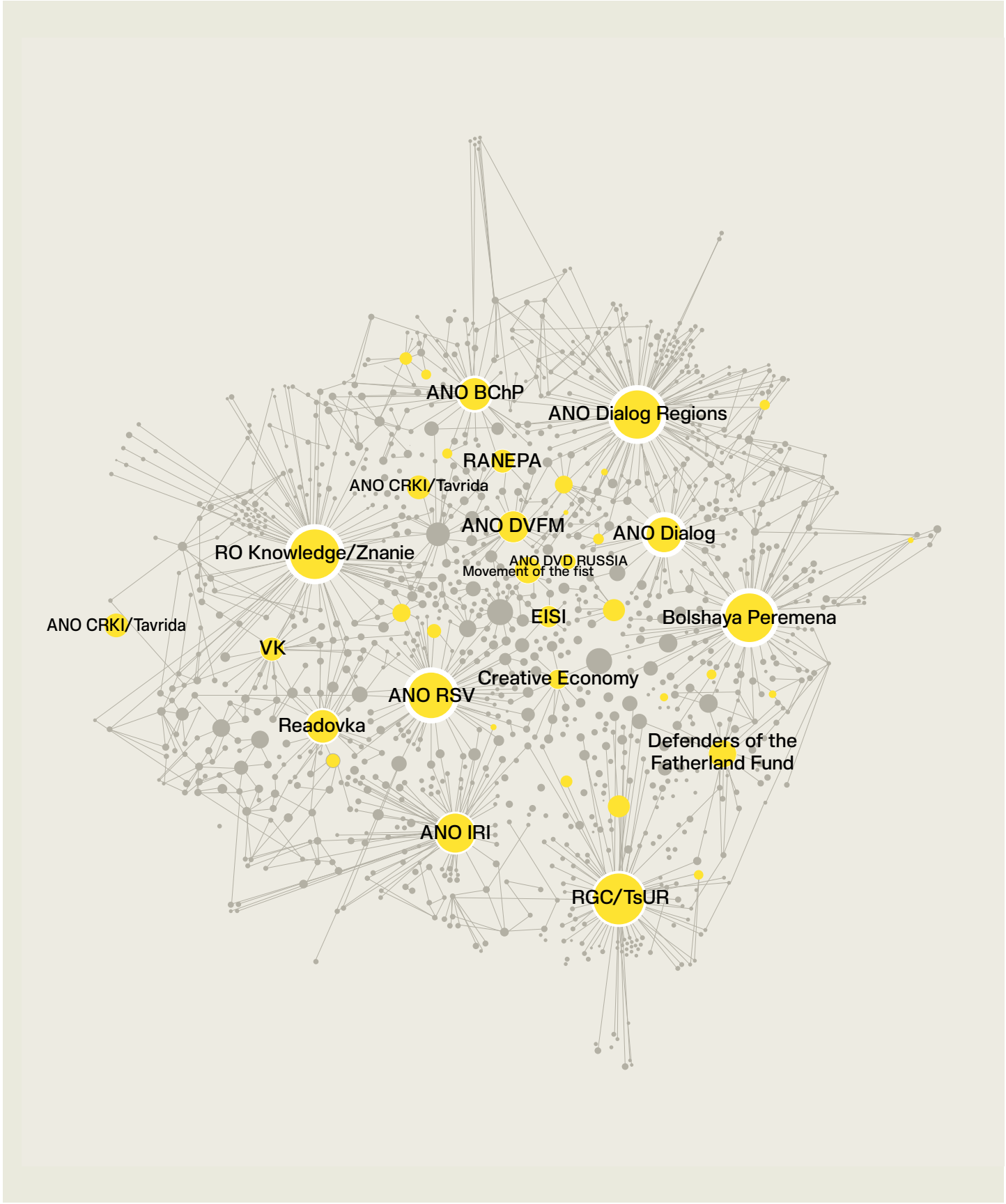
A third pattern is project-based staffing. The Directorate of the World Youth Festival shows the clearest event-cycle trajectory, with a rapid build-up in 2023 and early 2024 followed by decline after the event period. More Than Travel and the Defenders of the Fatherland Fund also show rapid post-2022 expansion, although their trajectories appear more institutionally sustained than the festival directorate. These cases suggest that parts of the ecosystem operate through temporary, mission-specific, or campaign-like organisational forms rather than only through permanent bureaucratic structures.

The media and digital-production segment follows a related but distinct trajectory. Readovka grows sharply after 2022, while the Internet Development Institute shows a longer prehistory followed by acceleration in the early 2020s. Together, these cases indicate that wartime expansion affected both media-facing organisations and the broader state-linked infrastructure for digital content, public communication, and civic mobilisation. The ecosystem was therefore not only enlarged after February 2022. It was also diversified across administrative, media, youth, cultural, and digital-production fields.

We compared self-reported CV data with leaked headcount figures from Kiriyenko's office (table below). For several organisations, the CV dataset captures a substantial share of the expected headcount. For example, the CV-based estimate captures 79.3% of the expected headcount for ANO "RSV", 59.1% for ANO "IRI", and 55.6% for ANO "Dialog-Regions". In other cases, such as ANO "Great Change" and ANO "BChP", the CV count exceeds the expected figure, likely reflecting high staff turnover or differences between formal employment and CV-reported affiliation. Conversely, organisations such as CISM, EISI, and the World Youth Festival Directorate are underrepresented in the CV data. This variation confirms that CV-based headcounts cannot be treated as official workforce statistics. Rather, their value lies instead in showing systematic patterns of observable labour traces: when organisations grow, which organisations expand together, how individuals move between organisations, and how different components of the ecosystem become visible in reported career histories.

No.	Entity	CV dataset headcount	Data leak headcount	Difference, CV - leak	CV as % of leak
1	ANO "RSV"	341	430	-89	79.3%
2	ANO "IRI"	156	264	-108	59.1%
3	ANO "Dialog-Regions"	1372	2,468	-1,096	55.6%
4	ANO "Great Change"	326	126	+200	258.7%
5	ANO "CRKI Tavrida"	n/a	331	n/a	n/a
6	ANO "CISM"	40	158	-118	25.3%
7	ANO "BChP"	96	56	+40	171.4%
8	ANO "DVD Russia"	n/a	50	n/a	n/a
9	ANO "Creative Economy"	25	23	+2	108.7%
10	ANO "CZ Mashuk"	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
11	ANO "World Youth Festival Directorate"	82	269	-187	30.5%
12	ANO "Revival"	n/a	7	n/a	n/a
13	ANO "Integration"	n/a	56	n/a	n/a
14	ANO "CEMAC"	5	9	-4	55.6%
15	ANO "EISI"	19	110	-91	17.3%

A labour market network analysis adds a second layer to this picture. We transformed the employment history data into a company-level network. Two companies are connected when they appear within the same CV-based career history. The network therefore does not show formal cooperation, hierarchy, or coordination. It shows labour-market proximity: the extent to which organisations are connected through overlapping pools of personnel and career trajectories.



Kiriyenko ecosystem in the labour-market network. Nodes represent companies or employer entities; edges represent shared CV-based career histories. Yellow nodes indicate organisations in the Kiriyenko ecosystem; Khaki nodes indicate other organisations. Node size indicates relative prominence in the CV-derived network. Note that the same layout is used for the overview and spotlight maps.

The network figures suggest that the organisations in the ecosystem do not occupy sharply separated labour-market spheres. Instead, they form a dense and highly integrated organisational space structured by several major hubs, including ANO Dialog Regions, ANO Dialog, RGC/TsUR, Znanie, Bolshaya Peremena, ANO RSV, and the Internet Development Institute. This pattern indicates that state communication, youth mobilisation, civic-patriotic programming, and media/content-production infrastructures draw on overlapping pools of labour rather than distinct and self-contained professional sectors. Particularly notable is the structural prominence of ANO Dialog Regions and other territorially distributed governance actors. This suggests that the regionalised communication apparatus may be more important to the ecosystem's labour infrastructure than a narrow focus on central organisations alone would suggest.

The spotlight maps further show that individual organisations are embedded in wider labour-market environments rather than isolated sectoral niches. ANO Dialog occupies a brokerage position between the regional-governance infrastructure, youth-oriented projects, and state-corporate or digital actors. More broadly, the maps suggest that the ecosystem is held together less by discrete institutional blocks than by overlapping patterns of personnel circulation across governance, media, education, mobilisation, and digital communication. All of this serves to confirm two key theses: that Kiriyenko's 50+ entities should be treated as a single, holistic system; and that this system is producing a cadre of indoctrinated professionals to staff these entities.

Taken together, the CV-based headcount reconstruction and labour-market network analysis show that the ecosystem was not hastily assembled after February 2022. Rather, key components expanded from around August 2020, grew through the COVID-19 period, and were already positioned to scale by the time of the full-scale invasion. The post-2022 period should therefore be understood as an acceleration and consolidation of an already emerging infrastructure. The evidence also shows that this infrastructure is not just a list of organisations, but a connected labour-market formation: a cluster of companies, state-linked communication bodies, media outlets, civic-patriotic initiatives, educational platforms, and digital/public-communication actors linked through shared personnel trajectories. This makes the ecosystem analytically significant not only as an organisational field, but as a distinct labour-market infrastructure for state communication, mobilisation, and information influence.

This additional set of evidence confirms a driving thesis of this report: Kiriyenko's "stovepipe" is not just a loose group of entities under one man's arm-length control. It is a coherent, holistic labour market. Indeed, it creates this loyal labour market through education and training programmes. And most importantly, these civil servants facilitate the reproduction of the system of ideological conditioning; put simply, they help to produce more of the same types of people. The results therefore show a generational change that is built to last beyond the lifetimes of Putin and even Kiriyenko. The impact on the labour market is therefore a combination of the ideological *products* of Kiriyenko's entities, of restricted social mobility channelled through these entities, and the reproduction of a certain type of individual that can thrive in this labour market.



3 SERGEY VLADILENOVICH KIRIYENKO

This chapter introduces Sergey Kiriyenko through a biographical sketch. While the focus of this report is on the entities that Kiriyenko controls, it is useful to outline the man who built and maintains the architecture. Such a sketch is made more difficult by a seeming lack of personality or ideology. Kiriyenko is known for being elusive. He has at different times been a communist, a free-market entrepreneur, and a reformer before evolving into the architect of Putin's totalitarian state. It is therefore perhaps most useful to chart what is known about him in terms of the nicknames given to him by Russian media in an effort to characterise this otherwise ethereal personality.



Putin and Kiriyenko[14]



First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov with Putin and Kiriyenko.[15]

14 Photo accessed from: Maksimovich, 2026

15 Photo accessed from: AnewZ, 2026

3.1 "HUMAN COMPUTER"

Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko was born in 1962 in the USSR in the Black Sea town of Sokhumi, now the capital of Abkhazia, a self-proclaimed independent state he frequently visits and tries to influence to this day.[16] He was born into a family of **prominent Soviet academics and dedicated career communists**. His grandfather, Yakov Israitel (also spelled Izraitel), was a loyal communist and member of the Cheka death squad who allegedly knew Vladimir Lenin, who reportedly awarded him with an inscribed pistol for his service to the Party.[17] In the 1930s, he served as the head of the KGB border guard on Russia's southern frontier and also headed the Sokhumi branch of the USSR State Bank.[18]

Kiriyenko's father, **Vladilen Israitel** was a Doctor of Philosophy and a distinguished professor in Gorky (now Nizhny Novgorod) and served as the head of the Department of Political Science at the Nizhny Novgorod State Academy of Water Transport.[19] A biographical sketch on Kiriyenko published in Globalsecurity.org claims there are rumours he may have advanced much higher up the communist party ladder if it hadn't been for his Jewish surname.[20] Little is reported about Kiriyenko's mother, **Larisa Kiriyenko**, other than that she was affiliated with the Odesa Economic Institute.[21] In the 1970s, Kiriyenko moved to Sochi with his mother after she divorced his father, and he took her surname Kiriyenko, which is Ukrainian in origin.[22]

In 1984 Kiriyenko graduated with honours from the **Gorky Institute of Water Transport Engineers**. He undertook his mandatory military service immediately after graduating. He was a member of the Communist Party and worked as a foreman at the **Krasnoye Sormovo** shipyard which produced parts for nuclear submarines.[23] From 1986-1991, he was the secretary of the Komsomol committee of the shipyard and the **first secretary of the Gorky regional committee of the Komsomol Communist Youth League**.[24] During this time he earned the first of several nicknames that would follow him, "human computer," due to his reputation for high-speed, calculated, and analytical decision-making.[25]

In mid-1991, just months before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kiriyenko was admitted into the business program at the Academy of National Economy in Moscow, where he spent a couple of years studying the effects of privatization on Russia's banking industry. He served as General Director of **AMK Concern**, a Komsomol-run trading and services company where he and his circle of friends successfully traded in staple goods during the post-Soviet economic shift, demonstrating that he was willing to embrace the opportunities afforded by market liberalisation.

16 Chukharova, 2025; Georgian-Abkhaz Context, 2025

17 Spisok-Putina, n.d.-a; GlobalSecurity, 2022; Yasmann, 2006; Proekt, n.d.-a

18 Yasmann, 2006

19 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1998; Proekt, n.d.-a

20 GlobalSecurity, 2022

21 TAdviser, n.d.

22 Kremlin Roadmap, n.d.

23 GlobalSecurity, 2022; Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, n.d.

24 Spisok-Putina, n.d.-a

25 GlobalSecurity, 2022

3.2 "KINDER SURPRISE"

Starting in 1994, Kiriyenko was a member of the **Presidential Council on Industrial Policy and Entrepreneurship**, which marked his entry into Moscow political circles, and he was also the **Chairman of the Management Board of Garantia Bank**, a bank he helped found. Under Kiriyenko's leadership, Garantia Bank handled pension funds for the Nizhny Novgorod region.

The bank was closely associated with regional authorities and played a key role in local financial structures. Kiriyenko's career progression became increasingly tied to **Boris Nemtsov (Nemtsov),** governor of the Nizhny Novgorod region at the time. Kiriyenko followed Nemtsov from regional politics to Moscow's world of business and finance as a loyal protégé. Kiriyenko was an active member of the Union of Rightist Forces, which was co-chaired by Nemtsov. Nemtsov would later become a fervent Putin critic and was assassinated in 2015.

Nemtsov acted as a political mentor to Kiriyenko, facilitating his rapid rise from a regional banker to unlikely Prime Minister.[26] From 1996–1997, Kiriyenko served as the President of NORSI-Oil (Nizhegorodnoftorgsintez), which was a major oil refinery company based in the Nizhny Novgorod region.[27] Following his leadership at NORSI-Oil, the Nemtsov-Kiriyenko partnership continued on a national level when Nemtsov moved to Moscow to become First Deputy Prime Minister to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in 1997. That same year, Kiriyenko was appointed **first deputy fuel and energy minister**.[28] The association between the two men is often cited as a key example of "crony capitalism" or the rise of so-called "young reformers" in post-Soviet Russia.[29]



Yeltsin and Kiriyenko circa 1998.[30]

[26] Sharafutdinova, 2011; U.S. Department of Justice, 2002; Insikt Group, 2022

[27] International Atomic Energy Agency, n.d.

[28] Yasmann, 2006

[29] Seibt, 2022

[30] Photo: picture-alliance/dpa/ITAR-TASS, accessed from: Rescheto, 2016

Kiriyenko is perhaps most widely known in Russia by the nickname "Kinder Surprise," a reference to chocolate eggs containing toys. This nickname was given to him when he **became the youngest Prime Minister in Russian history** at age 35 in March 1998. Unfortunately for Kiriyenko, the appointment seems to have been a setup. Just a few months after his appointment, the Russian economic crisis hit and, five days later, Kiriyenko resigned along with his entire cabinet.[31] His swift departure may perhaps be interpreted as a political sacrifice for Yeltsin, demonstrating above all his loyalty, a quality that became a key ingredient in his future career success.[32]



Kiriyenko and Yeltsin circa 1998.[33]

In that short period as Prime Minister, **Kiriyenko is reported to have played a key role in the appointment of Vladimir Putin as Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB)**, the successor to the KGB. This appointment, occurring just before the August 1998 financial crisis that forced Kiriyenko to resign, is widely viewed in hindsight as the event that launched Putin toward the presidency. Within roughly a year, Putin moved from FSB Director to Prime Minister and eventually Acting President.[34]

The disappearance of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) July 1998 loan tranche may also have played a role in perceptions of Kiriyenko's loyalty. Shortly before Russia's financial collapse, $4.8 billion sent by the IMF to the Russian central bank was diverted, stolen, and allegedly laundered abroad by Russian officials and connected financial institutions.[35] While rumours long circulated of Kiriyenko's involvement, in 2004 Novaya Gazeta directly accused Kiriyenko of embezzling the funds. Kiriyenko denied the accusations and successfully sued the newspaper for libel.[36] Kiriyenko's ability to cover for such a major theft also likely contributed to his perceived loyalty.

Hence, Kiriyenko's career didn't end in 1998. He continued to actively engage in politics. In December 1998, he founded and registered the all-Russian public political movement "New Force," and he ran for mayor of Moscow in 1999, placing second.[37] Together with his old friend Nemtsov and other "reformers," Kiriyenko formed the **all-Russian public political movement Union of Right Forces (SPS).** Kiriyenko led the party in the 1999 legislative elections, which finished fourth, receiving 29 seats. In December of the same year, Kiriyenko became the leader of the SPS faction when he was elected to the State Duma.[38] While Kiriyenko was considered a reformer like Nemtsov, he sought to be seen as more pragmatic, technocratic, and less boisterous. Kiriyenko also signalled his willingness to work within the system.

31 Fishman, 2016; Yasmann, 2006; Spisok-Putina, n.d.-a

32 Actualcomment.ru, 2016; Pertsev, 2023c

33 Photo accessed from: AnewZ, 2026

34 Bloomberg, 2024

35 Koriukin, 1998

36 Lenta.ru, 2007

37 GlobalSecurity, 2022

38 BBC, 2018



Kiriyenko the liberal reformer. From the left: Boris Nemtsov, Sergey Kiriyenko, Irina Khakamada, Konstantin Titov, Yegor Gaidar and Anatoly Chubais during the creation of the Union of Rightist Forces in 1999.[39]

This period is perhaps best characterised by a mixture of loyalty and political flexibility that would earn Yeltsin and Putin's trust, learn from (and later distance himself from) Nemtsov, and allow him to follow Putin's Presidency into its authoritarian and subsequent totalitarian phases.[40] Perhaps Kiriyenko's greatest demonstration of flexibility was transitioning from a 1990s "liberal reformer" to a "technocrat" within Putin's new administration.

3.3 "NUKE SURPRISE"

In May 2000, shortly after becoming president, Putin divided Russia into seven districts, each led by a presidential representative, which served to strengthen central control over the regions. Kiriyenko was appointed **plenipotentiary of the President of the Russian Federation in the Volga Federal District**.[41] The Volga Federal District was strategically important for the Kremlin; it comprises several non-Slav republics, including the predominantly Muslim Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and also houses the Russian Federal Nuclear Centre in Sarov, Nizhnegorodskaya Oblast, which is responsible for designing nuclear weapons.[42] Kiriyenko was the only one out of the seven envoys who didn't belong to Putin's inner circle, which raised some eyebrows among sceptics. Yet he successfully brought the regions, including Tatarstan, under greater Kremlin control during his five years in the role.[43]

Putin also appointed Kiriyenko **head of the State Commission for Chemical Disarmament** in May 2001, partially funded by the U.S. and responsible for overseeing Russia's compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including the destruction of its massive Soviet-era chemical stockpile.[44] Reviews of his success in this role are mixed, yet he mostly avoided scandals and dodged the blame for any failures. In fact, Kiriyenko's nuclear legacy arguably cemented his future with Putin.[45]

39 Photo accessed from: Pertsev, 2023c

40 Pertsev, 2022a; Pertsev 2022b

41 Petrov, 2002

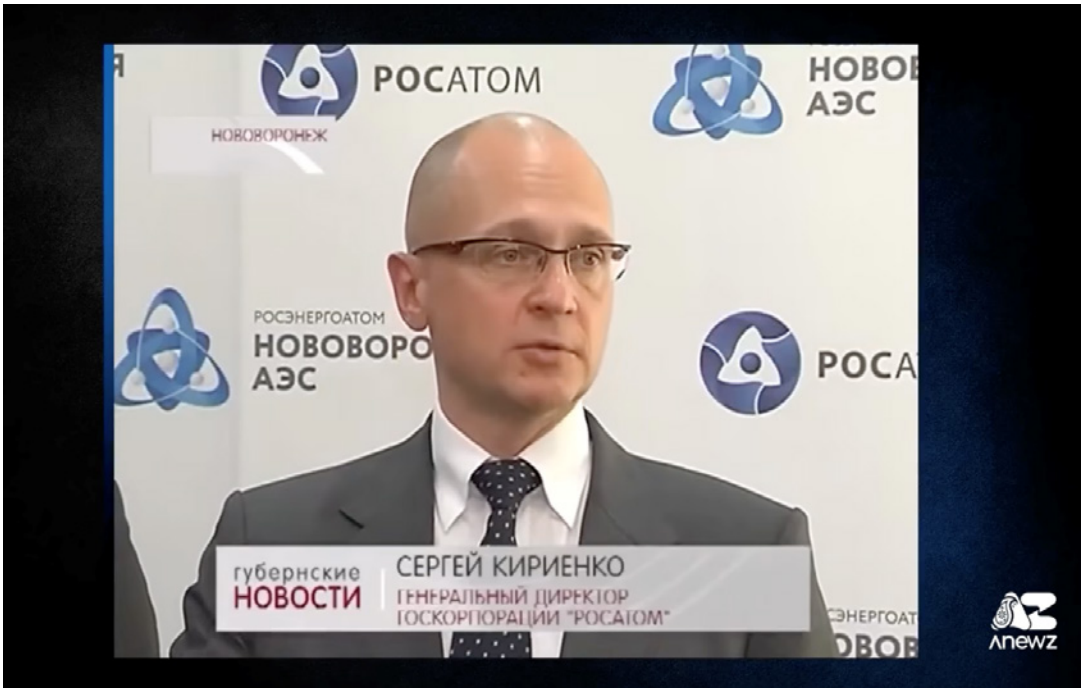
42 Wheeler, 2011

43 Insikt Group, 2022; Pertsev, 2022a

44 GlobalSecurity, 2022; Kaliadine & Arbatov, 2005; Yasmann, 2006

45 GlobalSecurity, 2022; Bellona, 2008

In 2005, Putin appointed Kiriyenko head of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency, and in 2007, he became the **Director-General of the State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom**, a position he held until 2016. Rosatom is a state-owned company which runs all nuclear facilities in Russia. It is a vertically integrated holding company that manages the entire civil nuclear fuel cycle, including uranium mining, enrichment, fuel production, nuclear power plant construction, and power generation. This powerful role earned Kiriyenko yet another nickname in the media, this time "nuke surprise." Because Kiriyenko was a loyalist to Putin rather than a long-time nuclear insider, he was trusted to run the company, which often acted as an arm of the state. His success in transforming the nuclear sector into a profitable, expanding, and internationally recognised entity made him indispensable.



Kiriyenko circa 2005.[46]

Kiriyenko's main task as head of Rosatom was to streamline operations and restore state control over Russia's fragmented nuclear sector. **Kiriyenko reorganised Rostom as a state corporation in 2007.** This change from agency to state corporation granted Rosatom greater autonomy in management and financing. His early initiatives at Rosatom focused on internal restructuring to cut administrative overlaps and reduce reliance on fragmented military-industrial chains for civilian nuclear projects. Critics noted the reforms prioritised state consolidation over transparency.

[46] Photo accessed from: AnewZ, 2026

Russia's nuclear industry received significant state investment under Kiriyenko.[47] This highlights Kiriyenko's successful transition from a young reformer to a powerful figure managing the nuclear sector and aiming to fulfil Putin's ambition of making Russia an energy superpower. Russia's consolidation of its domestic nuclear industry and vertical integration under Rosatom provided Kiriyenko (and the Kremlin writ large) with a strategic tool.[48] By proposing and co-constructing nuclear power plants in allied countries, Russia gained a foothold in strategic regions, transferred technological know-how, and built networks of scientists, engineers, managers, economists, entrepreneurs, and diplomats, domestically and abroad. In 2010, Kiriyenko was awarded with Order "For Merit to the Fatherland" IV degree and given title "Hero of Russia" in 2018 for his role in the development of the Russian nuclear industry.

Rosatom influences Russian domestic politics through its unique status as a "state within a state," wielding significant power over national infrastructure, the military-industrial complex, and the country's Arctic strategy. Rosatom manages several "closed" scientific and industrial cities (known as "nuclear cities" or ZATOs) where it is the primary employer. These cities serve as controlled environments where the corporation can effectively mobilise voters and ensure high support for the regime during federal elections. Rosatom's domestic operations are used to reinforce state ideology and ensure the loyalty of its vast workforce. Rosatom also holds the right of legislative initiative, allowing the corporation to draft the very laws that govern the nuclear sector and, by extension, influence the economic and regulatory landscape that supports the current political order.[49] Such patterns are repeated in Kiriyenko's work in the Presidential Administration.

Kiriyenko remains chairman of the Rosatom supervisory board and hence continues to wield considerable influence over the organisation. Rosatom aligned itself with Moscow's war economy since 2022, receiving state support and avoiding Western sanctions due to its international nuclear market dependence. Despite losing some Western markets, Rosatom nevertheless adapted to geopolitical shifts and remains a powerful vector of Russian influence. There are suggestions that Rosatom is expanding its operations beyond nuclear, shifting its customer base, and becoming an active military participant in Moscow's war: "These are the corporate achievements that are less likely to appear in the company's glossy PR." [50]

Kiriyenko's role at Rosatom gave him and his loyal team valuable experience working in the regions (including with elections), with the media, putting pressure on dissenters, and forging loyalty.[51] Additionally, he and his circle cemented ties with top foreign counterparts around the world, bringing him closer to the worlds of diplomacy and foreign intelligence. Kiriyenko established a reputation as a technocratic administrator enamoured with theories of new public management and social engineering, having tested them out through total oversight of the nuclear sector during a period of profound transition.[52]

47 Yasmann, 2006; Fishman, 2016

48 Bellona, 2022

49 Minin & Vlček, 2017

50 Nikitin & Gorchakov, 2025; Digges, 2025

51 Slivyak, 2015

52 Pertsev, 2016



Putin and Kiriyenko mid-2000s.[53]

Kiriyenko transformed Rosatom into a high-tech "digital giant," creating a blueprint for the technocratic governance he later brought to the Presidential Administration.[54] Kiriyenko's digitalization of Rosatom established a dual-track system of control: one focused on the physical surveillance of strategic populations and another on creating a national infrastructure for data sovereignty and state-led internet management.[55] Under Kiriyenko, Rosatom developed proprietary software, supercomputers, and predictive analytics. He took this industrialized view of technology to the Presidential Administration, treating public opinion as a technical variable to be manipulated via algorithms rather than just speeches.[56]

Interestingly, Rosatom's construction of data centres paired with nuclear power plants (NPPs) also provides the physical backbone for Russia's "Sovereign Internet" project, hosting the hardware needed for state-led censorship and data storage.[57] Additionally, the digital capabilities Kiriyenko first oversaw at Rosatom would become a blueprint for the infrastructure behind Russia's propagandist networks, which use AI to mass-produce false narratives and penetrate Western language models to change worldwide AI outputs.[58]

53 Photo accessed from: AnewZ, 2026

54 Rossokhovatsky & Khvostunova, 2019; Slivyak, 2015; Gaaze, n.d.

55 Pertsev, 2019

56 Rosatom, 2025

57 International Partnership for Human Rights & Global Diligence LLP, 2023

58 Rosatom Smart Utilities, 2024; TAdviser, 2026; Rossokhovatsky & Khvostunova, 2019; Newport & Jankowicz, 2025; Sadeghi & Blachez, 2025

Kiriyenko gained key experience at Rosatom which would serve him well in the Presidential Administration. This includes the following:

- **EXPERIENCE WITH ELECTIONS**: Kiriyenko developed highly effective "administrative resource" tactics to ensure high voter turnout in nuclear-industry regions, a model he later scaled nationally for the 2018 presidential election. Rosatom's vast, disciplined network and extensive voter databases provided the Kremlin with a mobilization tool (particularly in remote nuclear towns) that did not require additional financial resources.
- **REGIONAL ELITE TIES**: By overseeing "closed cities" known as ZATOs, and major industrial hubs, Kiriyenko developed direct working relationships with regional leaders long before he officially became their Kremlin supervisor.
- **SECURITY-POLITICAL SYNERGY**: Every nuclear facility and ZATO is under permanent, heavy surveillance by the FSB's specialised directorates to prevent espionage and sabotage. Kiriyenko had to work daily with these security units to manage access, internal investigations, and state secrets. Managing these cities required a considered approach where corporate goals met rigid security protocols. He learned how to navigate the FSB's "total transparency and coercion" model while maintaining his own technocratic "managed complexity."
- **EXPERIENCE WITH COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE CULTURE**: Operating in a hermetically sealed environment at Rosatom taught Kiriyenko the value of information control and the mechanics of preventing leaks, a skill he later applied to managing the Kremlin's domestic narratives.
- **FOREIGN POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEPENDENCIES**: By securing nuclear contracts in countries throughout Europe like Hungary and Slovakia, the Middle East (particularly Iran), and Africa, Kiriyenko gathered intelligence on foreign energy vulnerabilities and built long-term dependencies that the Kremlin uses for geopolitical leverage.
- **POLICY OF THE "NEAR ABROAD":** As head of Rosatom, Kiriyenko transformed the corporation into a primary instrument of Russian soft and hard power within the former Soviet Republics. By building nuclear power plants (NPPs) in neighbouring countries, he forged long-term, multi-decade technological and economic dependencies that tethered these nations to Russia, opening them to elite capture and espionage opportunities.
- **USE OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) TO REACH POLITICAL GOALS:** At Rosatom, Kiriyenko implemented rigid corporate structures to manage a sprawling empire of nuclear subsidiaries. Upon moving to the Presidential Administration, he translated these business metrics into political tools to evaluate and train regional leaders. He also imported Rosatom's internal talent-spotting and training mechanisms to create a new generation of federal-level managers.
- **EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTING DIGITIZATION EFFORTS:** Rosatom's specialised software platforms (Smart City platforms) served as prototypes for broader national systems of digital repression now seen in Russia under Kiriyenko's watchful eye.

We discuss Rosatom's unique role in foreign interference later in chapter 6.1.

3.4 "GREY CARDINAL"

In October 2016, Kiriyenko **moved from head of Rosatom to First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration.** Kiriyenko was seen as an outsider for the job and seems to have been Putin's personal choice, likely due to his alliance with the powerful **Kovalchuk family,** specifically Yuri Kovalchuk (widely known as Putin's personal banker and ideologue), coupled with his experience at Rosatom.[59] He earned the nickname "Grey Cardinal" as a result of his immense behind-the-scenes influence and his role as a key political strategist within Putin's administration. Like his predecessors, Vladislav Surkov (who was also widely called the "Grey Cardinal") and Vladislav Volodin, Kiriyenko operates as the Kremlin's quiet puppet master rather than as a public-facing politician. He is essentially one of the most powerful unelected officials in the Kremlin.



Yuri Kovalchuk (Kovalchuk) is a banking and media magnate and close friend of Putin. According to the Panama Papers, Kovalchuk held the wedding of Putin's daughter, Katerina Tikhonova, at one of his resorts. Kovalchuk is also considered "Putin's banker." In 1996 he and Putin established a notorious dacha cooperative called "Ozero" near Priozersk; all its members became billionaires or high-ranking officials. Rossiya Bank, led by Kovalchuk, amassed profitable assets benefiting Putin's circle and strengthening the ruling group. The bank, focusing on the domestic market and Crimea, was linked to criminal groups and faced sanctions from the U.S., Canada, and the EU.[60]

Yuri Kovalchuk.[61]

59 Yuri Kovalchuk is considered the patron of Kiriyenko, having reportedly persuaded Putin to bring Kiriyenko into the Presidential Administration.

60 Spisok-Putina, n.d.-b

61 Photo accessed from: Spisok-Putina, n.d.-b

International media reports and analyses note a close professional relationship between Kiriyenko and Yuri Kovalchuk, and Kovalchuk is widely seen as Kiriyenko's key patron who facilitated his rise in the Presidential Administration. Kiriyenko manages the Kremlin's political and ideological blocks, while Kovalchuk provides part of the media infrastructure (through his National Media Group and VK Company) to broadcast these narratives. Kovalchuk is known for his anti-liberal and anti-Western views which Kiriyenko now appears to share. Kiriyenko and Kovalchuk's relationship solidified during Kiriyenko's decade-long tenure as head of Rosatom, during which he seems to have replaced Nemtsov as Kiriyenko's political cover.

Mikhail Kovalchuk (Yuri's brother) leads the Kurchatov Institute, Russia's primary nuclear research facility, creating a bridge between Kiriyenko's state management and the Kovalchuks' institutional interests. Boris Kovalchuk (Yuri's son) also worked under Sergey Kiriyenko at Rosatom earlier in his career. The alliance between Kovalchuk and Kiriyenko is further cemented through the placement of their sons in leadership positions at VK Company. Vladimir Kiriyenko (Sergey's son) serves as the CEO of VK, while Stepan Kovalchuk (grandson of Yuri's brother Mikhail) serves as Senior Vice President for media strategy and content. Stepan Kovalchuk is also the creator of the Russian company involved in creating content favourable to the Kremlin, **DA-TEAM**.[62] Kiriyenko has advocated for business deals, such as the restructuring of Yandex, that favour consortiums tied to Kovalchuk, consolidating their joint control over the Russian internet. [63]

While the Kovalchuk-Kiriyenko alliance is strong, experts note that even Kovalchuk's protection has limits. Media reports claim the siloviki (security elites) have historically competed with Kovalchuk for influence over the Russian population. While Kovalchuk controls the National Media Group and VK Company, the security services maintain their own channels of influence, leading to frequent clashes over domestic internet censorship and media strategy. Some media reports claim that Kovalchuk's political rivalry with Russia's security services is intensifying as the war against Ukraine and its economic impact exacerbate clan conflicts. It is therefore rumoured that, since Kovalchuk is the primary patron of Kiriyenko, the security services target Kiriyenko to undermine Kovalchuk's power. This includes cases of the detention of Kiriyenko's appointees without prior notice to the Presidential Administration. In addition to internal infighting, some reports indicate that Kovalchuk may eventually prioritise the advancement of his own son (Boris Kovalchuk) over Kiriyenko, potentially making Kiriyenko's current position more vulnerable in the long term.[64]

As First Deputy Chief of Staff, Kiriyenko is responsible for managing Russia's domestic politics. He has implemented several major political strategies that have transformed Russia's domestic landscape and its influence abroad. Kiriyenko's experience with elections at Rosatom served him well in the Presidential Administration. In Russia, **state-owned companies like Rosatom often run election campaigns in cities where they operate and/or have any economic interest** (in Rosatom's case, nuclear). Rosatom had the unique side hustle of managing election interference in cities where its facilities are located, both inside Russia and in over a dozen countries outside. Observers have noted the similarity of Russia's domestic election campaigns under Kiriyenko to Rosatom's election influence campaigns.[65]

62 Arenina & Korostelev, 2023a

63 Institute of Modern Russia, 2018; McKay, Grove & Barry, 2022; Dergachev, 2016; Insikt Group, 2022; Dietrich, 2023b; Mironenko, 2023a; Mironenko, 2024; Dietrich, 2023a; Reiter, Pozychanyuk & Malkova 2023

64 Zygar, 2024a; Troianovski, 2025; Khomenko, 2025; Churakova & Anin, 2025; Charter97, 2025; International Partnership for Human Rights & Global Diligence LLP, 2023; Zygar, 2025

65 Pertsev, 2019a

Kiriyenko's high-profile role shaping and influencing elections began with Putin's "re-selection" in 2018. Since then, he has overseen elections at all levels. In 2018, Putin was supposed to win with a result of at least 70% of the vote while maintaining the appearance of political competition. Putin won a landslide victory with 76.69% of the vote.[66] This was no small feat; Putin had launched an unpopular policy to raise the retirement age shortly before the election, which led to painful losses in local elections and suggested that the task would be a challenge.

Kiriyenko and **Alexander Kharichev**, his close confidant from working together in the Volga Federal District presidential envoy's office in the early 2000s, created a strategy to turn things around. Methods for increasing voter turnout in 2018 included campaign materials delivered to all Russian corporations, guides for talks from managers to their staff, as well as SMS notifications to voters. "Public observers" were also introduced to replace independent election monitoring and create a false impression of transparency and would continue to be used in future elections. Many of these techniques are familiar from Rosatom days. Kharichev remains known as Kiriyenko's "election fixer" and manages Gubernational elections and is integral to Centre S' foreign election interference. [67]

Alexander Kharichev (Kharichev) is considered one of Kiriyenko's closest and longest-serving subordinates. Their partnership dates to the early 2000s when Kharichev worked in the Volga Federal District presidential envoy's office when it was headed by Kiriyenko. After that, Kharichev moved to the Presidential Administration, where he became deputy head of the Domestic Policy Department, which was then headed by Vladislav Surkov. He stayed in the Presidential Administration until 2009, when he left to work at the oligarch-owned Renova Group conglomerate. After four years at Renova, Kharichev rejoined Kiriyenko at Rosatom where he reportedly oversaw elections for candidates loyal to Rosatom in cities where the company had a presence.

When Kiriyenko moved from Rosatom to the Presidential Administration in 2016, he brought Kharichev with him to run the political bloc. He headed the Presidential Directorate for Supporting Activities of the State Council and more recently moved to a new directorate focused on data analytics. Kharichev worked with Kiriyenko on Russia's 2016 and 2018 elections and oversaw the 2020 vote to amend the Russian Constitution, and the 2021 State Duma elections. Following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Kharichev's unit has been instrumental in organising sham referendums in occupied territories and promoting "traditional values" and patriotism as the new state ideology.

Kharichev will also likely have a strong hand in the upcoming September 2026 Duma elections, although the landscape he and Kiriyenko face is more complex due to lingering war fatigue, anger over internet restrictions, and a widespread debate within official circles about the need to and/or danger of placing war veterans in the Duma.[68] He also oversaw dozens of lower-level regional elections.

Andrey Yarin, in Kiriyenko's Internal Politics Department in the Presidential Administration, also manages electoral influence and domestic dissent and purportedly has close ties to Russia's security apparatus (especially the FSB). Reportedly to bypass Yarin's influence, Kiriyenko shifted key functions to loyalists like Kharichev, creating a dual-track system where Yarin handles domestic repression and Kiriyenko's team focuses on political technology and elections.

66 Spisok-Putina, n.d.-a

67 Russian Election Monitor, 2025

68 Zygar, 2026

Kharichev also authored key ideological frameworks for the patriotic-educational pillar of Kiriyenko's architecture, such as "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood," which argues that Russia's "special statehood" functions as a political and spiritual centre, driven by inherent paternalism, preference for one-man rule, and a focus on service. Despite rumours in media reports of potential health issues or his possible replacement in late 2022 following poor results in referendums in the occupied territories of Ukraine, Kharichev has remained a cornerstone of Kiriyenko's expanded political bloc.[69]



Alexander Kharichev, Dec 10, 2023.[70]

In June 2018, Putin placed the **State Council Administration** under Kiriyenko's supervision. The State Council Administration dealt with domestic policy tasks, most of which were related to regional development. However, its role expanded to include interaction with expert organisations, engaging in monitoring and analysis of social processes, preparing meetings between the head of state and Kremlin administration leadership with experts, and monitoring socio-economic processes in the regions. Kiriyenko moved Kharichev to the Head of the State Council Activities Support Directorate to oversee these initiatives.

Kharichev implemented the expansion of remote electronic and multi-day voting, under Kiriyenko's supervision, and facilitated even more widespread manipulation and control than in previous elections already rife with corruption.[71] Kiriyenko has also overseen the replacement of nearly half of Russia's regional heads with a cohort of "young technocrats" who are essentially loyal managers trained in Kremlin-sponsored leadership programs like "Leaders of Russia." Indeed, according to a recent report, 72 out of 83 current governors were selected by Kiriyenko; 60 of them attended his "School of Governors" training programme.[72]

69 Pertsev, 2025b; Pertsev, 2022h; Stepanov, 2025; Pertsev, 2023c

70 Screenshot from: Sekretariat VRNS, 2023

71 Sergeev, Maleva & Tikhonov, 2025

72 Pertsev, 2026c

Kiriyenko's domestic strategy of suppression and election victories also most notably encompasses a broader spectrum of tactics aimed at stifling and eventually eliminating opposition. In 2019, the Kremlin, influenced by Kiriyenko, **created new political parties**, including **New People, Direct Democracy Party, For Truth**, and **Green Alternative** to appeal to voters who didn't seem as enthusiastic about the direction of the systemic parties (parties loyal to Putin). By 2020, these "spoiler" parties were officially registered and secured seats in regional parliaments, allowing parties like New People to win 15 seats in the State Duma in 2021.[73]

While Vladimir Putin's victory in the 2024 Russian presidential election was certain, Kiriyenko's task was to make it appear as though the public was genuinely engaged. It was particularly during the 2024 presidential election cycle that Kiriyenko successfully leveraged social media as a campaigning tool. His increased control over Russia's digital ecosystem made this possible.[74] Kiriyenko successfully used the 2024 election to project a resounding show of national unity behind the "special military operation" in Ukraine. High turnout and an ostensible landslide victory (officially 87%) were intended to demonstrate that the Russian public remains committed to the war effort, despite Western sanctions.

Russian elections, while controlled, are vital for regime legitimacy and elite management. Kiriyenko's next big election undertaking is Russia's September 2026 parliamentary elections. These elections will likely occur amid uncertainty from the Ukraine conflict and rising war fatigue among Russians, as well as widening discontent around internet restrictions imposed from March 2026. Diminishing public support for the war in Ukraine, especially among women and those affected by military drafts, complicates efforts to project strength.[75] The Kremlin is reportedly cutting back the quotas given to systemic opposition parties like the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF). For the 2026 elections, the number of "coordinated" districts[76] is expected to drop to nearly half of what it was in 2021.[77]

Russian media reports claim that systemic ("spoiler") parties will use opposition to Internet restrictions in their campaigns to channel public frustration about unpopular issues like internet restrictions. [78] New People has already become a test balloon to quell discontent ahead of the September elections. In April 2026, **Alexander Kharichev** read a message from Vladimir Putin at the New People political party's 6th congress in St. Petersburg where the Russian president praised the party for working with other political forces and civic groups, emphasizing the importance of broad consolidation during challenging times.[79] **Alexey Nechayev**, Leader of New People, followed with a speech calling for an end to Internet restrictions, the creation of "AI courts," and free public Wi-Fi across Russia's regions.[80] It is likely that such spoiler parties exist to test for potential policy changes.

73 Pertsev, 2024e

74 Russian Election Monitor, 2024b; Talanova, 2024a

75 Pertsev, 2024d; Zavadskaya 2024

76 "Coordinated districts" refer to electoral districts where the Kremlin informally allocates or manages outcomes with the so-called "systemic opposition" parties — parties that are legally allowed to operate and participate in elections but generally do not threaten the ruling system.

77 Pertsev, 2026a

78 Pertsev, 2026d

79 Vedomosti, 2026b

80 Apecom, 2026

Beyond the 2026 parliamentary elections looms the question of Putin's legacy. If Putin does run for another term in 2030, Kiriyenko's role would likely be that of a loyal servant or else as a natural successor to Putin.[81] Swedish and other Western intelligence services have highlighted 2030 as a critical milestone for Russian military capabilities.[82]

Beyond elections, a key characteristic of Kiriyenko's approach to his Presidential Administration portfolio is how he combines managerial and corporate practices to achieve his goals. This is knowledge gained from Rosatom. Kiriyenko modernised the notoriously closed, bureaucratic sector by introducing management principles often seen in private industry, including a focus on efficiency, cost-cutting, and international, competitive practices. He introduced **key performance indicators (KPIs) into his departments** and continues to promote corporate-style training for politicians.[83]

Employees of Russia's largest state corporations must complete courses designed by Kiriyenko and his circle. These short courses are reportedly filling gaps in the patriotic education of state-corporation employees, likely targeting middle and junior management and expanding to civil servants and budget-sector employees.[84] This approach, previously applied to "corporate mobilisation" for elections, is now being used for "corporate indoctrination." For example, employees attend a seven-day training course on **"Fundamentals of Russian Statehood"** at the National Centre "Russia." The programme, organised by The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) and the All-Russian Popular Front, was attended by over 1,500 people in 2024. Course participants learn about Russia as a "state-civilization." This perspective, influenced by the Eurasianist historian **Lev Gumilev**, sees civilizations follow a life cycle: birth, flourishing, decline, and death. Gumilev's ideas have long resonated with Vladimir Putin. The president has repeatedly spoken of the "dying West" and the "Russian civilization on the march." The program's reach has expanded beyond first-year students as originally intended, to now include senior students and adult Russians, reflecting Kiriyenko's advocacy for state influence over those dependent on authorities.

These initiatives accomplish two main goals; First, Kiriyenko and his circle can develop a new vetting system and a built-in mechanism to groom the next generation of civil servants, bureaucrats, influencers, and politicians who demonstrate unequivocal loyalty to the regime. Second, he can simultaneously oversee the course materials and which values and ideology he believes should be fed to them. Frequent surveys are shared with university students to monitor their alignment. Experts note that the level of their political ambitions and autonomic independence is considerably lower than that of the previous generation of leaders of the same rank.[85]

81 Putin's current presidential term extends to 2030, following his victory in the March 2024 elections. Constitutional amendments passed in 2020 allow him to serve two additional six-year terms, meaning he could potentially remain in power until 2036.

82 Harper, 2025

83 Pertsev, n.d.

84 National Centre Russia, 2026

85 Morozov, 2020; Paneyakh & Petrov, 2025

Examples of training initiatives tied to Kiriyenko include **"Leaders of Russia,"** the **"School of Governors,"** the **"School of Mayors," "Time of Heroes,"** and the **"digital spetsnaz"/cyber special forces**. The cast of characters involved in these Kiriyenko-led training initiatives includes Alexey Komissarov, Vice-Rector of the **Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration** (RANEPA), and head of the social mobility system "ANO Russia - Country of Opportunities."[86] Kharichev has also had an influential role over training courses for prospective regional leaders.[87]

While patriotic educational programmes shape youth and elite ideologies, Kiriyenko also oversees a massive, multi-layered digital propaganda apparatus that targets domestic Russian audiences, residents of occupied Ukrainian territories, and international public opinion. His approach often blends modern digital technology with traditional state control.

- Under Kiriyenko's oversight, the nonprofit ANO Dialog was transformed from a local public feedback tool into a national machine for systematic online state propaganda.
- In late 2024 and 2025, U.S. and European authorities identified Kiriyenko as the curator of dozens of "spoof" news domains designed to mimic Western outlets and spread disinformation to erode international support for Ukraine.
- Kiriyenko's office reportedly funds a wide network of "contractor" groups that pay bloggers and digital experts—using "black cash"—to promote Kremlin-aligned narratives on social media.
- Through his partnership with media magnate Yuri Kovalchuk, Kiriyenko oversaw the Kremlin's takeover of VK Company and its flagship VKontakte, Russia's largest social network. This strategy is used to control the internal internet, push pro-war narratives, and marginalise Western apps like WhatsApp.
- Kiriyenko oversees digital hubs in every Russian region to monitor social media sentiment and track public discontent in real-time. This "digital feedback" is used as a KPI to evaluate the performance of regional governors.
- Kiriyenko has leveraged his oversight of culture and education to push patriotic curriculum into schools and has pressured entertainers to produce pro-war content while blackballing critics. Efforts to control cultural production have seen vast sums of money pumped into the production of patriotic digital media content.
- Kiriyenko's digital initiatives are focused on achieving "digital sovereignty" by replacing Western platforms with state-controlled alternatives and implementing AI-driven surveillance systems. By 2026, Kiriyenko's apparatus has increasingly integrated AI-generated texts and images to automate the creation and spread of anti-Ukraine and anti-West propaganda across digital platforms.

The initiatives touched upon here are investigated in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this report.

86 Paneyakh & Petrov, 2025

87 Rumours surfaced in late-2022 and that he was to be fired due to alleged mishandling of the fake DPR and LPR referendums, with questions asked about delays and how money was spent. However, Kharichev remained in position and was the key point of contact for SDA activities. Andrey Polosin, who in 2022 was still director of Rosatom's Department for Interaction with Regions, was touted as a potential successor. Polosin instead moved into new role at the PA with a focus on youth and patriotic knowledge.

3.5 "VICEROY OF DONBAS"

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Kiriyenko increased his standing with Vladimir Putin by effectively managing the political aspects of the war in Ukraine. He was tasked with overseeing the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, positioning Kiriyenko as a strategist and tactician within the domain of grey zone operations. His role in this context often involves cementing positions of influence through public appearances, investments, and, when necessary, replacing or manoeuvring around older, more traditional Russian officials (like the security elites or *siloviki*).

Today, Kiriyenko is more likely to be remembered for his role in Ukraine rather than for elections and domestic politics. After Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Kiriyenko's portfolio expanded to include administration of Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories, a role which earned him the popular nickname "Viceroy of Donbas."[88] In this role, he would need to oversee the occupied regions and sell the war to Russians in the short term, and then spare Russia's post-war image and reputation in the longer term.[89] Some of his more visible public stunts included a visit to the Russian-occupied city of Mariupol, participating in the unveiling of a statue of an elderly woman holding the Soviet flag. Kiriyenko said that "Babushka Anya is a symbol of the motherland for the entire Russian world."[90] This paved way for Putin to justify the incorporation of eastern Ukraine's Donbas region as part of Russia.

Kiriyenko has also had a significant hand in patriotic military training for youth and conditioning them for war. It has been widely reported that Russian schoolchildren from multiple regions of Russia have attended military-patriotic camps where they learned to fire guns and received other tactical training. [91] Kiriyenko oversees the preparation of youth in occupied Ukrainian territories for war through a coordinated system of psychological indoctrination and tactical physical training.[92]

Also in the context of the war in Ukraine, Kiriyenko and **Ramzan Kadyrov**, the leader of the Chechen Republic, have formed a close, pragmatic alliance. Kiriyenko and Kadyrov collaborated closely on supplying and training troops to fight in the war. They have specifically supported the **"Soyuz" combat detachment,** which is based at the **Russian Union of Martial Arts**, co-chaired by Kadyrov's aide, **Daniil Martynov, and overseen by Kiriyenko. Additionally, The Russian University of Special Forces in Chechnya** has become a hub for training volunteers, often at the behest of, or in coordination with, Kremlin officials like Kiriyenko.[93]

Kiriyenko was tasked with overseeing the political integration of occupied Ukrainian territories into Russia. According to media reports and analyses, Kiriyenko was reportedly responsible for the multiple delays and initial failures of the 2022 annexation referendums in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). While the referendums eventually took place in late September 2022, they were postponed several times throughout the year due to shifting frontlines and the Russian military's inability to secure full control over the regions. When the votes were finally held from 23–27 September 2022, international observers and the United Nations described them as "sham" processes characterised by haphazard door-to-door voting and a lack of legitimate voter lists.

88 Orlova 2022; Pertsev, 2022b; Galimova & Atasuntsev, 2022

89 Pertsev, 2022c

90 Andrey Turchak Z, 2022; The Moscow Times, 2022b

91 Dfo, 2023b

92 Dfo, 2023b; Kakissis, 2025; Vorobiova, 2025

93 Al Jazeera, 2022b; Caucasus Watch, 2022; Pertsev, 2025c; Staalesen, 2023; Anin, Churakova & Kondratyev, 2026

Furthermore, internal polls commissioned by Russian authorities reportedly showed that only about 30% of residents in occupied areas supported joining Russia prior to the forced voting.[94]

Kiriyenko's oversight of the occupied territories in Ukraine often intersects with **Rosatom's operations** such as the illegal seizure and management of the **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant,** the fate of which is a central "sticking point" in ongoing peace negotiations.[95] Rosatom established a joint-stock company, **Zaporozhye NPP Operational,** registered in Moscow, which aims to manage the occupied Zaporizhzhia NPP.[96]

Rosatom has been accused of using its administrative power at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to pressure employees into signing Russian contracts, which is a prerequisite for participating in Russian-run political processes in the region. Several reports have surfaced detailing the Kremlin's use of detention and torture of NPP employees. The primary goals of the abuses appear to be the coercion of employees into signing contracts with Rosatom, suppression of pro-Ukrainian sentiment, and extraction of intelligence on Ukrainian military activities. While Rosatom employees are generally not reported to have directly participated in physical torture, multiple witnesses claim that the alleged torture and detention network would have been impossible without their knowledge and coordination with Russian security forces (namely, the FSB).[97]

Kiriyenko is furthermore responsible for the so-called **"Doppelgänger" information influence campaigns**, part of broader "Comprehensive Counter Campaigns" targeting Ukraine, as well as Ukraine-related policy in Europe, and some other parts of the world. These campaigns represent a **systematised, scaled-up model of Russian foreign information manipulation** implemented primarily by the Social Design Agency (SDA), ANO Dialog, and affiliated actors. At their core, these operations combine **centralised strategic narratives defined by Kharichev** with a highly structured execution pipeline: continuous media monitoring to identify societal grievances, mass production of multilingual content (articles, memes, videos, comments), and distribution through an extensive network of digital "touchpoints," including mirror websites imitating Western media, Telegram channels, bot networks, and paid advertising. The campaigns revealed Kiriyenko's willingness to engage in **data-driven, feedback-loop-based influence operations**, where propaganda is continuously tested, optimised, and deployed as part of a coordinated strategy to undermine support for Ukraine, weaken Western cohesion, and advance pro-Kremlin narratives internationally.

In late 2025, Kiriyenko's influence expanded beyond Ukraine to the near abroad and beyond. Putin established a new **Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation** which merged the abolished Directorate for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Directorate for Border Cooperation—two departments previously run by **Dmitry Nikolayevich Kozak** who resigned in September 2025 following a power struggle with Kiriyenko over the Kremlin's foreign policy direction. **Vadim Titov**, another longtime ally, was appointed to lead the new directorate.

Analysts suggest that the new structure is used under Kiriyenko as a cover for espionage, election interference, and the recruitment of foreign assets under the guise of "soft power" and cultural ties. Refining tactics used by its predecessors,

94 UN News, 2022; Socor, 2022; Al Jazeera, 2022a; Żochowski & Nieczypor, 2022; Amnesty, 2022; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia, 2025; Pertsev, 2022e

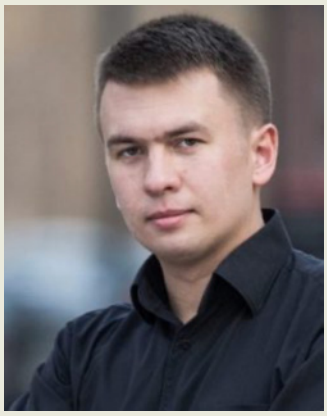
95 Josephson, 2025; Digges, 2023

96 Zharikova, 2022; Sultanhaliiev et al., 2025

97 Truth Hounds, 2023; International Labour Organization, 2023; Black, 2023; Dolzikova & Watling, 2024; Bengoechea, 2026; Coynash, 2026

the new directorate focuses on cognitive warfare, which aims to destabilise foreign governments and promote authoritarian values through disinformation and strategic corruption. Kiriyenko's ever-expanding portfolio has therefore catapulted him beyond domestic policy and into the realm of foreign policy and Russia's hybrid operations, areas traditionally overseen by Russia's intelligence, security and defence sectors.[98]

Ilya Borisovich Remeslo is a member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation's Commission on the Development of the Information Community, a body formed by the Presidential Administration—specifically overseen by Kiriyenko—to simulate civil society representation. He is a pro-government Russian blogger, lawyer, and public "informant" who used his legal background to file numerous complaints and lawsuits against activists and regime critics, acting as a surrogate for the Presidential Administration. For many years, he spoke out against renowned opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, and the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), and regularly appeared in the pro-Kremlin media space. He is described as a long-time loyalist of the system who is widely reported to be a direct subordinate of Kiriyenko. In March 2026, Remeslo suddenly launched sharp criticism of Vladimir Putin and the war in Ukraine, for which he was "punitively" subjected to treatment in a psychiatric hospital in St. Petersburg.[99]



Ilya Remeslo.[100]

Aleksander Petrovich Nikolin is a long-time associate of Kiriyenko, currently serving as his chief of staff and suspected to be an FSB officer. Allegedly, he is saved in Kiriyenko's phone as "Sasha FSB". Nikolin has followed Kiriyenko throughout his career since 2000. He became the head of the Organisational Department in the office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in the Volga Federal District – a position held by Kiriyenko at the time.[101] In 2004, Nikolin became the head of the Information and Planning Department. When Kiriyenko was appointed head of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency, Nikolin was his assistant. At Rosatom, Nikolin held the position of director of the Administrative Department of Rosatom and subsequently, an advisor to Kiriyenko, Rosatom's CEO. More recently, Nikolin appears to be employed by the Administrative Directorate of the President of the Russian Federation.

3.6 BUSINESS INTERESTS

Kiriyenko's business interests are heavily intertwined with state-controlled entities and strategic industries, particularly nuclear energy, while his son holds prominent roles in the Russian tech sector. Kiriyenko's actual business interests are opaque, and it is likely that assets are distributed through close business associates and family members. The most important figure from this perspective is his son, Vladimir.

98 Kanev 2025; Torres, Stefanov & Vladimirov, 2026

99 The Moscow Times, 2026; Spisok-Putina, n.d.-c; Meduza, 2026

100 Photo accessed from: Spisok Putina, n.d.-c

101 Kommersant, 2016

Vladimir Sergeyevich Kiriyenko (Kiriyenko Jr., born 27 May 1983) is the son of Sergey Kiriyenko, and the interests of father and son are interconnected. Kiriyenko Jr. has served as CEO of VK Company since 2021, where he is responsible for promoting the MAX messenger. At the time of his appointment to VK, Forbes estimated that Kiriyenko Jr.'s assets in industrial enterprises were worth $50 million.[102] His appointment at VK coincided with a shift in ownership to state-affiliated entities like Gazprombank, viewed by experts as a move to increase Kremlin control over the Russian internet. Under his leadership, VK has focused on building domestic alternatives to Western platforms, such as Messenger MAX, often modelling these tools after China's WeChat.[103] Russia's internet watchdog agency, Roskomnadzor (Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information, Technology and Mass Media), installs technical tools on provider networks, which are equipped with software from RDP.ru, a company owned by **Rostelecom**, Russia's largest digital service and telecommunications provider.[104] Kiriyenko served as First Vice President at Rostelecom, from 2016–2021, and is believed to be in pole position to eventually take it over.

Robert Robertovich Gndolyan is a trusted associate of the Kiriyenko family. He was classmates with Sergey Kiriyenko's son, Vladimir Kiriyenko at Moscow's Higher School of Economics, as well as at Skolkovo. Journalists believe that Gndolyan may be a nominal owner of some of Kiriyenko family assets. Gndolyan allegedly received Vladimir's shares in Sarovbusinessbank, which was founded by his father. Gndolyan became the director of Rostelecom's subsidiary after Vladimir Kiriyenko took over as vice president of the parent company.[105] According to legal entity registry data, Gndolyan was linked to several companies that have no apparent territorial or business-sector connection to him. Gndolyan is currently the director of JSC Digital Television, whose revenue in 2025 amounted to ₽7 billion (€70m).[106]

Gndolyan is owner of the Spanish company Bell-67, which is registered as the owner of a villa on the Costa Brava in Catalonia.[107] iStories found that the Bell-67 company owns two more forest plots with a total area of 2.4 hectares. According to its 2024 financial statement, the initial value of the assets registered to the company was €2,729,040 and the company's share capital amounts to €2,862,292. It was from this villa on the Costa Brava that Nadezhda Kiriyenko (the youngest daughter of Sergey Kiriyenko) posted photographs of her visits to Catalonia on social media.[108]

Like most members of the top Russian political elite, Sergey Kiriyenko and his family are linked to the exclusive lifestyle of the western Moscow suburbs. Kiriyenko reportedly owns a 7,000 sq. m. **land plot on Rublyovka (Рублёвка)**, often called Russia's Beverly Hills, with a residential building, sports complex, and security house.[109] Rublyovka is widely considered the most exclusive and expensive residential area in Russia and remains a premier symbol of wealth in in the country. It is located in the western suburbs of Moscow along the Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Highway, and is home to Russia's elite, including high-ranking government officials, oligarchs, and celebrities. The area is known for extreme privacy; many properties are hidden behind high fences.

102 Korolev & Pertsev, 2021

103 Taylor & Bove, 2022

104 Korolev & Pertsev, 2021

105 Zarubezhnye Aktivy, n.d.

106 Meduza, 2022b; List-Org, n.d.-c; List-Org, n.d.-d

107 Bell-67 SL was registered in the province of Girona in 1998 (NIF: B17552019; EUID: ES17010.000024782). The company's sole shareholder is Robert Gndolyan (NIF - Y3242938K). Igor Rogalsky (NIF - Y3279707J) is listed as the administrator.

108 Zarubezhnye Aktivy, n.d.

109 Proekt, 2019a

A study published by "The Project" in late 2025 reveals that 76% of senior Russian civil servants have relatives employed in public administration or government-affiliated businesses.[110] Meanwhile, less than 1% (10 out of 1012 people in "The Project's" database) of officials have relatives who fought in Ukraine. This highlights the disconnect between Russia's mega elite, like Kiriyenko, and the people fighting Putin's war.



A picture of Kiriyenko's land in Rublyovka, often called Russia's Beverly Hills.[111]

Titanium VC Limited (Titanium) is a venture capital firm founded in 2013 by Vladimir Kiriyenko and Alexander Ayvazov. Titanium was launched with capital of approximately €43.5 million and focused heavily on Israeli tech startups due to more favourable entry valuations compared to the Russian market. Key portfolio companies included Cloudyn (sold to Microsoft), Nanorep Technologies (sold to LogMeIn), Fabrika Online, Any.do, and BrightInfo. Reports suggest that Kiriyenko funded Titanium VC using profits from the sale of a stake in Sarovbusinessbank. Kiriyenko stated in 2016 that he divested from Titanium upon taking an executive role at Rostelecom, however reports have indicated he continued to have links to the entity. In July 2024, reports indicated that Kiriyenko filed a lawsuit in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) Supreme Court to transfer assets (specifically shares in Titanium VC) from his BVI-registered company, YaleCrest, to a new entity in Barbados called Belvaux Management Limited, likely to circumvent or manage the impact of Western sanctions.[112]

Mornington Finance Ltd (Mornington) is one of the now-dissolved offshore companies connected to Vladimir Kiriyenko. The company was reportedly established around 2005, shortly after his first offshore venture, Morgoth Finance Ltd, was created in 2004.[113]

110 Soldatskikh et al., 2025

111 Photo accessed from: Proekt, 2019a

112 Skrynnikova & Skobelev, 2021; Korolev & Pertsev, 2021; AFP, 2025; Gyori, 2025; The Moscow Times, 2025a

113 ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database, n.d.-c

Domestar Enterprises Ltd (Domestar) is identified as another one of the now-dissolved offshore companies connected to Vladimir Kiriyenko. According to data from the ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database (via the Pandora Papers), Vladimir Kiriyenko was identified as the ultimate beneficial owner of Domestar, which was registered in the British Virgin Islands.[114]

Morgoth Finance Ltd (Morgoth) was a British Virgin Islands offshore entity formerly owned by Vladimir Kiriyenko. According to the Pandora Papers, Vladimir Kiriyenko was the ultimate beneficial owner of the now dissolved company. The company was part of a network of BVI-registered entities used by high-profile Russian figures. It shared a registered address (the Yamraj Building in Road Town, Tortola) with companies linked to other sanctioned individuals, such as oligarchs Boris Rotenberg and Gennady Timchenko.[115]

While Mornington Finance, Domestar Enterprises, and Morgoth Finance have been dissolved, they are often cited in discussions regarding international efforts to pressure Russian oligarchs by targeting their offshore wealth managers and holding companies. Vladimir Kiriyenko's use of these companies reflects a broader pattern of offshore investment that led to his recent legal action against Yalecrest Holdings Limited.

Yalecrest Holdings Ltd (Yalecrest) is an offshore investment company based in the British Virgin Islands that has recently been involved in high-profile legal proceedings regarding sanctioned Russian assets. According to the Pandora Papers, Vladimir Kiriyenko is the ultimate beneficial owner of the company.[116] In 2024, Vladimir Kiriyenko filed a claim in the BVI Commercial Court against Yalecrest. The lawsuit sought the transfer of shares from Yalecrest to Kiriyenko personally, specifically involving his Titanium VC fund. Despite Kiriyenko being sanctioned by the U.S., UK, and EU, the case involved assets tied to Western investments, including Israeli startups previously acquired by companies like Microsoft.[117]

JSC Post Bank (Почта Банк) is a major Russian retail bank founded in 2016 by VTB Group and Russian Post. In the context of the war in Ukraine, Post Bank (Pochta Bank) has been identified as a significant financial entity supporting the Russian economy and state interests and is under international sanctions. Its primary role involves maintaining financial stability within Russia despite international pressure and being a target of major global sanctions. Andrey Ugnich, Sergey Kiriyenko's son in law, joined Post Bank in December 2016. He is currently Director of the Project Office and was previously Head of Strategic Projects (2016–2021).[118]

114 ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database, n.d.-a; Fakeoff, 2022

115 Offshore Leaks Database, n.d.-b; Chang, 2023

116 Offshore Leaks Database, n.d.-d

117 OffshoreAlert, 2024; The Moscow Times, 2025a

118 Proekt, n.d.-c; Setka, n.d.

Photo:iStock

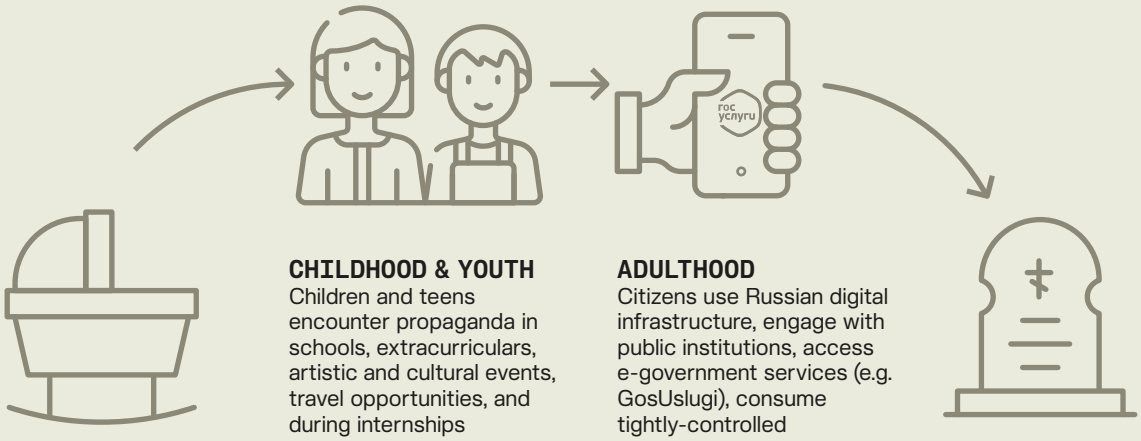


4 YOUTH & PATRIOTIC PROPAGANDA

During his December 2023 end-of-year "Direct Line" broadcast, Putin quoted Otto von Bismarck in saying that "Wars are not won by generals, but by schoolteachers and parish priests." Kiriyenko, through his numerous patriotic and youth initiatives, has diligently applied this principle. Its implementation across schools, universities, professional training, and hobbies is fundamentally altering the country's education system into a tool of ideological control. Through these vehicles, Kiriyenko controls knowledge production, social mobility, and future leaders. He has created a pipeline of young technocrats loyal to him and his governance methods; serving Putin today but undoubtedly building a solid base for an eventual play at the Presidential office.

Kiriyenko's propaganda system functions on an all-encompassing "cradle to grave" logic. It is based on an updated version of Soviet ideology crafted by Kiriyenko's most trusted political technologists. A child's indoctrination starts as early as kindergarten and follows all stages of development. It begins with the Conversations about Important Matters in pre-school, a subject which expands in primary school and is supplemented by the Fundamentals of the Defence of the Fatherland course. It continues through high school and university, during which continuous lectures and surveys are used to shape the perceptions and beliefs of students.

In their spare time, regardless of what type of hobby is pursued, the ideology is ever-present: in arts activities, sports, historical commemorations, travel, or work experience. Adults are invited to public information lectures, professional training, and exhibitions to learn a revisionist version of Russian history. Applicants for social mobility initiatives, grants, and civil service positions are scored partly on whether they have completed patriotic courses. Even regional governors are vetted through Kiriyenko's professional training programmes. To call this simply "patriotic propaganda" is an understatement: it is a full cradle-to-grave indoctrination process through which a cadre of middle management and leaders are selected.



CRADLE
Early childhood
Patriotic propaganda introduced as early as kindergarten

CHILDHOOD & YOUTH
Children and teens encounter propaganda in schools, extracurriculars, artistic and cultural events, travel opportunities, and during internships

ADULTHOOD
Citizens use Russian digital infrastructure, engage with public institutions, access e-government services (e.g. GosUslugi), consume tightly-controlled information, while their online activities are surveilled by the authorities

GRAVE

4.1 “PENTABASIS”

The Kremlin has aggressively expanded youth initiatives focused on patriotic education, militarisation, and ideological alignment, creating programmes that are expected to reach 50 million people aged 3-35 by 2030. More money and effort have been poured into these initiatives since Russia’s annexation of Crimea and full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[119] 2024 amendments to the Federal Law on Education require Russian teachers to incorporate “traditional Russian spiritual and moral values” into their teaching, including patriotism and respect for Russia’s defenders. Critics argue that this transforms education into propaganda in a manner that echoes Soviet times, replacing communist ideology with “traditional values.”



The little girl is holing a flag that says “Family Parade” and the billboard in the background says “Preservers of history.”[120]

119 Edwards and Mathers, 2025

120 Photo accessed from: Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2023, p. 30

Kiriyenko has emerged as the primary architect of Russia's domestic and youth policy; he oversees a vast network of state-funded initiatives designed to foster pro-government sentiment, identify future political leaders, and promote military-patriotic education. This indoctrination of school and university students is now firmly embedded in Russia's curriculum. Key objectives of these initiatives include:

- **MILITARISATION:** Preparing youth for military service, fostering a "war culture", and preparing a mobilisation reserve of Russia's citizens.
- **IDEOLOGICAL INDOCTRINATION:** Erasing dissenting historical narratives and fostering loyalty to the state. Forge a generation suspicious of a fifth column, and of NATO and the West.
- **SUPPORT FOR THE ONGOING WAR EFFORT:** Involving youth in activities like writing letters to soldiers. The Kremlin uses historical education as a tool to justify its war against Ukraine. Ideological teachings draw parallels between the victory over Nazism in the WWII and the purported "denazification" of Ukraine.
- **CONTROL IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES:** Actively imposing these programs in Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine to enforce a pro-Russian identity. Russian cultural assimilation in Ukraine aims to create a generation identifying as Russian and which views defending Russia as a civic duty.

The National Project "Youth and Children" (**Национальный проект «Молодёжь и дети»**) is a Russian government initiative launched in 2024 pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 309 of May 7, 2024 "On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2030 and for the Perspective until 2036" which establishes national development goals through 2030 and targets the comprehensive development of children and youth by creating opportunities for talent realisation, patriotic upbringing, and social mobility. The project is curated by **Dmitry Chernyshenko,** Deputy Prime Minister, and governed by **Grigory Gurov,** Head of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (*Rosmolodezh*).

According to official documents, the project's implementation began on January 1, 2025, extending through 2030 to align with the decree's primary timeframe, while allowing for extended measures toward 2036 where applicable.[121] Based on an official document, the project's goal is "The emergence and development of a generation of patriotic, highly moral, and responsible Russian citizens, capable of ensuring Russia's sovereignty, competitiveness, and further development."[122]

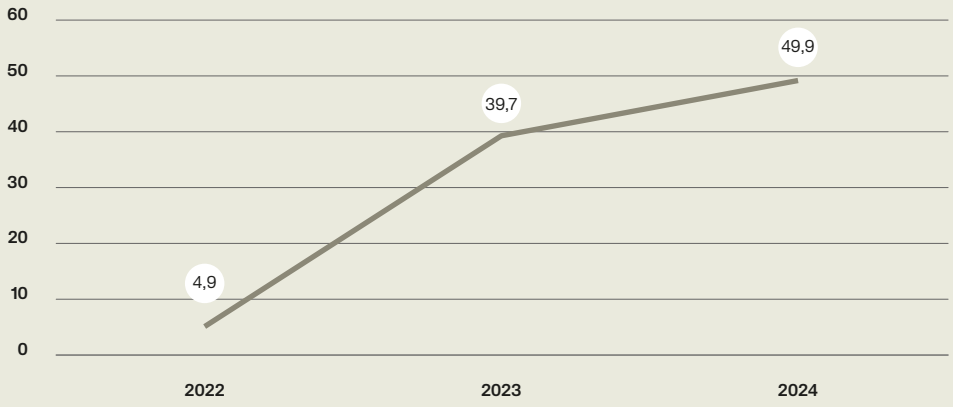
The "Youth and Children" programme essentially consolidated multiple and fragmented youth support efforts into a dedicated framework, incorporating demographic strategies from 2019 that addressed family and population priorities.[123] **While prior isolated programmes prioritised patriotic education and talent nurturing on a national scale, this framework has positioned youth development as integral to long-term socioeconomic stability and to Russia's overall survival as a nation.** The programme also addresses reducing the shortage of teachers in general education (largely due to drafting for the war against Ukraine) through new incentives and professional development.

121 Kremlin.ru, 2024b; Kremlin.ru, 2024a; Young South, n.d.

122 Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2025

123 CNPPM, n.d.

Media reports reveal how state expenditure on patriotic education grew nearly tenfold over just two years. The 2024 budget for patriotic education reached ₽49.9 billion (€499 million), compared to just ₽4.9 billion (€49 million) in 2022.[124] According to the very latest figures, the 2026 budget will exceed **₽500 billion (€5 billion),** though only a fraction of this funding is under Kiriyenko's control.



Expenditures on patriotic education in the state budget of the Russian Federation (in billion Russian rubles)

Federal laws show that most "youth policy" expenditures are subsidies, making it difficult to precisely track actual programme budgets and beneficiaries. Based on media reports and investigations, beyond direct federal subsidies, these education organisations receive financial and/or promotional support from:

- **STATE-OWNED BANKS:** Promsvyazbank, a primary lender for the military-industrial complex (sanctioned), has donated millions to Yunarmiya.[125]
- **STATE-LINKED CORPORATIONS:** Major entities like Sberbank, Rostec, and state media companies provide infrastructure and promotional support.
- **PRIVATE SPONSORS:** Business interests often provide "voluntary" contributions to align with Kremlin priorities.[126]
- **SCHOOL ADVISERS:** Approximately ₽20 billion have been dedicated to paying "patriotic advisers" in schools to facilitate youth movement engagement.

We therefore estimate that the likely funding interval for domestic propaganda through Kiriyenko-linked education and training networks, including state and non-state sources, was between ₽50 billion and ₽80 billion (€500-800m) a year for 2025. However, the Youth and Children budget for 2026-2028 shows a tenfold increase with total planned spending of approximately ₽1.79 trillion (€17.9 billion). Annual allocations are projected at ₽546.9 billion (€5.47 billion) in 2026, ₽584.9 billion (€5.85 billion) in 2027, and ₽662.5 billion (€6.63 billion) in 2028.[127] We do not expect Kiriyenko's allocation to increase at the same rate, but minor increases are visible for 2026.

124 The Moscow Times, 2023; Lychko, 2024

125 The Moscow Times, 2025b; Alava, 2021; Litnarovych, 2025

126 Alava, 2021

127 Leiba, 2025

The largest federal projects are "Teachers and Mentors", receiving roughly ₽170–180 billion (€1.7–1.8 billion) annually, and "Everything Best for Children", which rises from about ₽105 billion (€1.05 billion) in 2026 to almost ₽194 billion (€1.94 billion) by 2028. The smallest component is "Russia in the World", focused on international youth cooperation and promotion of Russian values abroad, at approximately ₽10–12 billion (€100–120 million) annually. The overall allocation may include teacher salaries, equipment, facilities, school repairs and the like, which makes determining the portion controlled by Kiriyenko for ideological control difficult to disentangle.

The Senezh Management Workshop is allocated ₽4.8 billion (€48 million) in 2026, ₽5.1 billion (€51 million) in 2027, and ₽5.2 billion (€52 million) in 2028. The Leaders of Russia competition receives roughly ₽1 billion (€10 million) annually. The veterans' programme "Time of Heroes" receives ₽489 million (€4.9 million) in 2026 and ₽255 million (€2.6 million) in 2027. Znanie is allocated approximately ₽6–6.5 billion (€60–65 million) annually, while the Centre for Military-Sports Training and Patriotic Education receives around ₽3.7 billion (€37 million) per year. In addition, the World Youth Festival Directorate receives over ₽4 billion (€40 million) in 2026 to preserve and expand the festival's legacy, plus a further ₽1.5 billion (€15 million) over three years for international youth-cooperation grants. In short, despite Russia's failing economy and high inflation affecting daily life for all Russians, more resources than ever are now allocated into patriotic propaganda.

RUSSIA'S "DNA"

Behind the curriculum's ideology is a definition of Russian identity established through five pillars: **statehood, family, society, man (individual), and country.**[128] This is known as the so-called **Pentabasis** concept, a five-element systemic model that is supposed to encapsulate the Russian worldview. [129] The Pentabasis functions similarly to what historians often refer to as the Tsarist-era "Triad" (Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality), aiming to create a cohesive ideology to justify current political actions and manage social attitudes during the conflict with Ukraine.[130]

The original article on the "Pentabasis" describes a "genetic code" of traditional values aimed at building a unified national identity amidst foreign pressure. This is also referred to as the **DNA of Russia. Key "genetic" values include patriotism, a strong state, family, historical memory, and collectivism,** blending Tsarist, Soviet, and modern orthodox elements. Authors of the original article on the "Pentabasis" include Kiriyenko loyalists **Andrey Polosin** and **Alexander Kharichev.**[131] The "Pentabasis" authors are also part of a "DNA of Russia" working group, of which Polosin is head, with advisory board members including Kiriyenko and Kharichev.[132]

128 The Foundations of Russian Statehood: The Pentabasis, National History, and Civic Values in Wartime Russia By Dima Kortukov and Julian G. Waller. In more detail, these ideas include "order for the state," "love for one's family," "unity for society," "the edification of the individual," and "a mission for the country."

129 There are several academic pieces on the "pentabasis" and its role in shaping post-war ideology. One such piece is "The Foundations of Russian Statehood: The Pentabasis, National History, and Civic Values in Wartime Russia" By Julian G Waller and Dima Kortukov. The so-called "Pentabasis" concept was likely invented by close Kiriyenko ally, Alexander Kharichev. See Cyberleninka, 2025; Vinokurov, 2023; Shelin, 2023.

130 The "Triad" is attributed to Sergey Uvarov, minister of education under Tsar Nicholas II, created the tripartite formula of Russian imperial absolutism: Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality. According to prominent historian, Cynthia Whittaker, Uvarov believed history is a linear progression, with nations evolving (from childhood to adulthood) while maintaining their core identity. The government should nurture national growth, address crises, and protect against threats, akin to a gardener tending to an orchard. See: Suslov, 2024; Kolesnikov, 2023b

131 Kharichev, Shutov & Polosin, 2022

132 Others include Putin aide, Vladmir Medinsky, Minister of Culture, Olga Lyubimova, and political scientist, Vyacheslav Nikonov.

Andrey Polosin's longstanding partnership with Kiriyenko dates to their time at Rosatom where Polosin was the head of regional relations, while Kiriyenko served as CEO. Polosin calls Kiriyenko his mentor. He is the chief organiser and designer of Russia's **"Fundamentals of Russian Statehood"** compulsory university course, which was introduced in 2023. The curriculum is described as an ideological equivalent to Soviet era "scientific communism," intended to explain Russia's unique "civilizational mission" to students. To further these patriotic and education initiatives, Polosin was appointed Vice-Rector of the **Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA)** in 2023, where he continues to oversee the rollout of ideological training like "DNA of Russia".[133]



Andrey Polosin in 2020.[134]

Kharichev, head of the Kremlin's social monitoring directorate, is known for his essays "Who Are We?" And "Russian Civilization" which emphasise the importance of raising future citizens to preserve and develop Russian civilization.[135] The "Foundations of Russian Statehood" curriculum teaches that Russians are naturally inclined towards self-sacrifice for the state and that collectivism is superior to individualism, which echoes Kharichev's ideological writings.

Content under "Foundations of Russian Statehood" and "DNA of Russia" (and many other youth, patriotic, military, and veteran initiatives) draws largely on **Lev Gumilev's writings**.[136] Gumilev (1912–1992) was a Soviet-era dissident, historian, geographer, and one of the fathers of modern Eurasianism.[137] He is also well-known as the son of Russian literary icons Anna Akhmatova and Nikolay Gumilev. Soviet leaders rejected his ideas and banned his texts, but he gained public attention during the Perestroika years. Many Russia experts believe Gumilev's ideas are influencing a new generation of hardliners like Kiriyenko and his circle, as well as Putin himself.

133 Pertsev, 2023c; Pertsev, 2025b; Pertsev, 2023e; Suslov, 2024; Klein & Stewart, 2025

134 Pertsev, 2023c

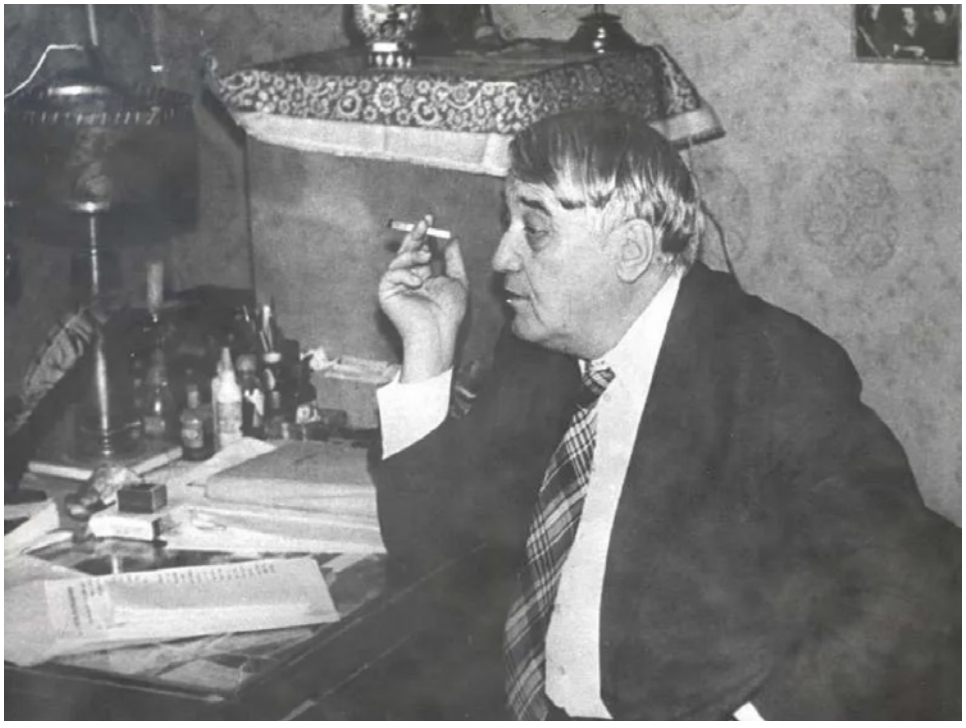
135 Pertsev, 2025f

136 Znanie, 2023a

137 Eurasianism, a 1920s theory by Russian exiles, rejected the notion of a western, bourgeois Russia.

The overall curriculum of "Foundations of Russian Statehood" prominently features Gumilev's ideas to promote collectivism, a sense of duty and service to the state, and a historical perspective that validates Russian expansionism.[138] **In the context of the war in Ukraine, Gumilev's ideas can be leveraged to present Russia's war in Ukraine as a historical necessity in the struggle for survival**.[139] For example, one of the nearly 100 videos available on the Znanie educational platform alleges discrimination against Russians in Ukraine, which intensified after the Euromaidan, and which is interpreted as a Nazi seizure of power backed by the West.[140] In another video, Russia is portrayed as the "guardian of the global balance" with a special historical role.

Putin has referenced Gumilev's theories in various speeches and statements emphasising Russia's strength, destiny, and civilizational role.[141] One of the most prominent and earliest explicit mentions came in Putin's annual Address to the Federal Assembly on December 12, 2012. In that speech, Putin stated: "The coming years will be decisive. Who will take the lead and who will remain on the periphery and inevitably lose their independence will depend not only on the economic potential but primarily on the will of each nation, on its inner energy, which Lev Gumilev termed *passionarnost*: the ability to move forward and to embrace change."[142] Putin also references Gumilev in his essay "On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians," where he states that Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians are all descendants of Ancient Rus, which was the largest state in Europe.[143] Putin posits that because all three nations share a common ancestor in Kyivan Rus, they are fundamentally "one people" and that Ukraine is not a fully sovereign nation without partnership with Russia.[144]



Lev Gumilev.[145]

138 Pertsev, 2023d; Shnirelman and Panarin, 2001; Umland, 2017

139 Cherevko, 2023

140 Znanie, 2023b

141 Bascom, 2022; Clover, 2016

142 Kremlin.ru, 2012

143 Kremlin.ru, 2021b; Clover, 2016

144 Ukrainian Research Institute Harvard University, 2021; Wilson, 2021; Düben, 2023; Kuzio, 2022

145 Photo: Lev Gumilev Foundation, accessed from: Cherevko, 2023

Kiriyenko's team, like Putin, utilises Gumilev's concept of "passionarity" (passionarnost) to frame Russia as a "civilization-state" in an ascendant, "passionary" phase.[146] In what some historians call a controversial and pseudo-scientific theory (ethnogenesis), history is shaped by passionate individuals who create or transform ethnic groups in cycles of birth, peak, and decay.[147] So called "passionarians" sacrifice themselves for grand ideas, lead movements, launch conquests, and create empires or revolutions. Examples frequently cited include Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and Lenin. **The "Foundations of Russian Statehood" curriculum relies heavily on Gumilev's cyclical view of history, in which civilizations are born, flourish, and eventually die like living organisms. In the context of Russia's relations with the West, European civilization is considered to be in the dying phase due to its promotion of liberal and capitalist values**.[148]

On Russia's official website oprf.ru (официальный сайт Общественной палаты Российской Федерации (ОП РФ)) an official document blends Gumilev and the "Pentabasis" concept, stating that, "**The ethnocultural, national and religious structure of the Russian Federation is unique. The multicentury civilizational formation of our country took place amid a complex historical process, characterized by a high level of social and demographic dynamics. The most important basic characteristic of this civilizational formation was the ability to integrate, taking into account the ethnoconfessional specifics of the various peoples and population groups that throughout its history our country has integrated."**[149]

Kiriyenko has long been associated in media with the Methodologists, a circle of thinkers based on the ideas of Soviet philosopher Georgy Shchedrovitsky.[150] Prominent figures in the movement, including the founder's son Pyotr Shchedrovitsky and "humanitarian technologist" Yefim Ostrovsky, have reportedly counselled Kiriyenko for decades. Kiriyenko's current role overseeing domestic policy allows him to apply the Methodologist belief that reality can be "programmed" through cognitive technologies, which is directly seen in his oversight of new university curricula like the Pentabasis.[151]

The "Methodological" link to "Pentabasis" is found in the functional application of these values.[152]

Rather than being just a philosophy, the **Pentabasis is a tool of cognitive sovereignty.**[153] According to some it is an attempt to create a "sovereign" worldview that inoculates Russian youth against Western liberal influence through a structured, top-down educational curriculum. This represents the Methodologists' hallmark which lies in treating ideology as a sort of "software update" for the national consciousness, designed by Kiriyenko's circles to ensure long-term political stability.[154] In an effort to distance themselves, Pyotr Shchedrovitsky Jr. and other philosophers have openly spoken out against Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the link some analysts draw between his father's work and the current administration's warmongering policies.[155]

146 Pertsev, 2024a; Cherevko, 2023; Pertsev, 2022g

147 Amelchkina, 2020; Gorozhaninova, 2016

148 Clover, 2016; Pertsev, 2026b

149 Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2023

150 Suslov, 2024

151 Stognei, 2020

152 Stognei, 2020; Pertsev, 2022d

153 Kukulin, 2022

154 Kortukov & Waller, 2025; Suslov, 2024

155 Kukulin, 2022; Suslov, 2024

4.2 EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

One prong of the Kremlin's attempts to secure ideological control and loyalty from Russian citizens is educational initiatives. Under Kiriyenko's leadership, school curricula have been edited to include a heavy dose of patriotism and conservative values. The cult of the Second World War is prominent, and one youth organisation is reminiscent of the Soviet-era Pioneers. The patriotic and militaristic aspects of this education entail practical elements, such as weapons training and learning to fly drones. In addition to securing loyalty, some initiatives are aimed at identifying, shaping, and cultivating future leaders among today's children and youth. Some educational initiatives are targeting foreign youngsters, and the changes of curriculum are also implemented in the Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine.

"FUNDAMENTALS OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE OF THE FATHERLAND"

"Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland" (Основы безопасности и защиты Родины) is a mandatory school subject in Russia, introduced in September 2024 to replace the previous "Fundamentals of Life Safety" course. Kiriyenko has been instrumental in integrating "Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland" into Russian schools.[156] The curriculum shift significantly increases military and patriotic content for students in grades 8 through 11. This mandatory subject focuses on preparing youth for military service, ideological conformity, and national defence.[157] Russia's Education Minister, Sergey Kravtsov, said that some lessons would be conducted by participants of the "special military operation" (full-scale invasion of Ukraine).[158] Echoing Kravtsov, Kiriyenko has explicitly called for involving veterans of the war in Ukraine to teach in schools, suggesting they are best equipped to pass on "patriotic values."[159]

The course is taught once a week and is also mandatory in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine. While the subject is compulsory for both boys and girls, some practical components, like military field training, target male students, though girls may voluntarily participate. Girls mostly are taught about the importance of traditional family values. Kiriyenko also oversees the "VOIN" (Warrior) Centre, which is responsible for giving teachers the practical military training components of the curriculum.

The course drew widespread international attention for not only teaching students combat principles, military discipline, drill regulations, and wartime first aid, but for also training students how to operate, code, and manufacture unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). According to the Russian government (in 2024), the procurement of over 17,000 lightweight UAVs was planned for classes in which students are taught how to control them. The expanded program covers 30 Russian regions, supplying equipment to over 500 schools and colleges.[160]

The course has also reportedly placed schools under extreme financial strain to obtain necessary materials needed to accompany the topics. Schools are reducing textbook purchases and seeking donations from families to avoid prosecution for failing to implement the course.[161]

156 Kameneva, 2024; Institute of Mass Information, 2023

157 BBC Monitoring, 2024

158 RBC, 2023

159 Sota, 2025

160 The Russian Government, 2024a

161 Verstka, 2025

"CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IMPORTANT MATTERS"

"Conversations about Important Matters"/«Разговоры о важном» (often referred to as "Important Conversations"), introduced in Russian schools in 2022 by Russia's Ministry of Education, is a compulsory curriculum designed to teach schoolchildren Russia's core traditional values and instil in them a sense of duty to their country.[162]

The programme's legal foundation was based on existing federal educational frameworks, including the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation."[163] Teachers are instructed to use quizzes, group tasks, and presentations to reinforce key points, supported by methodological materials and pre-developed scenarios.[164] By late 2022, participation became enforced, with schools required to integrate it into schedules and report compliance.[165]

"Important Conversations" was originally designed for older school children, but it expanded to cover kindergarten in 2024 and pre-school since 2025. According to Russia's Education Ministry guidelines, the weekly sessions cover topics such as patriotism and, beginning in fifth grade, the "special military operation."[166] However, children are primed for the Ukraine war topic early on; investigative reports reveal that war-themed discussions and events at some schools now include children even as young as three years old, before they can even read or write.[167]

Minister of Education, Sergey Kravtsov, said the programme's thematic content draws directly from Russia's National Security Strategy, approved by Putin on July 2, 2021, which emphasizes the protection of traditional values as a core component of state sovereignty. Putin marked the debut of "Important Conversations", and in his remarks, characterised the "special operation" in Ukraine as a defensive effort against threats to Russia's security.[168]

The programme mandates teaching patriotic values every Monday morning in first period, including flag raising and national anthem singing. The programme has a strong focus on Soviet heroics in the Second World War and the overall decline of Europe. Much of the curriculum has a strong anti-West slant.[169]

Putin declared 2025 the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Second World War; 2025 events expanded to also honour participants in the war against Ukraine. This narrative was reinforced in the thematic lesson under the Important Conversations umbrella, dedicated to the "Defenders of the Fatherland."[170]

162 Vorobyov, 2025

163 Grokipedia, n.d.

164 Rozgovory o Vazhnom, 2025; Sykt.uo, n.d.

165 Lanza, 2025

166 Lanza, 2025; Rozgovory o Vazhnom, 2022

167 Talanova, 2024b

168 Kommersant, 2023; Kremlin.ru, 2022b

169 Institute of Education Development Strategy, 2023; Fomin, 2022

170 Vorobiova, 2025; It's important to note that Putin appointed Kiriyenko to head the supervisory board of Russia's Centre for Historical Memory in 2025, essentially giving Kiriyenko a key role as guardian of the Kremlin's views of Russia's history.



Vladimir Putin at the Important Conversations lesson in Kaliningrad, September 1, 2022.[171]

Courses for "Important Conversations" prescribed by Russia's Ministry of Education are typically provided by academic year, and have included the following: "Traditional family values" (Традиционные семейные ценности); "Day of the reunification of Crimea with Russia" (День воссоединения Крыма с Россией) commemorating the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine; "Digital sovereignty of the country" (Цифровой суверенитет страны); "The Arctic – territory for development" (Арктика – территория развития), "Artificial intelligence and humans" (Искусственный интеллект и человек); "The values that unite us" (Ценности, которые нас объединяют); "Peaceful atom: Day of the Nuclear Industry Worker" (Мирный атом. День работника атомной промышленности); and a course entitled, "Russia — a world leader in the nuclear industry" ("Россия — мировой лидер атомной отрасли"), which was supported by Rosatom.[172] In a video for a lesson in April 2023 about the 19 April "Day Commemorating Genocide of the Soviet People," Russian historian, A. Zvyagintsev, drew parallels between the Second World War and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[173] Many of the speakers who appear in these lectures are affiliated with Znanie, another recently revived Soviet institution in charge of mass education and propaganda.

Media reports highlight bias and blatant indoctrination in course materials and guidelines and believe that the programme structure suppresses critical thinking by exposing young minds to narratives without analytical scrutiny or dissenting sources, drawing parallels to Soviet-era indoctrination. Indeed, the "Important Conversations" programme mirrors the Soviet Young Pioneers' ideological education with its integration of lessons, oaths, and symbols into school life.[174] "Important Conversations" has been criticised by parents and teachers as political propaganda and indoctrination; however, educators who resist the curriculum or fear the draft have faced massive pressure such as firing, resignation, and ridicule.[175]

171 Photo accessed from: Kremlin.ru, 2022b

172 Tambovskaya Zemlya, n.d.-b. More class examples can be found by year, starting in 2022-23 on Important Conversations' official website at: Rozgovory o Vazhnom, n.d.-a

173 Rozgovory o Vazhnom, n.d.-b

174 Rozhanovskaya, 2023; Air Force Institute of Technology, 1975; Platoff, 2022

175 Military mobilization has taken a toll on Russian schools. An investigation from the independent media outlet *Verstka* reported that Russian teachers, who aren't exempt from the draft, are going into hiding and fleeing the country. See e.g. Satanovskii, 2022; Ilyushina, 2022; Litvinova, 2023; Akhmedova, 2022

"THE ABC OF IMPORTANT MATTERS"

"The ABC of Important Matters" «Азбука о важном» ("ABC Project") is a Russian patriotic educational project launched in 2023 and closely associated with Kiriyenko's political youth strategies.[176] The project serves as a regional (most prominently far east) component or supplement to the broader national curriculum of "Conversations about Important Matters"/«Разговоры о важном.»

Designed primarily for preschoolers and primary school students, the "ABC Project" uses the alphabet to introduce children to patriotic words and socio-political concepts associated with Russian national identity. Each letter of the Russian alphabet is paired with a specific word or concept that aligns with state-promoted values (e.g., "army" "fatherland," and "traditions") and introduces the slogan widely used in pro-war propaganda, "*Svoikh ne brosaem*" ("We do not abandon our own").[177]

It's worth noting that the materials distributed to such young students are visually appealing and often feature illustrations by professional artists, such as renowned artist, Alexander Ten, who created 48 original drawings for the preschool version.[178] Analysts have described the "ABC Project" as a tool in an ideological battle within children's literature.[179]

The ABC Project was initially piloted in Russia's Far East under the supervision of the presidential envoy's office under Yury Trutnev, the presidential representative for the Far Eastern Federal District and Arctic, and Deputy Prime Minister. Kiriyenko and Trutnev share a long-standing professional and personal relationship characterized by shared career paths as technocrats from the 1990s and a mutual passion for martial arts.[180] The men share joint leadership in the Russian Union of Martial Arts (RSBI, also known as RUMA),[181] established in 2005 and discussed later in this report.



The book of ABC of Important Matters.[182]

176 Krenig, 2023
177 Russian Life, 2024
178 Kolyma.ru, 2023
179 Antel et al., 2024
180 GlobalSecurity, 2022; Krenig, 2023
181 Russian Union Martial Arts, n.d.
182 Photo accessed from: Kolyma.ru, 2023

Yuri Trutnev is Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation and Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Far East Federal district. He sits on Rosatom's Supervisory Board as one of nine members (along with Kiriyenko). Trutnev acts as a key government liaison with Rosatom regarding Arctic infrastructure. His focus is on the development of the Northern Sea Route and the construction of nuclear icebreakers. He also frequently co-chairs commissions involving Rosatom projects, such as uranium mining in Namibia. Trutnev is an accomplished athlete and holds a 7th dan in Kyokushin karate. As far back as the 1980s, he has been involved in promoting martial arts both within Russia and internationally, often attending events like the "Battle of Champions."

Trutnev and Kiriyenko's paths likely first crossed in the early 2000s when Trutnev was the **Governor of Perm Region** (2000–2004) and Kiriyenko was the **Presidential Envoy to the Volga Federal District** (2000–2005), which included Perm. They later served together in the Russian Cabinet when Trutnev was Minister of Natural Resources (2004–2012) and Kiriyenko headed Rosatom. Kiriyenko and Trutnev share joint leadership in the **Russian Union of Martial Arts (RSBI), which they established in 2005**. RSBI's main donors include national-scale companies, such as Rosatom and its subsidiaries. RSBI was instrumental in using martial arts clubs as fronts for sabotage, weapon training camps, and other types of operations. For example, in December 2022, he co-founded the **"Soyuz" (Union) volunteer detachment** which is composed of high-level martial artists and professional athletes to participate in the conflict in Ukraine. Under Kiriyenko's guidance, Trutnev was also involved in youth and patriotic initiatives, including "The ABC of Important Matters" «Азбука о важном» ("ABC Project") a Russian patriotic educational project initially piloted in Russia's Far East under Trutnev's supervision.[183]



Yuri Petrovich Trutnev visited Kyokushin-kan Honbu Dojo and took part in training with Kancho Royama
Source: Kyokushin World Union (KWU).[184]

[183] Designed primarily for preschoolers and primary school students, the "ABC Project" uses the alphabet to introduce children to patriotic words and socio-political concepts associated with Russian national identity. See Krenig, 2023; GlobalSecurity, 2022; Russian Union Martial Arts, n.d.; Romanovskiy, 2024a; Rosatom, n.d.-c; International Arctic Forum, n.d.

[184] Photo accessed from: KWUnion, 2018

"MOVEMENT OF THE FIRST"

The integration of "Important Conversations" («Разговоры о важном») into school curricula coincided with substantial growth of another Kiriyenko initiative, "Movement of the First," (Движение первых) which serves as a modern centralized framework to oversee the ideological upbringing, patriotism, and social development of children and teenagers.

"Movement of the First" was established under presidential directive (Federal Law No. 258-FZ) in 2022, following Putin's personal initiative to create a unified national platform for youth development.[185] It is a state-sponsored youth organisation established to foster active citizenship and national values among children and adolescents aged 6 to 25.[186] The movement is led by Kiriyenko loyalist, **Artem Metelev,** a former representative of ruling party United Russia's "Young Guard," and a participant in Kiriyenko's "Leaders of Russia" competition.[187] Based on an Executive Order signed by Putin in July 2023, "Movement of the First" centres were opened in all Russian universities, not just in schools.[188]

After its launch, "Movement of the First" rapidly incorporated representatives from Russia's newly annexed territories, and delegations from those territories participated in the First Congress held in December 2022.[189] According to a Russian media report, the government allocates over ₽21.3 billion (€213m) annually to the organisation.[190] The movement uses propaganda to promote military service and national unity, particularly among young members, and has so-called "re-education" initiatives in annexed Ukrainian territories to brainwash captured Ukrainians to align with Russian perspectives.[191]

Currently, according to "Movement of the First's" official website, the movement operates across all subjects of the Russian Federation, with over 48,000 primary departments, 2,200 local branches, and 89 regional offices.[192] Putin announced in March 2025 that the organisation's membership reached 11 million. Russian state media announced that "Movement of the First" opened about 40,000 offices across the country.[193] According to investigative reports, school administrators demand key performance indicators (KPIs) for enrolment in the movement from teachers, while municipal and regional authorities focus on pressuring the administrators to bolster participation.[194]

"Movement of the First" has its own TV channel (DVIZH), a radio station, and an app and website in Russian and English (будьвдвижении.рф and wefirst.ru) with over 14 million registered users. The movement also uses VKontakte and Telegram to share event announcements, project updates, and interactive content, engaging youth in patriotic and developmental activities.[195]

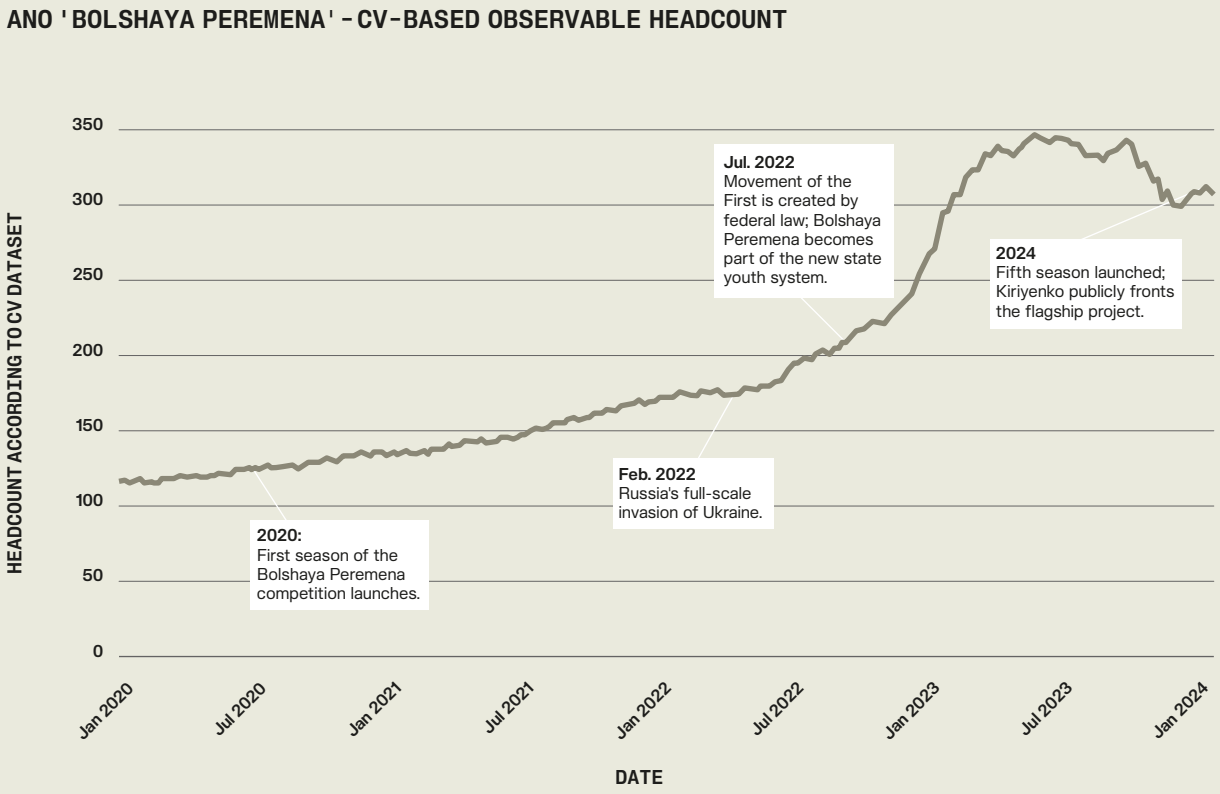
"Movement of the First" prioritizes respect for Russian traditions, culture, and historical continuity. Its public materials emphasize the importance of patriotism, service to the Fatherland, devotion to the Motherland, and personal development among youth. It is often described as a modern successor or analogue to the Soviet-era "Pioneer" organization, aimed at uniting children, teenagers, educators,

185 Kremlin.ru, 2023e
186 Elistinsky Lyceum, n.d.
187 Pertsev, 2025a
188 Federal Law No. 379 FZ, July 24, 2023
189 Kremlin.ru, 2022c
190 Parlamentskaya Gazeta, 2023
191 Bilokobylskyi, 2024; Klein & Stewart, 2025; Khrebtan-Hörhager, 2024
192 Movement of the First, n.d.
193 Kommersant, 2025; TASS, 2023b
194 Pertsev, 2025a
195 Dvizheniye Pervyh, n.d.-b; Aktsiya Elka Zhelaniy, n.d.

parents, and mentors for the common good of the country. The organization promotes programmes that foster education, knowledge acquisition, and scientific and technological proficiency for societal benefit.[196] Based on the movement's official website, activities include education, leisure, volunteering, creative projects, sports, media, and large-scale events like congresses or parades. "Movement of the First" also influences a series of weekly lessons frequently stress the importance of student participation into organized activities like the movement.

"ZARNITSA 2.0"

"Movement of the First" places a strong emphasis on military-patriotic activities that appear to prioritize state loyalty and the militarization of the country overall.[197] The movement runs dozens of flagship programmes, including "Zarnitsa 2.0," a military-patriotic game integrating digital technologies to enhance traditional values and foster interest in Russian history and the Armed Forces.[198] According to a 2025 report by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, around 800,000 children took part in the war game in 2024 with 3.1 million participating in 2025.[199]



196 Movement of the First, 2025a

197 Trudolyubov, 2024

198 Dvizheniye Pervykh, n.d.-a

199 Klein & Stewart, 2025

ANO BOLSHAYA PEREMENA'S CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside ANO Bolshaya Peremena in the same CVs

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

ANO BOLSHAYA PEREMENA
(Target organisation)

332
employers share at least one CV with ANO Bolshaya Peremena

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

1	Movement of the First	42 shared CVs
2	ANO RSV	19 shared CVs
3	ANO DVFM	16 shared CVs
4	Internet Development Institute	15 shared CVs
5	RO Knowledge/Znanie	13 shared CVs
6	Yandex	12 shared CVs
7	Alfa-Bank	11 shared CVs
8	Sberbank	10 shared CVs
9	RANEPA	10 shared CVs
10	Rostelecom	10 shared CVs
11	Rosmolodezh	10 shared CVs
12	ANO CRKI / Tavrida	9 shared CVs
13	Russian Youth Union	9 shared CVs
14	HSE University	8 shared CVs
15	Artek	8 shared CVs
16	VK / Mail.ru	7 shared CVs
17	Roscongress Foundation	7 shared CVs
18	Rospatriotcenter	7 shared CVs

A shared CV means that the same person listed both ANO Bolshaya Peremena and another employer in their career history.
The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

ANO "BOLSHAYA PEREMENA"

Another flagship organisation of "Movement of the First" is **ANO "Bolshaya Peremena"/Большая Перемена** (translated as "Big Change" and also referred to as the "Big Break"), which began its work as a charity for orphans but was turned into a high-visibility platform for patriotic education and social mobility under state control. Kiriyenko personally chairs the entity's supervisory board, and "Movement of the First" is a major recipient of funds from the Presidential Grants Foundation, also overseen by Kiriyenko.[200] The foundation serves as another example of how Kiriyenko leverages his signature management style of competitive selection, combined with ideological vetting, to fill important future positions in Russia.

[200] Federal Press, n.d.-a



Putin addresses Pioneers.[201]

The foundation operates one of the largest youth competitions in Russia. Kiriyenko defines its primary goal as helping youth "try themselves in different fields and decide on their future occupation" in service to the country.[202] Originally for 5th–10th graders, it has expanded to include college students and younger children.

The "Bolshaya Peremena" annual competition is designed to provide opportunities for self-realization for youth from the 5th grade up to age 25.[203] Winners receive significant financial grants (up to ₽1 million/€10,000) for education or business startups, as well as trips across Russia.[204] "Serving the Motherland," one competition category, promotes the Kremlin's view of Russian history and armed aggression in Ukraine to Russia's youth.[205]

Kiriyenko is directly involved in managing the project and meets with finalists to discuss the development of the contest. Kiriyenko emphasises that the contest is unique because its participants act as "co-authors." Under his direction, students have been involved in co-creating the contest's branding, slogans, and regional teams.

201 Photo accessed from: Almenda, 2023a
202 The Russian Government, 2024b
203 Institute of Mass Information, 2023
204 Kozhukhova et al., 2025
205 Institute of Mass Information, 2023



Photo: Kirill Zykov/RIA News

Kiriyenko in 2024 speaking at the "Bolshaya Peremena" competition, a flagship project of "Movement of the First."[206]

The "Bolshaya Peremena" foundation works closely with Rossotrudnichestvo to bring foreign teenagers to "Artek International Children's Center", a Soviet-era youth camp located in illegally annexed Crimea, which serves as a soft power tool to promote pro-Russian sentiments and build pro-Russia networks abroad. In 2024, children from Canada, Finland, France, Sweden, the US, and UK took part in the summer camp.[207] A few children from Finland who attended Artek did so free of charge – as they won a competition organised by the Russian Science and Culture Centre in Helsinki, which required them to write an essay an make a presentation in Russian.[208] The camp's organisers claim that overall, 1,000 children from 67 countries participated.[209] Kiriyenko frequently meets with participants at Artek.

"OUR VICTORY"

Kiriyenko has been heavily involved in promoting the **"Our Victory"** (**«Наша Победа»**) national competition, **one of several projects focused on strengthening patriotic education and honouring the Second World War**. Kiriyenko has frequently used this platform to engage youth and promote national unity narratives. "Our Victory" likely became more important for Kiriyenko after Putin appointed Kiriyenko to head the supervisory board of Russia's Centre for Historical Memory in 2025, essentially giving him a core role as guardian of the Kremlin's official interpretation of Russian history.[210]

206 National Centre Russia, 2024a
207 Yle, 2024
208 Yle, 2024
209 Yle, 2024
210 Novaya Gazeta, 2025

"Our Victory" is organized by the Commission of the Civic Chamber on Demography and Protection of Family, Children, and Traditional Family Values. The purpose of the competition is to collect and evaluate ideas and initiatives of Russian residents to celebrate Victory Day and to scale up the best projects.[211] "Our Victory" serves to link modern youth with Soviet-era historical narratives, aiming to ensure historical continuity. According to one report, "the state and public institutions continue to work together to implement socially significant projects aimed at studying and preserving information about the main historical events of our country."[212]

"WITHOUT A STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS"

The all-Russian project "Without a Statute of Limitations" (**Без срока давности**) is another major state-sponsored historical and educational initiative aimed at preserving the memory of Nazi crimes against civilians in the USSR during the Second World War. Kiriyenko's "Russia Land of Opportunity" is an official partner of the "Without a Statute of Limitations" project, facilitating its integration into youth management and volunteer competitions. Kiriyenko has publicly stated that the project aims to educate future generations and counter what he describes as modern attempts by "Nazis" to influence youth beliefs.[213] The competition theme of the project is manifestations of genocide against the Soviet people during the Great Patriotic War. In 2023, project groups from the new regions (Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics, Zaporozhe and Kherson regions) of Russia took part in the competition for the first time.[214]

"THE HOMEROOM TEACHER'S FORUM"

"The Homeroom Teachers' Forum" is a major annual Russian educational event bringing together thousands of educators to discuss school system development, upbringing, and mentorship. The forum highlights the "sacred" role of teachers, focusing on moral education, mentorship, and professional development rather than just subject teaching.

In October 2025, Kiriyenko spoke at "The Homeroom Teachers' Forum," stating that the forum "has become a true family, a real example of devotion and professionalism. People who have chosen the sacred profession of teacher and educator as their calling set an example of true service not only for children — their pupils, not only for their parents, but for everyone around them. Thank you very much for this…. What your pupils will believe in and what they will dream about will determine not only their fate and happiness but also the success and future of our country."[215] The "Homeroom Teachers' Forum," held on the instructions of President Putin, is supported by ANO "Dialog Regions."

The forum has strong pro-war themes, including the importance of duty to one's country and themes of self-sacrifice. In 2024, The VOIN (Warrior) Centre[216] (another Kiriyenko-initiative) partnered with the Alexander Nevsky Military University to offer workshops on topics such as first aid, UAV control, and firearms training. Participants learned how to apply tourniquets, as well as how to operate drones and test their shooting accuracy.[217] Programmes like this fall in line with a broader trend of the Kremlin integrating unmanned aerial systems (UAS) training into its

211 Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2023

212 Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2023

213 Vremya, 2022

214 Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2023

215 National Centre Russia, 2025c

216 The Centre was launched on Kiriyenko's initiative in 2023 and functions as one of the many organizations that contribute to the militarization of *Russian* children and youth. The Centre's activities include training in drone piloting, shooting, engineering, and tactical medicine.

217 National Centre Russia, 2025c

national education system to instil a military spirit in its future generations.[218] In 2025, UK Defence Intelligence released a report claiming that over 2,500 teachers in more than 500 schools and 30 colleges had now received UAS training through the national education framework. The report states that "In a more concerning trend, recent reports have emerged detailing the Kremlin's efforts to target children as young as 13 through various platforms such as video games, contests, and educational projects aimed at developing defence skills, particularly in UAS operations."[219]

Russia's Minister of Education, Sergey Kravtsov, collaborates with Kiriyenko's son Vladimir to develop digital educational platforms for Russian schools.[220] Unsurprisingly, VK Company was officially announced as the technology partner of the "Homeroom Teachers' Forum," which has its official channel on VK's MAX messenger. Teachers can participate in a quiz via the MAX messenger chatbot and even complete tasks in the "Drugoe Delo" service. The forum hosts podcast recordings with VK experts who contribute ideologically driven thematic content for teachers.[221]

"DNA OF RUSSIA" & "FOUNDATIONS OF RUSSIAN STATEHOOD"

The "DNA of Russia" project («ДНК России») is a Kremlin-backed initiative developing ideological, patriotic, and educational content. The project released a series of videos created to accompany the "Foundations of Russian Statehood" course.[222] Andrey Polosin, a political analyst close to Kiriyenko, supervised the production of The DNA of Russia. The videos are professionally done, with compelling sound and imagery.

The "Foundations of Russian Statehood" (FORS) is a 72-hour course developed by the Russian Presidential Administration (Kiriyenko is the primary architect of the FORS curriculum). The course is part of a broader effort under the "DNA of Russia" project to align higher education with official Kremlin values.[223] The FORS curriculum was officially decreed by President Putin during a session of the Russian State Council in December 2022.[224] Russia's Ministry of Education implemented this national ideological program across schools and universities, and Russian universities received a confirmation that the 72-hour course will be required of all freshmen beginning in fall 2023.

FORS' aim is to foster patriotism, regime loyalty, and a so-called "state-civilization" identity amid the ongoing war in Ukraine. *According to an official document, "mastering the discipline "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood" is the formation in students of a system of knowledge, skills and competencies, as well as values, rules and norms of behaviour associated with the awareness of belonging to Russian society, the development of a sense of patriotism and citizenship, the formation of the spiritual, moral and cultural foundation of a developed and an integral personality, aware of the peculiarities of the historical path of the Russian state, the originality of its political organization and the connection of individual dignity and success with social progress and political stability of their homeland."* [225]

218 SSBCrackExams, 2025

219 SSBCrackExams, 2025

220 Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, 2025

221 National Centre Russia, 2025c

222 Znanie, n.d.-a

223 Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2024

224 Kremlin.ru, 2023a

225 Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2024

Course objectives include presenting Russia's history (in a predominately victorious light), analysing its civilizational values, and exploring challenges to Russian statehood.[226] Students are presented with lectures and seminars on Russia's unique characteristics, including its vast territory, natural resources, diversity, industry, and infrastructure. They also learn about the heroes of Russian history, which include historic, cultural, and other figures who have shown service and self-sacrifice to the motherland.[227]

4.3 YOUTH MOBILITY INITIATIVES

Through board membership of key organisations, as well as personal connections, Kiriyenko is heavily involved in youth mobility initiatives. Some of them target established professionals who must be monitored for ideological purity and loyalty to the regime. A system comparable to the Soviet-era political commissariat has been implemented, and youth mobilisation policies also demonstrate similarities with their Soviet-era equivalents. Organisations within Kiriyenko's purview provide training and education for youth leaders and professionals in both lower and higher education. Social media is an integral part of youth policies. Youth mobility initiatives are also being implemented in occupied Ukraine, and the annual World Youth Festival and other outward-facing initiatives aim to disseminate Russian narratives to the CIS and globally.

ANO "Integration"

The Organisation for the Integrated Development of Urban & Rural Territories (Integration) /ПО КОМПЛЕКСНОМУ РАЗВИТИЮ ГОРОДСКОЙ И СЕЛЬСКОЙ ТЕРРИТОРИИ «ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ», founded in 2019, is an organisational vehicle used by the Presidential Administration to institutionalize and fund state-led patriotic education and domestic policy projects, bridging the Kremlin's ideological goals and the logistical reality of its nationwide youth forum industry.[228] It is tasked with promoting so-called opinion leaders who advance the Russian government's agenda around the country.[229]

Integration was founded based on Presidential Decree No.106, "On Deputy Heads of Federal Government Agencies for Social and Political Work." Because it was issued as a "closed" or partially restricted decree (often indicated by its absence from standard public databases immediately upon signing), many of its specific operational details were initially reported via official leaks and administrative guidance. The directive states that federal ministries and agencies are required to introduce a position for a deputy head specifically responsible for "social and political work" or patriotic education, which relates to Kiriyenko's overall strategy of strengthening ideological control within state structures. These officials are responsible for controlling the political loyalty of employees, promoting pro-government narratives, organizing patriotic events, and ensuring compliance with the ideological guidelines of the Kremlin.[230] The introduction of this role is widely viewed as a move to reintroduce a form of political commissariat (similar to the Soviet-era *zampolit*) into the civilian government structure. This measure ensures that the civil service remains loyal and ideologically synchronized with the Kremlin's narrative, particularly following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

226 Kolesnikov, 2023a

227 Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2024; Voronov, 2022

228 Popkova, Konev & Kanyukov, 2023

229 Reiter, Zholobova, Safonova & Pertsev, 2024

230 The Insider, 2024

Integration exposes young people and talented IT workers, teachers, and historians to propaganda under the guise of professional development. Also, it ensures elite continuity, as it can provide career paths and leadership roles for the children of high-ranking Russian officials, ensuring the next ruling class is vetted and loyal.[231] Integration played a role in Russia's 2024 presidential elections. According to Russian investigative reports, the ANO participated in the formation of a database to monitor the political sentiments and electoral preferences of employees of organisations subordinate to the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, as well as students.[232]

Longtime Kiriyenko affiliate Sergey Novikov is responsible for numerous projects in Ukraine's occupied territories, specifically overseeing Integration's activities there. ANO Integration organised events for military personnel during which well-known Russian celebrities performed to raise morale.[233] These were termed "propaganda brigades" (**агитбригады**) and included actors and musicians such as Sergey Bezrukov, Yevgeny Petrosyan, Denis Maidanov, or Mikhail Porechenkov – among others.[234] The idea for the performances was said to be initiated by Kiriyenko himself. In addition, Integration supported musicians Alexander Rosenbaum, Yulia Chicherina, and Oleg Gazmanov in raising money for units of the Russian-backed Donetsk and Luhansk National Republics.[235]

Sergey Novikov is one of Kiriyenko's longest-serving subordinates. He started working with Kiriyenko in 2000, where, as a spokesperson for Kiriyenko in Nizhny-Novgorod, he worked on the Social and Cultural Projects Fair to develop a new socio-economic model for the Volga Federal District. When Kiriyenko was appointed head of Rosatom in 2005, Novikov followed him there.[236] Novikov served as his press liaison and director of communications at Rosatom before following Kiriyenko into the Presidential Administration in 2016. Novikov allegedly views Kiriyenko as a role model.

Novikov currently serves as the **Head of the Public Projects Directorate** under Kiriyenko and manages projects aimed at shaping public opinion and education within Russia (he launched the well-known program "Conversations About Important Things"). As Head of the Public Projects Directorate, he has been tasked with expanding Russian soft power efforts in Armenia ahead of its June 2026 elections. Novikov will likely also continue to serve as Kiriyenko's key operative for ideological control, specifically managing the **Russian Internet**, social media, and cultural spheres (cinema, theatre, and music). The two men also jointly manage the **Internet Development Institute (ANO IRI)**, and **ANO Dialog**. As an opera enthusiast, Novikov also has a side gig directing operas, yet he is also known to censor the worlds of music and theatre and has been accused of being the chief censor of Russian culture keeping productions in line with Kremlin narratives and traditional worldviews, and compiling blacklists.[237]

231 Reiter, Zholobova, Safonova & Pertsev, 2024

232 Zholobova, Reiter & Pertsev, 2024

233 Mukhametshina & Ivanov, 2022

234 Zholobova, Reiter & Pertsev, 2024

235 Zholobova, Reiter & Pertsev, 2024

236 Reiter, Zholobova, Safonova & Pertsev, 2024

237 Yaffa, 2025; Pertsev, 2024b; Stezhensky, 2025; Reiter, Zholobova, Safonova & Pertsev, 2024; Lassila 2024



Sergey Novikov.[238]



Sergey Novikov and conductor John Fiore meet with playwright Katarina Aronsson at the Royal Swedish Opera before the premiere of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's opera Iolanta. October 14, 2021. Novikov's Iolanta was staged at the Royal Swedish Opera in 2021. The theatre ceased contact with Novikov and Helikon Opera after learning about Novikov's primary occupation.[239]

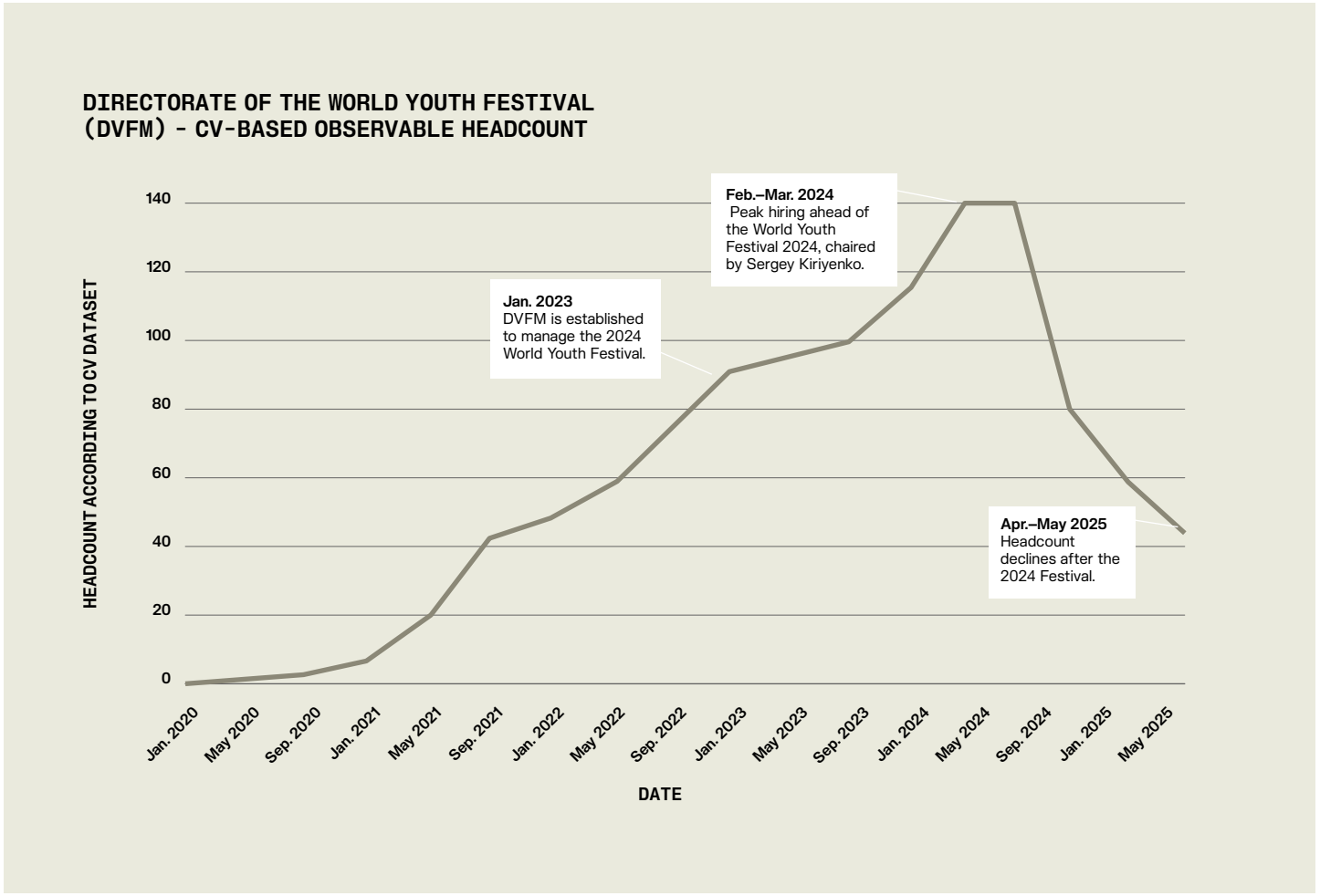
238 Photo accessed from: Reiter, Zholobova, Safonova & Pertsev, 2024

239 Photo accessed from: Reiter, Zholobova, Safonova & Pertsev, 2024

ANO Integration plays strategic roles for the Kremlin. It acts as a middleman for federal subsidies and can receive massive state funds including from agencies such as *Rosmolodezh* (the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs). This essentially enables Integration to distribute them without transparency, also bypassing potential competitive bidding requirements. Russian media reported that, at the end of 2022, Integration received over ₽100m (€1m) each from RusHydro, one of Russia's largest energy companies, Dalgiprotrans JSC, a major Far Eastern company engaged in the design of transport infrastructure (part of the "1520 Group," owned by Alexey Krapivin, oligarch Arkady Rotenberg's partner), and Mosgiprotrans, one of Russian Railways' largest contractors, also engaged in the design of transport facilities. The organisation's total budget is unknown as it comes entirely from non-state sources to cover 54 fulltime staff as of January 2024.[240]

Trainings for professionals found on budget documents include: "VK Social Network for Media Projects" (led by Vyacheslav Prokhorov, VK), "Master of Migration to Telegram" (Dr. Levanov, creator of the main channel on the environment of the SER and network of Telegram channels), "Medical projects in uncertain conditions" (led by Alexey Goreslavsky, IRI and Julia Ablez, ANO Dialog Regions), "How Regional Media Can Be Federal" (led by Andrey Novikov, editor-in-chief of Readovka and Michael Vügin, editor-in-chief of Ura.ru), and "Information blockade in the conflict in Ukraine" (master class led by Alice Lippe).

[240] Zholobova, Reiter & Pertsev, 2024



Directorate of the World Youth Festival

Directorate of the World Youth Festival (DVFM) ДИРЕКЦИЯ ВСЕМИРНОГО ФЕСТИВАЛЯ МОЛОДЕЖИ («ДВФМ») was established in 2023 to manage the 2024 World Youth Festival, to be transformed later into a permanent structure to manage Russian soft power to international youth.[241] Currently, it serves a logistical hub for international youth engagement and operates the International Platform of Opportunities portal to keep foreigners engaged with Russian state initiatives.[242]

DVFM operates as a "counter-narrative hub" and aims at showcasing the "Real Russia" to foreign delegates and dismantling "Western media stereotypes," which in practice means regional expeditions across Russia and the occupied territories of Ukraine to normalize the Kremlin's worldview.[243] DVFM closely collaborates with ANO Dialog and Senezh, and trains foreign bloggers and influencers to create and promote positive content about Russia for international audiences.[244]

241 UN Web TV, 2025

242 World Youth Festival, 2024b

243 World Youth Festival, 2026

244 World Youth Festival, 2025b

DIRECTORATE OF THE WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL'S CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside ANO DVFM or the Directorate of the World Youth Festival in the same CVs

DVFM DIRECTORATE OF THE WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL (Target organisation)

201 employers share at least one CV-link with the Directorate of the World Youth Festival

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

1	ANO CRKI / Tavrida	36 shared CV-links
2	ANO "Bolshaya Peremena"	22 shared CV-links
3	RO Knowledge/Znanie	19 shared CV-links
4	ANO RSV	18 shared CV-links
5	Movement of the First	15 shared CV-links
6	Roscongress Foundation	11 shared CV-links
7	ANO Dialog Regions	10 shared CV-links
8	Internet Development Inst.	10 shared CV-links
9	Rosatom	9 shared CV-links
10	Rosmolodezh	9 shared CV-links
11	Moscow Government	7 shared CV-links
12	Assoc. of Volunteer Centers	7 shared CV-links
13	Rospatriotcenter	7 shared CV-links
14	ANO Dialog	6 shared CV-links
15	ANO "More Than Travel"	5 shared CV-links
16	TASS	5 shared CV-links
17	VK / Mail.ru	4 shared CV-links
18	State Duma	4 shared CV-links

I A shared CV-link means that the same person listed one DVFM employer and another employer in their career history. The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

Sergey Kiriyenko is the primary patron and chairman of the board overseeing DVFM's work and personally leads the organizing committee for both the 2024 and 2026 festivals.[245] As described on the World Youth Festival website, DVFM acts as the operator under the strict supervision of the Committee chaired by Kiriyenko. DVFM works together with *Rosmolodezh* (the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs), this cooperation ensures that the organization's activities are perfectly synchronized with the Kremlin's federal youth policy.[246]

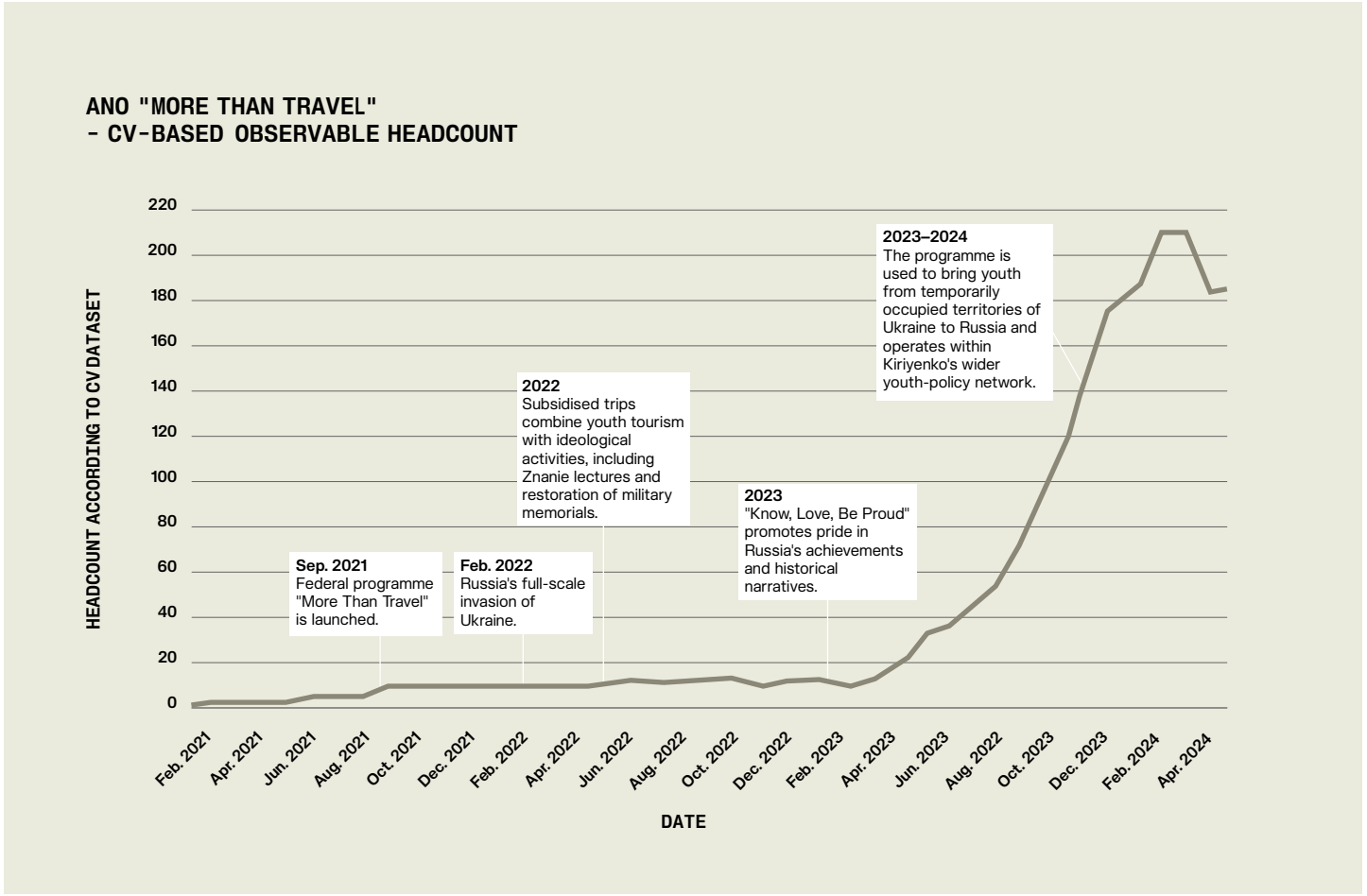
ANO "More Than Travel"

More Than Travel (ВСhР)/БОЛЬШЕ, ЧЕМ ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ («БЧП») is a federal program launched in 2021.[247] It is officially a youth tourism initiative but serves as a tool for ideological indoctrination and the cementing of the Russian World narrative. It provides free or largely subsidized trips to Russians aged 14–35 as a reward for state-sponsored contests like "Leaders of Russia". The ideological component of these trips is a core function. Participants engage in activities such as attending lectures by members of "Znanie," and restoring military memorials.

245 Kuzor, 2026; World Youth Festival, 2026

246 World Youth Festival, 2026

247 More Than Travel, n.d.



Another programme BChP runs is "Know.Love.Be Proud!" which intends to instil a sense of pride in Russia's achievements and historical narratives. The integration of Russian occupied territories in Ukraine is also a pronounced task of the entity, as the programme is used to bring youth from the occupied territories of Ukraine to Russia to solidify their identification with the Russian state. Kiriyenko chairs the supervisory board which oversees BChP and is frequently present at its major events and awards ceremonies. BChP is also integrated into the larger web of organisations under Kiriyenko's partial control, such as *Rosmolodezh* (the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs), "Russia- Land of Opportunities," and "Movement of the First."[248]

According to its official website, as of early 2026, BChP has hosted over 320,000 participants from Russia and the occupied territories.[249] Its funding is safeguarded by the national project "Youth and Children" and its budget for 2025 was ₽4 billion (€40m), nearly triple the originally planned ₽1.5 billion.[250]

BChP's current general director is **Olesya Teterina**, who was recently awarded a presidential commendation for her work in concluding "socially significant events."[251] BChP was legally tucked under a massive new federal project called "We are together (education of a harmoniously developed personality)," which had a total budget of for 2025 of 66.63 billion (€660m).[252]

248 Movement of the First, 2025b; National Centre Russia, 2025e

249 More Than Travel, n.d.

250 National Centre Russia, 2025e; Verstka, 2024b

251 Visit Primorye, 2024

252 Verstka, 2024b

ANO “Center for the Development of Cultural Initiatives”

ANO “Center for the Development of Cultural Initiatives” (CRKI) (АНО «ЦРКИ» Таврида), often referred to by its primary brand, **“Tavrida” or “Tavrida. ART,”** is a Russian autonomous non-profit organization dedicated to fostering young talent in the creative industries. **“Tavrida”** is a project of the federal youth agency “Rosmolodezh” under the national project “Obrazovanie” (education). Tavrida has served as a Nationwide Youth Education Forum since 2015 and evolved into a creative industries ecosystem in 2021. Tavrida boasts an **“Art Park,”** a 250-hectare public space featuring large-scale installations and architectural objects created by young creators. Tavrida’s key projects and activities include the **ART Festival**, which is an annual “festival of festivals” that gathers thousands of participants for music, theatre, street art, and educational sessions. Another project is **“Meganom Academy of Creative Industries,”** which is a permanent year-round educational centre providing advanced training for future leaders in culture and the arts. Tavrida’s activities also include seasonal workshops focusing on specific disciplines like cinema, fashion, robotics, and literature, and managing grant competitions, a record label, a publishing house, and a network of art residences across Russia, including in occupied territories of Ukraine. For example, in March 2025 an Arts Centre was created in the occupied Kherson region. [253]



Ksenia Artemyeva [255]

“Tavrida” was launched in Crimea (Sudak) not long after the annexation of the peninsula. The project is managed by the Public Projects directorate headed by **Sergey Novikov**. **Ksenia Artemyeva** is currently the CEO of the “Tavrida” Art Cluster. She frequently serves as a spokesperson for the project at major events like the World Youth Festival, where she promotes free educational programmes like the “Music Laboratory” for young creators. Kiriyenko has been the key speaker and patron of the Tavrida forums since their inception in 2019, positioning them as a centrepiece of the Kremlin's information strategy. Journalists describe Kiriyenko’s use of Tavrida as a tool to cultivate a loyal creative class. According to media reports, regional governors in Russia were encouraged to implement Tavrida-affiliated art residencies on a regular basis after the strategic session’s introduction.[254]

ANO Center of Knowledge “Mashuk”

ANO Center of Knowledge “Mashuk” (“CZ Mashuk”) is an educational and training centre based in Pyatigorsk, Stavropol Krai, and serves as a federal educational centre focused on professional development and training for youth leaders, teachers, and specialists in youth policy. It is often referred to as **“The City of Knowledge”** (**Город знаний**). The centre falls under Kiriyenko’s direct sphere of influence, and his system of so-called “Knowledge Centres” throughout Russia (which includes the Senezh and Tavrida centres). The primary focus is training

253 Center for the Development of Cultural Initiatives, 2023; Headhunter LLC, n.d.; Kremlin.ru, 2023c; Rozhnova, 2020

254 Headhunter LLC, n.d.; Vorobiova, 2024; Kim, 2024; Removskaya, 2020; Center for the Development of Cultural Initiatives, 2023; World Youth Festival, 2025c; Art Cluster Tavrida, n.d.; Youngspace, 2024

255 Photo accessed from: Youngspace, 2024

schoolteachers, university professors, and educational administrators in modern pedagogical methods and state-aligned ideological frameworks. However, the ANO also provides training for regional leaders of youth organizations and government employees working in domestic policy. Unofficially, it serves to promote state-aligned narratives, and analysts have historically compared these camps to Soviet-era youth policies aimed at state-controlled social mobilization. [256]

In the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the centre operates as a critical instrument of the Russian state's domestic informational confrontation and social mobilization strategy. Its role has evolved from a general youth forum into a specialized training hub for anchoring state narratives within the Russian education system and integrating the war's social impact into civilian life. In June 2025, Mashuk launched programs for history and Russian language teachers from over 20 countries (including Armenia, Bulgaria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Georgia, India, Iraq, China, Mali and Belarus), focused on "preserving historical truth" in the face of modern "global challenges" (i.e., the war in Ukraine). **Anton Serikov**, who is often characterized as a member of Kiriyenko's inner circle, is the Director General of the Mashuk Knowledge Centre.[257] The campus features modern residential blocks, amphitheatres for large lectures, specialized "creative laboratories" and digital media centres for content production and can accommodate approximately 300–600 people simultaneously for residential programmes. [258]

According to media reports and social media sites (VK and Telegram), the centre's 2026 curriculum focuses on digital pedagogy, leadership, and national unity. Key programmes include **"Spring Pedagogical Council"** (Vesenniy PedSovet) which began 28 April 2026 and covered digital pedagogy, AI integration in classrooms, and modern educational formats. **"The School for Moderators and Volunteers"** is focused on tools for working with youth and adults, including AI in communication and project activity development. Another programme, **the International School Director Programme** is a new initiative for 2026 to train school leaders using top Russian and international management practices. There is also an **"All-Russian Youth Forum – Mashuk,"** a large event scheduled in August 2026, and aiming to host 2,200 young professionals in pedagogy and education to discuss topics like the "technology of upbringing" and AI.[259]



Anton Serikov, Director General of the Mashuk Knowledge Centre shakes hands with Natalia Virtuozova, Director General of the National Centre RUSSIA in 2025.[260]

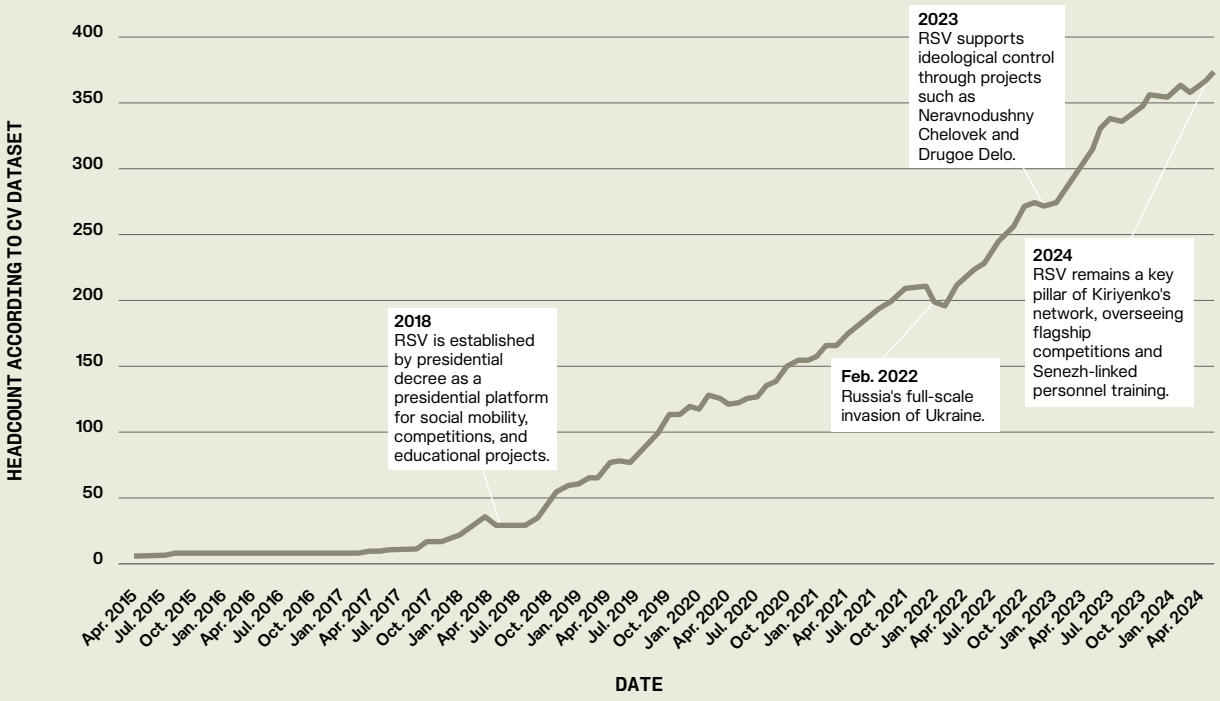
256 Audit, n.d.; Audit, 2026; Mashuk Knowledge Centre, n.d-c; World Youth Festival, 2025a

257 According to investigative reports like Ru Mafia, Serikov has been implicated in schemes involving "PRO Brand" and familial connections to divert or embezzle funds from state-sponsored projects or initiatives.

258 Audit, n.d.; Audit, 2026; Mashuk Knowledge Centre, n.d-c; World Youth Festival, 2025a

259 Mashuk Knowledge Centre, n.d.-a; Mashuk Knowledge Centre, n.d.-b; Mashuk Forum, n.d.; Vestnik News, 2026

260 Photo accessed from: National Centre Russia, 2025b



4.4 PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES

In addition to targeting children and adolescents, the regime monitors and indoctrinates adult professionals. Kiriyenko plays a key role here as well. An example of one initiative is the “School of Governors,” which trains political leaders in Kiriyenko’s approach to governance. The regime actively works to militarise the state apparatus and secure the loyalty of war veterans by promoting their recruitment into government structures.

ANO RUSSIA – LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES' CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside ANO Russia - Land of Opportunities in the same CVs

ANO RUSSIA – LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES (Target organisation)

457 employers share at least one CV with ANO RSV

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

1	RO Knowledge/Znanie	37 shared CVs	10	ANO BCHP	18 shared CVs
2	HSE University	28 shared CVs	11	Movement of the First	17 shared CVs
3	ANO CRKI / Tavrida	25 shared CVs	12	Rosmolodezh	12 shared CVs
4	Moscow Government	24 shared CVs	13	RRC	12 shared CVs
5	Internet Development Institute	22 shared CVs	14	ANO Dialog Regions	11 shared CVs
6	RANEPA	21 shared CVs	15	VK / Mail.ru	11 shared CVs
7	Rosatom	21 shared CVs	16	Dir. of the World Youth Festival	11 shared CVs
8	Sberbank	20 shared CVs	17	Russian Post	11 shared CVs
9	Bolshaya Peremena	19 shared CVs	18	Yandex	10 shared CVs

A shared CV means that the same person listed both employers in their career history. The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

ANO "Russia – Land of Opportunities"

The National Project "Youth and Children" encompasses several federal projects designed to foster talent development, patriotic education, and self-realisation among the youth. Key among these projects is "Russia-Land of Opportunities" (RSV)/РОССИЯ - СТРАНА ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ («РСВ»).

RSV is an autonomous non-profit organization (ANO) established in 2018 by a decree from President Vladimir Putin.[261] The goal of the organization is to create a centralised "presidential platform" designed to act as a "social elevator" for students, young professionals, and management-level individuals, through various competitions, Olympiads, and educational projects.[262] For example, Vladislav Davankov, a leader within the systemic opposition party "New People" and presidential candidate in 2024 had a significant career in RSV before entering the State Duma.[263]

261 RSV, n.d.

262 Tsvetkova, 2025

263 Russian Election Monitor, 2024a

Alexey Komissarov is the Co-Chairman of the Central Headquarters of the All-Russia People's Front (ONF) and the CEO of the ANO Russia – Land of Opportunities, which manages high-profile personnel contests like "Leaders of Russia," designed to identify and promote talent for government service. As of 2023, Komissarov is also the rector of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), an institution that trains future state officials. This role is seen as a strategic extension of Kiriyenko's influence over Russia's educational and administrative personnel. Under his leadership, the academy has been integrated into Kiriyenko's broader political infrastructure to train future rectors, vice-rectors, and educational managers in alignment with state ideology.

Komissarov and Sergey Kiriyenko share a close professional and political relationship, with Komissarov often described as a trusted right-hand man and a key lieutenant within Kiriyenko's influential political bloc. Their partnership is primarily cantered on the Kremlin's efforts to cultivate a new generation of loyal Russian elites through "social elevator" projects and educational institutions. Their collaboration extends into the tech sector; Kiriyenko has overseen the restructuring of Yandex in the Kremlin, while Komissarov has served as a member of the Yandex board, acting as a link between the state and the company. Komissarov also has experience in the West; he began his career as an entrepreneur and won the Russian stage of Ernst & Young's "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 2010. He is sanctioned due to his leadership in the All-Russia People's Front and his role in supporting policies that undermine Ukraine's sovereignty, including fundraising for military units in occupied regions.[264]



Putin and Komissarov.[265]

RSV oversees dozens of nationwide contests and programs. The most prominent is "Leaders of Russia," a Kiriyenko-affiliated management competition for prospective government and corporate officials.[266] Other projects include "I'm a Professional" (for students), Kiriyenko's signature "School of Governors" program which recruits and trains regional heads, and "Time of Heroes," a career program specifically designed for veterans who participated in the war in Ukraine.[267]

264 Intelligence Online, 2023; Pertsev, 2024b

265 Photo accessed from: Kremlin.ru, 2021c

266 The BEARR Trust, 2018

267 Verstka, 2024c; Pertsev, 2024b; Churakova & Anin, 2025

Above all, RSV is an important pillar for ideological control, which operates through several interconnected layers. For example, "Neravnodushny Chelovek" (The Concerned Person) is a survey platform created jointly with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia, that has expanded to nearly 450 universities (almost half of all Russia's higher education).[268] Through its routine surveys, it collects data on students' "social and psychological well-being," which critics and journalists suggest is used to identify risk groups or students with anti-government views.[269]

"Drugoe Delo" (Another Matter) is a mini-app within the social network VKontakte owned by RSV.[270] It uses "gamification" methods, offering points for those who attend webinars on ecology or culture, which can eventually be traded for high-value rewards like internships at state-linked companies or travel within Russia. This may be compared to Chinese "social credit scores".

RSV plays an important role in justifying Russia's occupation of Ukraine to Western audiences. It organises tours for foreign influencers to the occupied territories of Ukraine, so that they can create positive content and praise Russia.[271]

Perhaps most importantly, RSV manages the Senezh Management Workshop, an educational centre used to train winners and finalists of its various competitions for professional career in the public and private sector.[272] According to media reports, the organisation distributes more than ₽15 billion (€150m) annually.[273] According to the investigative website Vyorstka, Senezh is most likely "Kiriyenko's favourite pet project." Kiriyenko's job via Senezh is to manage the internal audience's perception, including in the regions. Whether the goal is supporting the war or selling a peace treaty, Senezh is where the messaging is refined to ensure the Russian public remains calm and compliant. This involves marginalizing radical patriots (known as "Z-patriots") and focusing on a "calm majority" that will accept any decision made by the leadership.[274] *Vyorstka* claims that a major weakness of Senezh is that the siloviki (security and military officials) do not attend these seminars. Therefore, Kiriyenko's political instructions often clash with the reality of how police and security agencies act on the ground.[275]

According to an official budget report, a total of ₽1.2 billion (€12m) will be spent on RSV programmes annually by 2030.

268 South Ural State University, 2025

269 Khayrutdinov, 2026

270 Drugoe Delo, n.d.

271 Sebastian, Krebs & Vlasova, 2025

272 Kremlin.ru, 2025b

273 Verstka, 2024a; Rusprofile, n.d.-c

274 Verstka, 2024c

275 Verstka, 2024c

“School of Governors”

A signature Kiriyenko project founded in 2017, the “School of Governors” (Школа губернаторов) is a high-level personnel training program for Russian regional leaders. It is located at the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) and serves as a key tool for creating a loyal, technocratic elite.[276] Reportedly, 55 of Russia’s current 89 governors graduated from the school.[277] Most Russian governors have been appointed by Kiriyenko through this programme. [278] The school for governors is sponsored by Sberbank and is hosted at its resorts and aims to train and ideologically align candidates for gubernatorial elections.

The **Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration/РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАРОДНОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА И ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ СЛУЖБЫ ПРИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТЕ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ (RANEPA/«РАНХиГС»)** is one of the largest Russian universities specialising in social sciences, economy and humanities, often called the “Kremlin’s forge of cadres”, playing an important role in staffing the Kremlin’s power vertical and acting as a training ground for Russia’s future civil servants and political elite.[279] Under Kiriyenko’s influence, the academy evolved from a traditional educational institution into a high-tech talent filter designed to ensure the loyalty and efficiency of the state apparatus. Its “Executive reserve programme” is a flagship project, which trains potential regional leaders through business case studies and extreme physical challenges to test their psychological resilience.[280] A newer programme, called “Resource of Russia” aims at identifying top-tier undergraduate students to be fast-tracked into government roles.[281]

RANEPA helped to develop the “Fundamentals of Russian Statehood” course, which became mandatory in all Russian universities across Russia in 2023.[282] The Leaders of Russia contest aims at filtering talent is integrated with RANEPA, as its winners typically receive grants to the academy’s prestigious MBA and MPA programs. RANEPA’s rector Alexey Komissarov[283] is also the CEO of the ANO Russia-Land of Opportunities, which shows the merging of the state’s talent selection and training platform, within Kiriyenko’s direct orbit.

Following the invasion of Ukraine, the school has increasingly incorporated war-related criteria. For example, recent gubernatorial rotations show a preference for candidates who have participated in the military effort or supported the “Defenders of the Fatherland” foundation.[284]

276 Pertsev, 2024f

277 Hollowell, 2026

278 Pertsev, 2024c; Pertsev, n.d.; Zygar, 2024b. Notable “Kiriyenko-Era” corporate-style Governors include Georgy Filimonov (Vologda Region), Alexander Khinshtein (Kursk Region), and Vyacheslav Fedorishchev (Samara Region).

279 Violier, 2025

280 Churakov & Anin, 2025

281 Presidential Academy RANEPA, n.d.

282 Pertsev, 2023a

283 Sanctioned: Open Sanctions, n.d.-a

284 Beznosiuk, 2025; Pertsev, 2026c

Russian media reports suggest there may be limits to Kiriyenko's "School of Governor" approach. Since many governors appointed under the programme are only in their second terms, there is currently little room for new graduates to advance, leading to a "social elevator" to nowhere.[285] Also, Russian media reports that security services are increasingly arresting regional officials and governors without prior coordination with Kiriyenko's team, undermining his ability to guarantee safety to his hand-picked technocrats.[286]

Kiriyenko's political bloc has methodically reduced the autonomy of regional heads, making them more beholden to federal authority than local elites.[287] Regional heads are evaluated based on strict Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), particularly their ability to deliver high election results and maintain social stability.[288] Digital governance strategies discussed in chapter 5 provide additional methods of exerting control over regional governors.

"Time of Heroes"

Time of Heroes (Время Героев) is another one of Kiriyenko's premier programmes. Launched in 2024, it selects veterans of the war against Ukraine for elite management training to become governors, mayors, and federal officials. According to the official website, "Time of Heroes" aims to train "highly qualified, competent managers from among the participants of the special military operation for subsequent work in state and municipal authorities, as well as state-owned companies." [289] War veterans who are graduates of the programme are called Russia's "new elite" and often gain proximity to Putin.[290] By integrating technocrats with war veterans, Kiriyenko is essentially shaping a loyalist administrative class intended to lead Russia through a prolonged conflict and beyond.

The programme is once again managed by the Higher School of Public Administration under the Presidential Academy (RANEPA). Participants undergo a two-year master's degree program consisting of four in-person modules. Training includes management and leadership courses alongside internships in administrative positions.[291] Novaya Gazeta Europe reported that a source from the Presidential Administration told them that the main purpose of "Time of Heroes" is "to show that going to fight in the war is also a potential pathway to securing a prominent position in a government agency at a later date."[292] As of May 2025, 42 participants from the first track had already been appointed to positions in executive and legislative bodies and state corporations. One young graduate, Evgeny Pervyshov, was appointed governor of the Tambov Region in 2025 after fighting in Ukraine.[293]

285 Pertsev, 2026c
286 Warsaw Institute, 2018
287 Pertsev, 2019b; Pertsev, 2023b
288 Pertsev, n.d.
289 The Time of Heroes program, n.d.
290 Elliott, 2025
291 Hopkins & Lobzina, 2025
292 Novaya Gazeta Europe, 2024
293 Pertsev, 2026c

"Time of Heroes" is widely viewed as a Kremlin strategy to ensure the long-term loyalty of ambitious veterans and to militarize various levels of Russian government.[294] The programme is also a way for the Kremlin to address concerns about crime and social instability driven by returning veterans. Kiriyenko's "ecosystem" for veterans is likely designed to transform returning soldiers from a potential security threat into a loyal, administrative "new elite." Expert commentators underscore how Russian veterans of the Ukraine war share similarities with Soviet-Afghan war veterans, including reintegration challenges and post-war roles. Afghanistan-era military figures such as Boris Gromov, Alexander Lebed, and Alexander Rutskoy successfully used the status from their wartime service to advance their political careers.[295]

According to kremlin.ru, over 65,500 applications have been submitted, with a high concentration of highly decorated veterans applying for the second wave (Registration took place from November 15, 2024, to January 15, 2025). In a June 2024 "Time of Heroes" meeting, Putin said that not only professional soldiers would be welcome to apply, but also those who enlisted to serve in the Russian military voluntarily.[296]



Participants in A Time of Heroes meet with Vladimir Putin, 14 June 2024.[297]

Novaya Gazeta Europe was able to establish the identity of 80 of the 83 participants and found that 13 of them are suspected of involvement in war crimes by the Ukrainian authorities. For example, a veteran named Sergey Proklov, commander of the 155th Marine Brigade, was accused of involvement in civilian killings in Ukraine. Despite the accusations, Putin awarded the brigade the honorary Guard Brigade title. In one other example, Major Zaur Gurtsiev led air operations in Mariupol and was tasked with improving missile guidance technology. Under Gurtsiev's leadership, the Mariupol Drama Theatre, a civilian shelter, was hit during the Russian bombing, resulting in up to 600 civilian casualties.[298]

294 Elliott, 2025

295 Goble, 2024; Elliott, 2025

296 Kremlin.ru, 2025a; RBC, 2024

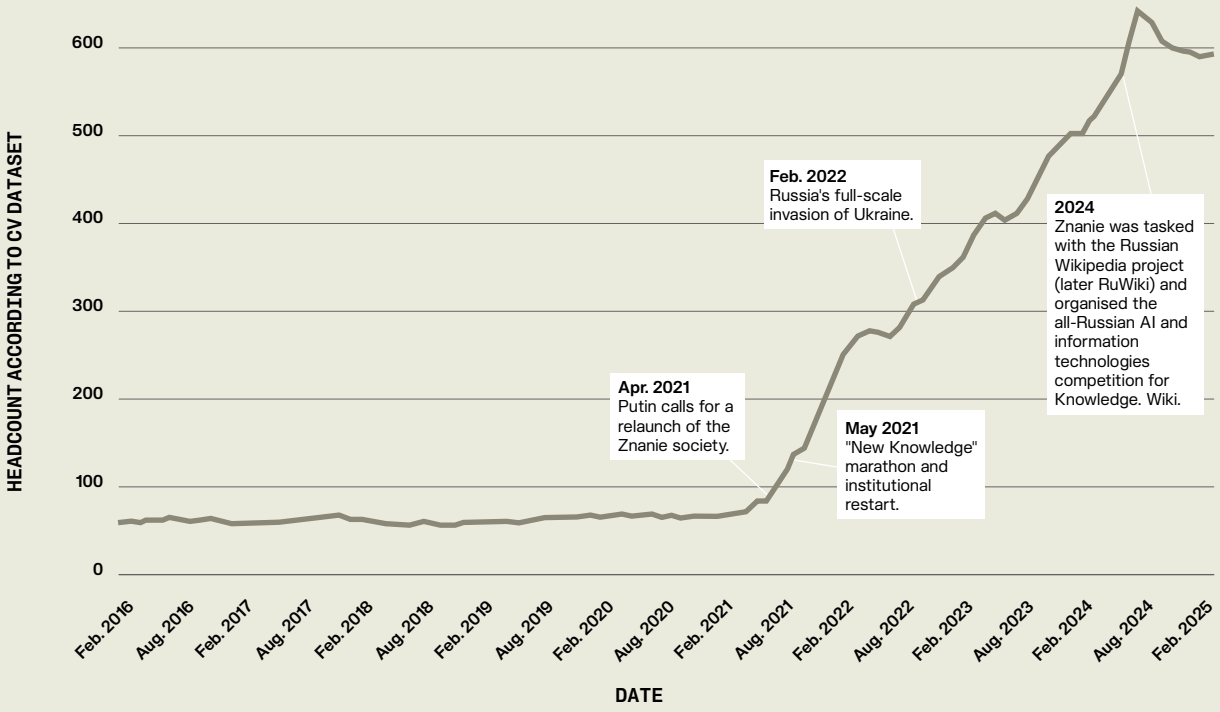
297 Photo: Kremlin.ru, Accessed from: Novaya Gazeta Europe, 2024

298 Novaya Gazeta Europe, 2024

4.5 HISTORICAL-PATRIOTIC INITIATIVES

Kiriyenko plays a key role in the Kremlin's efforts to mobilize Russians of all ages and from all walks of life through various activities and organisations, partially resurrected from the Soviet era. Some of the efforts are digitized. The Russian leadership is trying to secure loyalty by instilling and reinforcing state ideology, which entails patriotism and support for the war against Ukraine. The Russian Orthodox Church is one of the central institutions involved in these efforts. These initiatives take the form of large-scale popular science, public information lectures, and exhibitions on a massive scale.

ZNANIE – CV-BASED OBSERVABLE HEADCOUNT



Znanie

"Znanie" ("Knowledge") is a massive state-backed educational organisation that promotes the Kremlin's ideology as popular science.[299] As stated on its official website, its mission is to popularise scientific and cultural knowledge, foster spiritual-moral education of youth, develop civil society, instil pride in Russia's achievements, preserve historical truth, and counter disinformation/fakes. It particularly emphasises dialogue between youth and prominent public figures in science, culture, sports, and public life.[300]

299 Open Sanctions, n.d.-c

300 Znanie, n.d.-b

ZNANIE'S CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside RO Knowledge/Znanie in the same CVs

RO KNOWLEDGE/ ZNANIE
(Target organisation)

619
employers share at least one CV with Znanie

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

1	ANO RSV	37 shared CVs	10	NTV	21 shared CVs
2	Internet Development Institute	33 shared CVs	11	VK / Mail.ru	20 shared CVs
3	Sberbank	31 shared CVs	12	State Duma	19 shared CVs
4	Moscow Government	30 shared CVs	13	VGTRK	19 shared CVs
5	ANO CRKI / Tavrida	29 shared CVs	14	Synergy University	19 shared CVs
6	RANEPA	27 shared CVs	15	Krasnyy Kvadrat	18 shared CVs
7	Channel One Russia	26 shared CVs	16	Rosmolodezh	16 shared CVs
8	Movement of the First	23 shared CVs	17	ANO DVFM	15 shared CVs
9	Yandex	21 shared CVs	18	T-Bank / Tinkoff	15 shared CVs

A shared CV means that the same person listed both employers in their career history. The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

The organisation is a key tool for the Kremlin's ideological branding among the youth and civil servants of Russia. It hosts stadium-sized lectures on science, technology that integrate state-approved historical and political narratives. It also manages ideological courses such as "Conversations about Important Things" and "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood", as the main developer.[301]

Znanie was formally established by Presidential Decree No. 617 on 11 December 2015 under Vladimir Putin, explicitly to revive and modernise the historic Soviet-era All-Union Society "Znanie," which was founded in 1947 by Soviet intellectuals for mass popularisation of science and knowledge. Members of the Soviet society were engaged in popularising science and lecturing on the achievements of the Soviet economy and industry. In a 2021 address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Putin announced the need for "Znanie" to undergo a major digital reboot on a modern digital platform. [302] Naturally, the digital component strengthened Kiriyenko's hand.

301 Almenda, 2024; Pertsev, 2023a

302 Kremlin.ru, 2021a

"Znanie" operates as an all-Russian public-state (общественно-государственная) non-commercial organization and is funded largely through government subsidies. It maintains branches in all 89 federal subjects of Russia and runs regional supervisory boards in most of them.[303] It uses festivals and youth events to intellectually attract youngsters and plays an important role in the so-called "Russification" of the residents of the occupied territories, opening numerous local offices there.[304]

> *"To convey your vision, to convey your faith, to convey a dream, you need to look someone in the eye — there is no other way. Therefore, mentors and educators are people who, first of all, set a personal example. Today, I want to address special words of gratitude to the heroes of the special military operation, to our veterans, many of whom are present in this hall. They have proven all important things — to themselves and to the country — by demonstrating miracles of courage and heroism on the battlefield,"* noted **Sergei Kiriyenko** from the stage.

Source: Russia.ru Kiriyenko's speech at the Fifth Ceremony of the "Znanie Award"

Its leadership in the early phases included former Putin aide, Vyacheslav Volodin, and Kiriyenko. Since 2021, tech entrepreneur **Maxim Dreval** has served as director, significantly expanding output, the production of high-quality videos/lectures, and drawing federal support for a budget increase from ₽100 million to ₽2 billion (€100,000 to €10m).[305] Dreval was a winner of Kiriyenko's signature "Leaders of Russia" competition which identifies new faces and new talent for Russia's bureaucracy. The Deputy CEO of "Znanie" is **Dmitry Rybalchenko**, a marketing and business executive who believes that VR technologies will become a fundamental element of the educational and outreach programme. Kiriyenko currently serves as the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of "Znanie," enabling him to direct and influence its strategic goals, funding and high-level personnel decisions. [306]

303 Znanie, n.d.-b

304 Almenda, 2024

305 Golod & Yakoreva, 2022

306 Kremlin.ru, 2022a; National Centre Russia, 2024c; Aloyev, 2021

Anton Vladimirovich Serikov is often described as an associate or affiliate of Kiriyenko, particularly in the context of administrative or political projects. Serikov completed additional training at MGIMO, the Skolkovo School of Management, and the Graduate School of Public Administration of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration. He serves as the Director General of the Mashuk Knowledge Center, a project overseen by Kiriyenko that focuses on training regional management and educators, and was deputy head of the "Znanie Society."[307] In 2025, Anton Serikov received a salary as deputy head of ANO "Russia – Land of Opportunity." In 2022 and 2023 he travelled to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Russian media reports surfaced that Serikov was arrested in March 2026 due to alleged large-scale embezzlement linked to his roles under Kiriyenko.[308] The allegations involve a scheme to siphon budgets from Znanie and the Mashuk Centre through an advertising and communications agency called "PRO Brand." The agency allegedly served as a vehicle for siphoning money out of the educational projects overseen by the Presidential Administration.[309] The case is being handled by federal authorities, signalling a high-level investigation into the management of educational budgets within the Kremlin.[310] Political analysts note Serikov's arrest may have been a form of indirect pressure and a strike against Kiriyenko's influence by Russia's security services (FSB).[311] This pressure was likely driven by the fact that Kiriyenko opposed blocking Telegram before the end of the 2026 State Duma election campaign, because alternative apps lacked sufficiently developed propaganda channels. Kiriyenko was wary of provoking public irritation ahead of the elections, but the security services' decision to block the platform was allegedly made without taking the Presidential Administration's position into account.[312]

As The Bell reported, the FSB's Second Service has been dealing with the Internet in Russia since at least the summer of 2025. This structure is responsible for combating the state's ideological opponents and has also been identified as the unit responsible for the poisoning of Alexei Navalny.[313]

"Znanie" activities include events, grants, lecturers, news, contests, women's educational content initiatives, and participation in major forums and exhibitions (e.g., RUSSIA EXPO). However, "Znanie" is best known for its federal educational marathons, the first of which was held in May 2021 and became a symbol of "Znanie's" resurrection. "Znanie" is a general partner of the educational programme of the "World Youth Festival" (a platform for communication between young people from Russia and other countries) and the educational "Znanie.Pervye marathon" is one of the main events of this programme. At a 2024 conference with young participants allegedly from Russia, Serbia, China, the USA, Azerbaijan, Germany, and Mongolia, Dmitry Peskov said "we will not tolerate interference in our lives, in our internal affairs, in our politics. We will not tolerate criticism of our democracy and the claim that it is not what it should be. Our democracy is the best, and we will continue to build it."[314]

307 National Centre Russia, 2024b; Caucasian Knot, 2026

308 Part 4, Article 160 of the Russian Criminal Code

309 Sledstvie.Info, n.d.

310 Caucasian Knot, 2026

311 Caucasian Knot, 2026

312 Kommersant, 2026; Panteleev & Vinokurov, 2026; Surinskaya & Ivanov, 2026; Burkhardt, 2026

313 Randygin, 2026

314 World Youth Festival, 2024a

"Znanie" was also tasked with the Russian Wikipedia project (later RuWiki).[315] In 2024, "Znanie" organized a hackathon-type of competition, the "all-Russian competition on artificial intelligence and information technologies" for "Knowledge. Wiki". Participants had to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in analysing and examining the content, quality, and reliability of texts. Finalists faced challenges in artificial intelligence, language models, information security, data encoding, and translation, and were offered places in the master's programme at the Institute of Information Technologies and Digital Transformation at the Kosygin Russian State University as a reward.[316]

Other notable "Znanie" competitions and programmes include "League of Knowledge," an intellectual tournament designed specifically for students in schools and colleges, and "Share Your Knowledge," a recurring all-Russian educational campaign where experts deliver lectures in schools and universities. In April 2022, CEO of Gazprom-Media Holding, Aleksandr Zharov, spoke at the opening ceremony of "Share Your Knowledge", where he emphasised the importance of digital and technical innovation for Russia. He stated: "We are living in the fourth industrial revolution, to what is called Industry 4.0, the blossoming of the information age. It implies the integration of digital technologies into all spheres of human activity, from business and production to the social aspects of life."[317]



Promotional poster of the Znanie.Wiki hackathon.[318]

Military-patriotic campaigns throughout Russia, including the occupied territories of Ukraine, include "Znanie Heroes," which are part of a broader trend of militarising education. Participants of military operations (including Wagner mercenaries) are invited as speakers. "Znanie Heroes" is actively held in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, focusing on "Russification" and indoctrination.[319] The campaign serves as a crucial element in maintaining public support for the war in Ukraine and ensuring the ideological loyalty of the younger generation.

315 The Moscow Times, 2022a; Astrakhan Tatishchev State University, 2024

316 Astrakhan Tatishchev State University, 2024

317 Gazprom-Media, 2022

318 Accessed from: Astrakhan Tatishchev State University, 2024

319 Almenda, 2023b

Directorate of the Exhibition of the Achievements of Russia

The Directorate of the Exhibition of the Achievements of Russia (DVD Russia)/ ДИРЕКЦИЯ ВЫСТАВКИ ДОСТИЖЕНИЙ «РОССИЯ»/ «ДВД «РОССИЯ» was founded in March 2023[320] as the administrative organ of the "Rossiya" exhibition. The Russia International Exhibition and Forum opened at VDNKh[321] in Moscow between November 2023 and April 2024 (extended to July), and featured 31 expositions from all 89 regions, government departments, as well as large companies and associations. The aim of the exhibition was to demonstrate Russian achievements in technology, military, science, sports, and culture, as well as showcase the regions.[322] Some 18.5 million people are said to have attended the exhibition, though these figures are disputed.[323]



The 2023-24 exhibition.[324]

Sergey Kiriyenko chairs the committee that oversees the exhibition and is the public face of the project. The expo is referred to as "Kiriyenko's brainchild", and it was also used as a launchpad for Putin's 2024 presidential campaign, as it provided a heavily curated environment where "ordinary citizens" could express their desire for Putin to continue his work leading the country.[325] Kiriyenko often personally conducts tours for foreign dignitaries.[326] Following on from the success of the "Rossiya" exhibition, Kiriyenko championed an infrastructure legacy project co-financed by the regions, which lead to the creation of a permanent Rossiya National Centre at the Krasnopresnenskaya Embankment.[327]

The Rossiya National Centre was opened by Putin on 4 November 2024 and hosts interactive expositions showcasing the country's major achievements in science, culture, technology, the environment, and education. According to the website: *The very best of what Russia lives by and takes pride in can be seen with one's own eyes — at expositions and forums, in concert halls, and at lectures and seminars featuring leading contemporary experts and thinkers. But most importantly, it is at the National*

320 Rusprofile, n.d.-a

321 Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy (Выставка достижений народного хозяйства) is a Soviet-era exhibition centre of 2.4 million square metres and approx. 400 buildings.

322 Kremlin.ru, 2023d; Dart Expo (n.d.)

323 Pertsev, 2024d

324 Photo by Mos.ru, accessed from: Wikipedia, 2026

325 Akchabar, 2024

326 Akchabar, 2024

327 Pertsev, 2024d

Centre RUSSIA that tomorrow begins today. Here, the vision of the nation's future is taking shape — open, strong and creative. And to see this future, you don't even need to travel to Moscow: branches of the National Centre RUSSIA are already opening across the regions, turning the entire country into a single space of knowledge, ideas, and inspiration.[328]

The "permanent exhibition" managed by DVD Russia shows a trajectory from a temporary organizer of events into a permanent pillar of state ideology. The exhibition is designed to present Russia as a high-tech, sovereign, prosperous superpower, and focuses on the achievements of the last 20 years, as though it is in fact a monument to the Putin regime.[329] The Centre hosts an array of lectures and events from Kiriyenko-linked educational, training and youth initiatives, including "Znanie," "Time of Heroes," and "Movement of the First."[330]



Public panel discussion on Russian moral values.[331]

DVD Russia's directorate is led by a team of loyal technocrats within Kiriyenko's orbit, such as **Natalia Sergeevna Virtuosova**, who is a former vice-governor of the Moscow region. She is an experienced media and PR manager.[332] The organisation is closely tied with other Kiriyenko organs such as "Russia-Land of Opportunities" and "Senezh," as "Senezh" trains and guides the staff at the exhibition to ensure they act as effective ideological ambassadors.



Copyrighted Logo of DVD Russia.[333]

328 National Centre Russia, n.d.-a

329 Pertsev, 2024d

330 McGlynn, 2023; National Centre Russia, n.d.-b

331 Photo accessed from: Press Office of the National Centre Russia, 2025

332 Rusprofile, n.d.-a; Mukhametshina & Ivanov, 2023

333 Accessed from: Rusprofile, n.d.-d

ANO Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects

Logo of ANO Pskov Revival.[334]

ANO Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects (ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ В ГОРОДЕ ПСКОВЕ) was founded in February 2019 as a specialist organisation dedicated to the restoration of Orthodox monuments in the Pskov region. This includes monasteries and temples included in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List. As of 2019, Pskov Oblast and the Pskov Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) were shareholders of the organisation. The entity claimed to have overseen the restoration of 69 heritage sites by the end of 2025.[335] The majority of its projects involve the restoration of properties of the Pskov Diocese, but it also acts as an urban developer for turning Pskov into a destination for "spiritual tourism".[336]

According to statements by the governor of Pskov, Mikhail Vedernikov, as of 2023 the organisation received a total of ₽2.7 billion (€27m) from the federal budget and other budgetary sources. For the period of 2022-2024, ANO Revival received at least ₽1.5 billion (€15m) from the state and ₽968 million (€1m) in 2025. However, financial reporting seems to be inconsistent with these figures, showing lower levels of income e.g. ₽865,4 million in 2025.[337] The funds Revival received in 2025 included: ₽150 million for the reconstruction of the Porkhov Fortress,[338] ₽810 million from the Ministry of Culture for the restoration of 30 cultural and heritage sites in Pskov Region, as well as ₽8 million for the development of a scientific and design documentation for sites in Klin, a village in Pskov Oblast. [339] A significant sum is intended to support the 7-person staff working at the organisation: according to a post by the Telegram channel Pskov Governorate (Псковская Губерния), around ₽30 million was spent on the staff in 2024. Revival is also subject to four court cases about debts, specifically regarding lack of payment for works rendered.



Denis Vasilenko.[340]

334 Accessed from: AnoPskov.ru, n.d.
335 PLN, 2024
336 Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Pskov Oblast, n.d.
337 List-Org, n.d.-a
338 Interfax, 2024
339 Argumenty i Fakty Pskov, 2024
340 Photo accessed from: Rossiya Pskov, 2021

General Director Vasilenko Denis Anatolyevich appears to be a hands-on, operational director with a background in the construction industry, and he has allegedly faced financial troubles despite the major sums of cash passing through ANO Revival. In addition to funnelling state funding to contractors, Revival manages emergency funds for urgent repairs, together with a volunteer programme managing 1,600 participants.[341] Vasilenko is also linked to several similar but low-visibility ANO, corporate, and charity entities active in Crimea. Information is sparse about both Vasilenko and the entities connected to him such as the Charitable Foundation for the Support of Humanities "My History", ANO "Old City", ANO Revival of Cultural Heritage Sites of the "Republic of Crimea Scythian Neapolis", ANO Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects "Formation", and OOO "Khersoneskaya Trapeza". Vasilenko himself (in addition to his organisations) has been sued multiple times; for example in 2021, for failing to pay his contractor for the renovation of a restaurant hall and kitchen in Pechory, and then again at the beginning of 2023, when the claimant sought a ruling that Vasilenko was bankrupt. These alleged financial problems indicate that funding allocated for the purpose of restoring ancient religious artefacts is likely instead being redirected to other purposes.



Vasilenko received the Medal of Venerable Martyr Zelenetsky in 2024, while the employees of ANO Revival received honorary certificates from the Pskov Diocese Administration.[342]

341 Voyevodin, 2023

342 Photo from: Pskov Information Agency, 2024

ANO "Scythian Neapolis" (АНО «Неаполь Скифский») is an organisation established in 2024 by the Ministry of Culture of Occupied Crimea and the Crimean Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was established following the signing of a memorandum between Sergey Axenov (head of occupied Crimea) and the Metropolitan of Simferopol and Crimea, Tikhon Shevkunov, also known as Putin's confessor. The organisation is based in Simferopol, and it is registered under the same address as ANO "Formation" as well as the Crimean Branch of the ROC. The organisation's aim is to restore the open-air Scythian Neapolis site. **Denis Vasilenko,** the general director of ANO Revival, is also the director of ANO "Scythian Neapolis". Despite announcements about a large-scale restoration project and declaration of support from United Russia Duma MPs for Revival to receive federal funding,[343] it appears that as of 2026, these activities are not underway, while financial statements suggest low levels of activity.[344]



Metropolitan Tikhon Shevkunov and Sergey Axenov signing the memorandum.[345]



Scythian Neapolis.[346]

343 United Russia, 2024

344 List-Org, n.d.-b

345 Photo source: Telegram channel of Sergey Axenov, accessed from: Kommersant, 2024

346 Photo source: Telegram channel of Sergey Axenov, accessed from: Kommersant, 2024

ANO "Formation" (АНО «Становление») is an organisation established in 2013, which has also been headed by Denis Vasilenko since 2025. Along with the change of leadership, the organisation moved to Crimea (it was previously based in Moscow). It focuses on cultural and education activities. It is also a co-founder of the publishing house "The Wandering Traveller" **(ООО «Вольный странник»)**, which publishes writings on religious-related topics. It also has a 2% stake in an exhibition stand design and manufacturing company LLC "Exposervisprofi" **(ООО «Экспосервиспрофи»).** In 2018, Formation received a grant of ₽2.9 million from the Presidential Grants Foundation for historical and cultural projects.[347]

A year later, it won a ₽2 million from the Foundation to implement the "Multinational Russia" photo exhibition series.[348] It is supposed to receive ₽179,000 from the federal budget for its projects in 2026-2027 under the programme "Development of Culture". However, similarly to other organisations connected to Vasilenko, Formation seems to be facing financial issues – in 2026, its bank account was blocked by the tax agency due to a tax debt of ₽241,000. The organisation has been involved in five court cases, most of which were brought against ANO Formation by the Department of Property and Land Relations of the City of Sevastopol due to Revival's failure to pay rent.

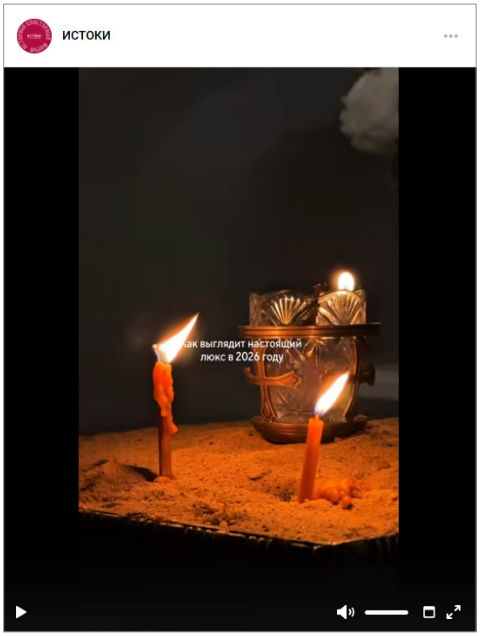
ANO "Old City" (АНО «Старый Город») is another organisation headed by Vasilenko, although less is known about its activities. It was established in 2013, and is registered in Pechory, a town in Pskov Oblast. It focuses on specialised construction.[349] Notably, ANO "Old City" and ANO Revival share the same 7 employees, which hold similar positions in both organisations.

While Revival is officially a regional cultural restoration entity, it could more accurately be described as a high-priority federal project to integrate state interests with the Russian Orthodox Church. The organisation is chaired by former Prime Minister Sergey Stepashin, as part of the patronage network of Sergey Kiriyenko. Kiriyenko allegedly has a deep interest in Pskov due to its spiritual significance to the Russian state. The organisation was championed by Metropolitan Tikhon (Shevkunov), often referred to as "Putin's spiritual mentor"[350] or "Putin's confessor".[351] According to Meduza, Kiriyenko and Tikhon have other joint ideological projects such as Istoki, which is a forum for patriotic education, and which Kiriyenko considers as an incubator for developing patriotic-religious youth projects across Russia. The centrepiece of this forum is in Pskov-Pechory Dormition Monastery, run by Tikhon. At the forum, Kiriyenko's daughter Lyubov Kiriyenko is an organiser and regular speaker.[352]

"Istoki"

Istoki is a historical and patriotic centre which organises summer camps and functions within Kiriyenko's network of organisations. Its name, "Istoki", the Russian term for "Origins", accurately captures its focus: the centre "helps young people and their families to cherish the history of the Homeland, preserve cultural heritage, and respect the traditions of their people and family".[353] Moreover, its programme focus in 2025 included: "celebration of the 80-year anniversary of the Great Patriotic War; strengthening traditional and moral values; genealogy and learning about family history; learning the history of Russia and the achievements of great Russian figures".[354] Tikhon Shevkunov, the Metropolitan of Simferopol and Crimea, reportedly came up with the idea for Istoki.[355] Religion is thus a core aspect of its activities, as seen on its VKontakte page, where much of the content is church-related.

347 Presidential Grant Foundation, n.d.-a
348 Presidential Grant Foundation, n.d.-b
349 Rusprofile, n.d.-b
350 Holodomor Museum, 2022
351 The Moscow Times, 2025c
352 Pertsev, 2023f
353 Istoki, n.d.
354 Istoki, n.d.
355 Pskovskaya Guberniya, 2024a



Screenshot from a post by Istoki on VKontakte[356]
The caption reads: "What real luxury looks like in 2026"

Istoki's links to Kiriyenko are evident. He personally opened the second session in 2022 by making a speech in which he quoted the phrase "only the nation and country which knows its history, has a future"[357] and stated that the camp's activities should take place all year-round.[358] Metropolitan Tikhon and the governor of Pskov Oblast were also present at the opening ceremony. Since then, Istoki launched the Istoki. Shkola (Istoki. School) project, which consists of several shorter camps throughout the year focusing on different themes, in which both children and adults can participate. Reportedly, 40 veterans of the war in Ukraine were responsible for the "patriotic education of children and teenagers" during the Istoki.School camp.[359] Furthermore, Istoki is a project of Rosmolodezh, organised under the "Youth and Children" programme.[360] Representatives of the Movement of the First and participants of the Bolshaya Peremena contest are explicitly mentioned as a separate category of those who can participate in the camp.[361] In 2024, the centre's activities were extended to Sevastopol in occupied Crimea.



The infrastructure of the Istoki camp in Pechory built by "TikhvinProektRestavratsiya" LLC.[364]

Moreover, Istoki appears to be related to ANO Revival. Notably, the company "TikhvinProektRestavratsiya" LLC was responsible for building the infrastructure of the Istoki camp in Pechory in Pskov Oblast, as part of its contract with ANO Revival.[362] "TikhvinProektRestavratsiya" filed a lawsuit against ANO Revival in 2024: the project cost around ₽229,2 million, of which ANO Revival still had not paid ₽49,9 million to the company.[363]

356 Istoki, n.d.
357 Pln-Pskov.Ru, 2022
358 Pskovskaya Guberniya, 2024a
359 Pskovskaya Guberniya, 2024a
360 National Projects of Russia, n.d.
361 National Projects of Russia, n.d.
362 Pskovskaya Guberniya, 2024b
363 Pskovskaya Guberniya, 2024b
364 Photo from: Pskovskaya Guberniya, 2024b

4.6 MILITARY-PATRIOTIC INITIATIVES

Kiriyenko oversees initiatives and policies specifically designed to militarise Russia's children and youth. The cult of the victory in the Second World War is an important element. One of the organisations provides its members with paramilitary training. The organisations are part of Russia's attempts to strengthen control of the occupied parts of Ukraine and to strengthen ties with youth in other foreign countries. Some of the efforts are strongly digitized; therefore, while this section is part of the domestic policy pillar, its activities spill over into the digital and foreign interference chapters.

"Volunteers of Victory"/ Волонтеры Победы

"Volunteers of Victory" (officially the All-Russian Public Movement "Volunteers of Victory" ARPM) is a youth movement that originated from a 2015 initiative to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Russia's victory in the Second World War.[365] The organisation is part of the broader political apparatus overseen by the Public Projects Directorate. "Volunteers of Victory" is controlled by *Rosmolodezh* (Federal Agency for Youth Affairs) and *Rospatriotcenter*, which operate within the political and patriotic sphere managed by Kiriyenko.

"Volunteers of Victory" is primarily funded through presidential grants. Kiriyenko's office is instrumental in managing these grants and the Presidential Grants Foundation/The Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives, which has allocated millions of rubles to the movement's projects.[366] Kiriyenko sits on the foundation's coordinating committee. In 2025, Putin appointed Kiriyenko to head the supervisory board of Russia's Centre for Historical Memory.[367] "Volunteers of Victory" is one of the largest organisations dedicated to preserving historical memory and promoting patriotic upbringing under this umbrella.[368]

The movement has expanded its focus from the Second World War to "popularize Russia's modern achievements" and organise and participate in a range of activities to support veterans. "Volunteers of Victory" amplifies state-promoted ideas of the heroism of ordinary people during the war in Ukraine. Young people aged 14 and above in Russia commemorate events, maintain war graves, and organise patriotic-historical activities.[369] According to investigative reports, "Volunteers of Victory" received a grant from the Presidential Grants Foundation for the "Victor's word. Donbas" project, a series of video clips featuring the Second World War participants connected to Donbas, intended to foster cultural connection between Russia and the DNR and LNR.[370]

The "Volunteers of Victory" movement is under international sanctions for being directly involved in the Kremlin's re-education efforts by recruiting children in the occupied territories of Ukraine to join their pro-Russian movement, as well as for promoting a pro-Russian image while covering up the deportation of citizens. "Volunteers of Victory" also expanded internationally, selecting coordinators in foreign countries to organize remembrance activities, many of whom returned as "Ambassadors of Victory."[371]

365 Naumov, 2019

366 The fund also awards multi-million-ruble grants for other cultural projects supporting the Russian invasion of Ukraine and integration of Donbas residents.

367 Novaya Gazeta, 2025

368 Novaya Gazeta, 2025

369 Klein & Stewart, 2025

370 Sivtsova, 2022

371 Naumov, 2019; National Centre Russia, 2025d

“Russian Student Detachments”

The All-Russian Public Organisation “Russian Student Detachments” (RSD, Российские студенческие отряды) is another organisation aimed at preserving historical memory and patriotic education of children and youth. RSD aims to provide students with work experience in various sectors, promote patriotic education, and develop leadership skills. Students typically work in construction, agriculture, hospitality, healthcare, and as counsellors in children's camps. RSD was reorganised on 23 February 2011 from the Youth All-Russian Public Movement “Russian Student Detachments” (founded in 2004) to form the more modern structure.[372]

RSD is a key beneficiary of state support, which is managed through the mechanisms of the Presidential Administration supervised by Kiriyenko.[373] As of 2025, the organisation's Board is chaired by Yulia Drozhzhina, and the Central Headquarters is led by Yaroslav Zubashchenko.

Under Kiriyenko’s curatorship of youth policy, RSD has expanded beyond traditional construction, healthcare, and agricultural roles to include IT-units. RSD has a large focus on modernising through the implementation of digital technologies. RSD develops media specialists within the movement, training personnel to create content and promote projects, which includes professional training in media technologies. RSD also holds large-scale events online. It has a partnership with Rosatom which includes the use of Rosatom's digital tools for training and selecting students for high-tech construction and production projects.[374] In 2026, RSD is developing a unified digital platform for movement participants and potential employers (largely using the “RSO.Trud” (РСО.Труд) mobile application and ecosystem).[375] RSD is also integrated with VKontakte.[376] Kiriyenko has championed interactive, high-tech exhibitions like the “Grand Model of Labor Achievements” and the “Russia” exhibition, which use virtual reality and neuro-games to showcase RSO's history and current projects to the youth. Kiriyenko likely views the RSD as a vital tool for achieving “digital sovereignty” by training students in local technologies while simultaneously embedding state ideology through modern digital formats. These efforts are part of a larger multi-billion-ruble investment in youth policy aimed at creating pro-government digital content and engagement.[377]

RSD often works in cooperation with the “National Youth Council of Russia” and other youth groups in Russia and neighbouring nations like Belarus.[378] The program has also been implemented in the occupied territories. In 2023, regional branches were opened in the Zaporozhye region, and so-called Donetsk and Lugansk people’s republics. In 2024, the Regional main office of student teams was established in the Kherson region.

From an official press release: *In 2025, Russian Student Brigades will provide employment for more than 400,000 school and university students across the country. Various labour projects of different scales will be organized for young people in Russia and abroad. Today, more than 1,000 employers collaborate with student brigades, including PJSC Gazprom, the Russian Railways holding, the Roscosmos State Corporation, the Rosatom State Corporation, PJSC Rosseti, the Alabuga Special Economic Zone, PJSC KAMAZ, the Mriya resort, LLC Agronom Sad, and others.*[379]

372 Russian Student Detachments, n.d.-b

373 Seldon.News, 2026

374 Eastern Economic Forum, 2022

375 National Centre Russia, 2025a; Rabota Rossii, n.d.

376 Russian Student Detachments, n.d.-a

377 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023; Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2023

378 Intermol, 2024; National Centre Russia, 2025a

379 National Centre Russia, 2025a

Yunarmiya

One of the most notorious militarised organisations functioning as a de facto paramilitary training ground for future Russian soldiers is the All-Russian Military Patriotic Social Movement (Yunarmiya)/Всероссийское военно-патриотическое общественное движение «Юнармия», a nationwide group that trains young people in military skills, patriotism, and actively supports the military-industrial complex. Accused of forcibly deporting Ukrainian children during the invasion, Yunarmiya is under international sanctions.

Vladislav Golovin, a military officer who participated in the siege of Mariupol and became a decorated "Hero of Russia," leads the organization. While Yunarmiya was originally established by Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu in 2016, Kiriyenko now oversees the broader Kremlin-driven ecosystem that integrates it with other patriotic initiatives.[380] Graduates of Kiriyenko's Kremlin-funded initiative for veterans "Time of Heroes" programme have been appointed to leadership positions within Yunarmiya.

The movement has characteristics of the old Soviet Pioneers which was used as a state tool for upward mobility. As far back as 2019, St. Petersburg's Yunarmiya branch head, Igor Korovin, said that the organisation would start building centres that would resemble Soviet Pioneers' Palaces.[381] Even before the outset of the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, educators reportedly lost their jobs for questioning the Yunarmiya's purpose.[382]

According to its official website, membership currently stands at over 2 million school-aged children and teens.[383] Yunarmiya units have been introduced in schools, with some schools hosting military recruiters and administering mandatory patriotic education.[384]

At the time of its creation, Yunarmiya accepted young people aged 8 to 18. However, over the past five years, media reports claim that the movement has started accepting children as young as kindergarteners.[385] According to Russian media, teenage members of Yunarmiya give patriotic lessons to preschool children, teaching them things like how to disassemble and assemble Kalashnikov assault rifles.[386]

Even though the movement is voluntary, there is societal pressure on children and professionals to join. Social media posts often glorify the classes in which each student has joined the movement, and children keep inviting new friends to the movement. Schools also have special rooms for students in Yunarmiya. At the university level there are also perks to being a member of Yunarmiya; media reports claim more than 20 Russian universities already award extra points in their entrance exams to students who belong or have belonged to Yunarmiya.[387] Russian media reports that many Russian children exposed to war propaganda are enlisting in the army straight after high school, many of whom died in combat within two months.[388]

Yunarmiya is active in all Russian occupied Ukrainian regions. Some media outlets like RFE/RL Ukraine obtained leaked documents about Yunarmiya by the Ukrainian hacker group KibOrg, which provided deeper insights into the organization,

380 Klein & Stewart, 2025

381 Rotkevich, 2019

382 B-Port News Agency, 2018

383 Yunarmy, n.d.

384 Gittoes, 2025

385 Institute of Mass Information, 2023

386 Institute of Mass Information, 2023; Hurska, 2024

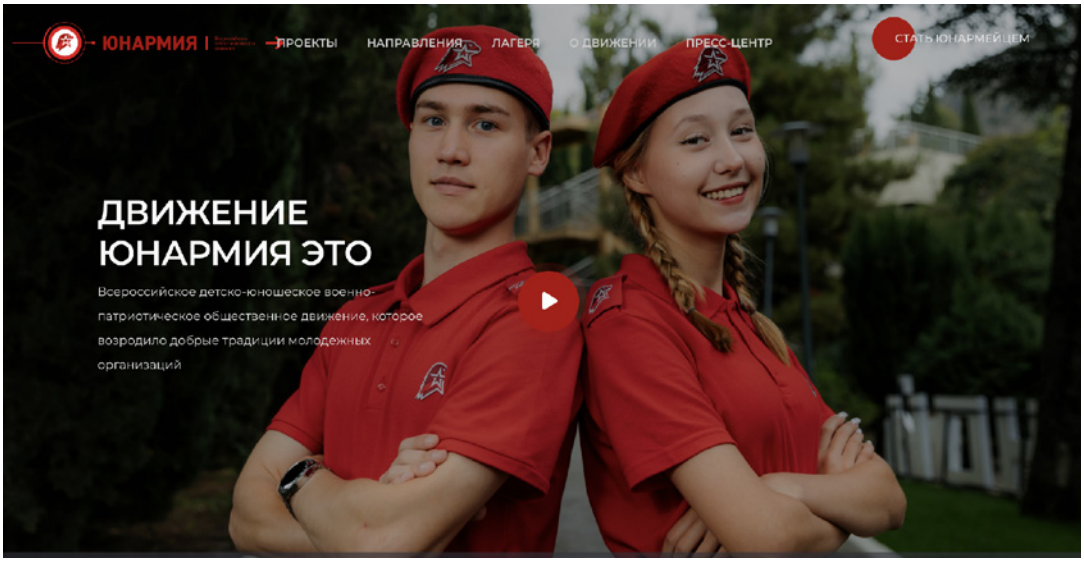
387 Alava, 2021

388 Morozova, 2024

particularly in Russia's occupied territories.[389] According to KibOrg, in 2023, Yunarmiya was using the school buildings in Donetsk and Luhansk free of charge for firearms and sports training, with financial backing and other support coming from the Russian federal government and the Yunarmia headquarters in Moscow.[390] One example provided was of an eighth grader from a Russian-occupied Donetsk city who won a bronze medal at the Guardian-2024 training camp for disassembling and reassembling an AK-74 rifle.[391] Russia provides the salaries for Yunarmiya leaders in Donetsk starting in March 2026, according to the Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation.[392]

Media reports also surfaced that 200 teenagers from Donetsk and Luhansk were taken to Chechnya for "military training and patriotic education" at the "Gorny Kliuch" camp after conversations between Maria Lvova-Belova and Chechen leader and Putin-loyalist, Ramzan Kadyrov.[393]

Yunarmiya allegedly received ₽480m (€480,000) in grants in 2024.[394] In 2025, the Kremlin doubled the budget, according to media reports and a Telegram post.[395] The group also received a ₽10m (€100,000) donation from Promsvyazbank (heavily sanctioned by the US, UK, EU, and others), a primary lender to Russia's military-industrial complex. Reportedly, Yunarmiya has many partners and sponsors, such as Russia's state-owned bank Sberbank (also under sanctions), and several media outlets.[396] According to a Finnish researcher, Yunarmiya's main sponsorship may also be linked to the late Evgeny Prigozhin and his Wagner Group.[397]



Hompegae of the Yunarmiya website[398]

389 According to RFE/RL's website, "The development of Yunarmia amid the full-scale invasion is evidenced by previously unpublished documents from the Russian occupation authorities that were obtained by the Ukrainian hacker group KibOrg and provided to Schemes, the investigative unit of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service, and its media partners."

390 Savchuk & Schemes, 2024

391 Savchuk & Schemes, 2024

392 Center for Countering Disinformation, 2023

393 Kalashnyk, 2026

394 The Moscow Times, 2025b

395 Mozhem Obyasnit, 2025

396 Alava, 2021

397 Alava, 2021

398 Accessed from: Yunarmy, n.d.

An investigation by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) provides further evidence of how Russia systematically recruits teenagers in occupied Ukrainian territories into its broader propaganda and information ecosystem. The report shows that recruitment extends beyond formal structures into parallel networks of media training and digital engagement designed to cultivate a new generation of pro-Kremlin communicators under the Yunarmiya project "Young Correspondents".[399]

According to OCCRP, Russian authorities and affiliated actors have established "media schools," training programmes, and youth initiatives across the occupied regions. These initiatives are presented as opportunities for professional development in journalism, blogging, and digital production, but in practice function as mechanisms for building a localised propaganda workforce. Participants are trained to produce news reports, social media content, and video material aligned with Russian narratives, often portraying life under occupation in a positive light while omitting or distorting the realities of war.

A central feature of this system is its reliance on locally sourced voices – a cadre of ideologically-aligned influencers. Rather than depending solely on Russian state media personnel, the strategy prioritises recruiting teenagers from occupied territories who can present themselves as authentic, grassroots actors. This approach enhances the credibility of the content produced and allows pro-Kremlin messaging to be framed as originating from within the local population.

The investigation also highlights the institutionalisation of recruitment pathways. These media initiatives are linked to state-aligned organisations, educational structures, and occupation authorities, creating a pipeline through which participants can transition from training programmes into more formal roles within the pro-Russian media environment. Incentives such as stipends, career prospects, and educational opportunities are used to attract participants, embedding recruitment within broader social and economic structures. Training programmes promote Russian historical narratives, language, and identity, contributing to the long-term integration of occupied populations into the Russian political and informational space.

These initiatives operate alongside militarized youth programmes such as Yunarmiya, forming complementary components of a wider system. While Yunarmiya emphasises discipline, military preparedness, and patriotic education, media recruitment efforts focus on shaping the information environment by producing content that supports and legitimises Russian policy. Together, they demonstrate a holistic approach to youth mobilisation, by combining physical, ideological, and informational dimensions.

The Russian Union of Martial Arts (RSBI)

Since 2005, Kiriyenko has been the co-chair of the of the **Russian Union of Martial Arts** (RSBI, also known as RUMA) (Российский Союз Боевых Искусств), which unites 71 all-Russian sports federations and organisations representing various martial arts and combat sports. The RSBI holds numerous national and international events annually to promote martial arts and pre-conscription youth training.[400]

Kiriyenko's longtime friend, Yuri Trutnev, deputy head of the Russian government and Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in the Far Eastern Federal District, is co-chair of RSBI.[401] In late 2022, RSBI was instrumental in forming the Union detachment (Отряд «Союз») of athletes to participate in the war in Ukraine.

399 Dudchenko et al., 2026

400 War & Sanctions, n.d.

401 Dfo, 2023a; Russian Union of Martial Arts, n.d.

RSBI has procured weapons since the outset of the war in Ukraine, and Trutnev and Kiriyenko allegedly travelled to the Donbas to equip a Soyuz Union detachment unit with drone detection devices and sniper rifles. In this way, using detachments like Soyuz, RSBI directly bridges the gap between youth sports and active military service.[402]



A RUMA-linked athlete killed in Ukraine.[403]

According to financial documents obtained by IStories, RSBI's main donors include national-scale companies, many of which fall in the Rosatom group, and companies from the Far East where Trutnev serves as envoy.[404] According to financial documents available to journalists, in 2022-2023, Rosatom and its subsidiary transferred ₽123m (€1.2m) to "Soyuz," Sberbank transferred ₽50m (€500,000), RusHydro – ₽60m (€600,000), Lukoil – ₽50m (€500,000), VTB – ₽25m (€250,000). From the Trutnev Group, the largest donation to the RSBI – ₽80m (€800,000) – was made by the Magadan-based security company White Wolf.[405]



Sergei Kirienko speaks to a seminar organized by the Russian Union of Martial Arts. Photo: rsbi.ru

402 Soyuz Union Detachment (**Отряд «Союз»**) was formed under the auspices of RSBI in 2022. GlobalSecurity, 2022; Krenig, 2023; Romanovskiy, 2024; World News Kyokushin Karate, 2022

403 Photo: Superkarate Website, accessed from: Lozovenko, 2024

404 Romanovskiy, 2024

405 Romanovskiy, 2024a; Lozovenko, 2024

The Russian National Aikido Council

Kiriyenko's involvement in sports organisations is not limited to RSBI. He is also the Chairman of the Presidium of the National Aikido Council of Russia (Национальный Совет Айкидо России) (НСАР/NSAR).[406] The organisation focuses solely on Aikido and is part of RSBI. Currently, the director of the Aikido Council is Igor Petrovich Pasko. The organisation has been involved in activities related to the war in Ukraine – the executive director and certain members of the NSAR Presidium attended an RSBI meeting about the war in March of 2022, and at the end of 2024, Kiriyenko gave an award to the family of an aikido coach killed in the war, stating that "aikido masters heroically distinguish themselves on the frontline."[407] Lastly, regional branches of NSAR have been established in occupied Zaporizhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk.[408]

VOIN Centres/(«Воин»)

VOIN (Warrior) Centres (**«Воин»**) comprise a large network of centres providing military-sports training and patriotic education to teenagers under the guise of a "centre for military-sports training and patriotic education of youth."[409] With Putin's support, Kiriyenko, along with Trutnev, initiated the VOIN training programme in 2022. Kiriyenko's work with VOIN is often carried out through RSBI. Many VOIN Centre instructors are combat veterans or athletes from the RSBI.[410]



VOIN "Warrior" centre in occupied Kherson.[411]

VOIN centres are designed to provide military training to adolescents and young adults, with a particular focus on training them for potential future service in the Russian Armed Forces.[412] These centres also provide training in UAV operation, firearms, tactical medicine, and engineering skills.[413] Currently, the centres operate in 21 regions, and have trained a total of more than 120,000 cadets and employ 400 instructors who have been to the frontline.

406 Russian National Aikido Council, n.d.-c

407 Russian National Aikido Council, n.d.-b; Russian National Aikido Council, 2024

408 Russian National Aikido Council, n.d.-d

409 Yuzych, 2024.

410 Romanovskiy, 2024

411 Source: Screen shot from a video accessed 1 April 2026 from LinkedIn feed of Petro Andriushchenko, Head of Center for the Study of the Occupation I **Керівник Центру вивчення окупації**

412 Kalashnyk, 2026

413 GlobalSecurity, n.d.

VOIN has centres which have been active in Russian occupied territories of Ukraine since 2023; Kiriyenko oversaw the opening of its Berdyansk branch.[414] Over 513,000 Ukrainian children in occupied areas have undergone military training or exposure to Russian militarisation programs, and Russian occupation officials are indoctrinating children through school courses and exposure to military personnel, according to Ukrainian human rights groups. [415] VOIN also allegedly facilitates the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia.[416]

VOIN Centres have developed in close cooperation with representatives of Chechen Head, Ramzan Kadyrov. Daniil Martynov, a former FSB Alpha Special Forces operative turned “advisor to the minister for emergencies” and known in recent years as “Kadyrov’s assistant,” was appointed as the overseer of this new project aimed at children and adolescents, drawing attention due to his involvement in conflicts in Ukraine on behalf of Kadyrov.[417] Martynov was instrumental in the establishment of the Spetsnaz University, a major military training facility in Chechnya, in 2015. Many of the teachers and trainers at the VOIN centres have reportedly undergone training at the Spetsnaz University.[418] Sanctioned Russian Ombudswoman for Children, Maria Lvova-Belova, visited a centre in Chechnya testing weapons and applauded the quality of Chechen training.[419]



Maria Lvova-Belova testing weapons at the Spetsnaz University in Chechnya.[420]

414 Kalashnyk, 2026; Hird, 2026; Stepura, 2025

415 Tsentr Natsionalnoho Sprotivu, 2025; Administratsiya Khersonkoy Oblasti, 2025; Stepura, 2025

416 Glavnoye v Gencheskiye, 2023; Iredale, Yacht & Hird, 2025; Kalashnyk, 2026

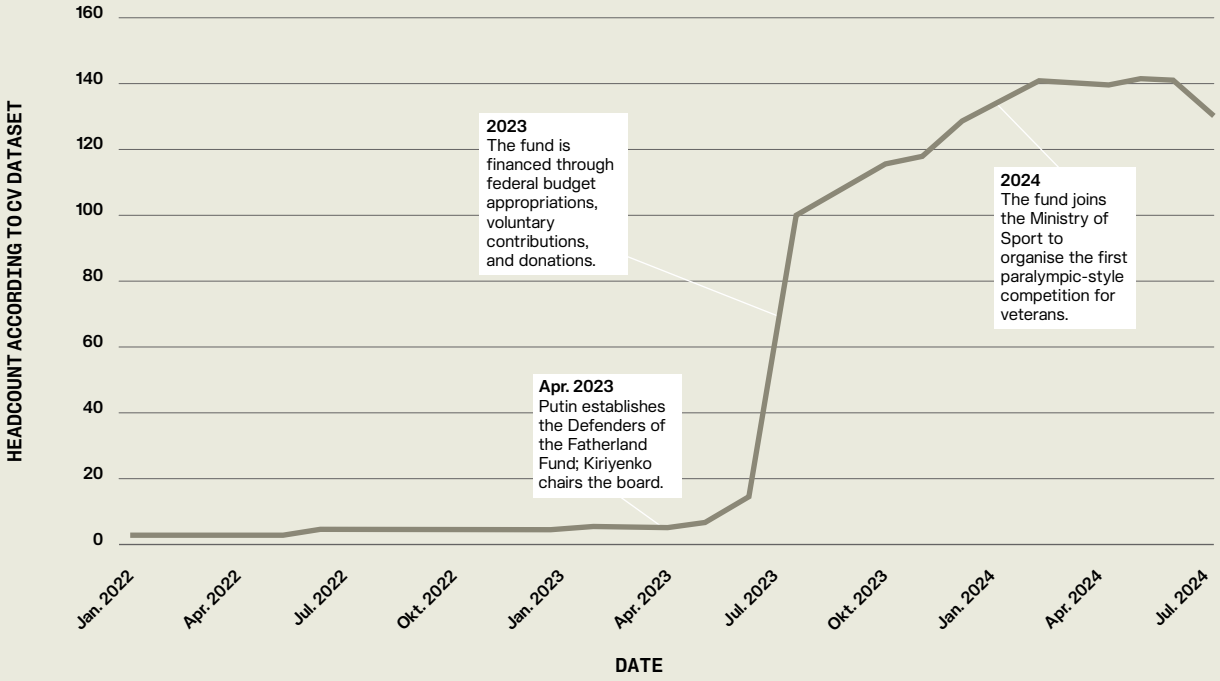
417 Yuzych, 2024

418 Staalesen, 2023

419 VOIN, 2023

420 Photo: Screenshot of a VK video, accessed from: Staalesen, 2023

DEFENDERS OF THE FATHERLAND FUND - CV-BASED OBSERVABLE HEADCOUNT



Defenders of the Fatherland Fund

Kiriyenko chairs the board of "Defenders of the Fatherland" Fund (Защитники Отечества), established by Putin in April 2023. This organisation oversees targeted social, medical, and psychological assistance to veterans and their families, such as providing high-tech prosthetics, psychological counselling, residential adaptation, and legal aid.[421] The foundation is designed to help those who fought in the war against Ukraine, and to assist with "veteran patriotic education and sports." The fund is financed through federal budget appropriations, voluntary contributions and donations, and other unknown sources.[422]

421 Kremlin.ru, 2023b

422 Interfax-Russia, 2023

"DEFENDERS OF THE FATHERLAND" FUND'S CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside "Defenders of the Fatherland" Fund in the same CVs

DEFENDERS OF THE FATHERLAND" FUND (Target organisation)

73 employers share at least one CV with "Defenders of the Fatherland" Fund

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

1	Russian Armed Forces	6 shared CVs
2	Russian Railways	4 shared CVs
3	Rosselkhozbank	4 shared CVs
4	ANO Dialog Regions	3 shared CVs
5	Sberbank	3 shared CVs
6	Russian Post	3 shared CVs
7	Pension Fund of the Russian Fed.	3 shared CVs
8	Ministry of Internal Affairs	3 shared CVs
9	OTP Bank	3 shared CVs
10	Social Protection Adm.	3 shared CVs
11	RO Knowledge/Znanie	2 shared CVs
12	RANEPA	2 shared CVs
13	United Russia	2 shared CVs
14	Russian Standard Bank	2 shared CVs
15	Home Credit	2 shared CVs
16	MTS Retail Network	2 shared CVs
17	Kazan Federal University	2 shared CVs
18	Rosgosstrakh	2 shared CVs

I A shared CV means that the same person listed both "Defenders of the Fatherland" Fund and another employer in their career history. The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

Kiriyenko works alongside Anna Tsivileva, the fund's chair, and Putin's first cousin once removed. Tsivileva's role has since expanded; she was appointed Deputy Defence Minister in mid-2024, further consolidating her influence over veteran affairs.[423]

"Defenders of the Fatherland" received almost ₽30 billion (€300m) in 2024–2025, and according to its own press release, 2,500 veterans have found jobs with its support.[424] The foundation joined forces with the Ministry of Sport to organise a paralympic competition among veterans.[425]

Based on official announcements, of the more than 100,000 veterans who have returned from Ukraine so far, tens of thousands have not found work, have not applied for work, or are unable to work, and this failed integration poses a threat to a post-Putin Russia.[426] While the fund allocates billions of rubles for wounded soldiers, critics point out that this support is often uneven. Reports highlight that while some veterans receive advanced electric wheelchairs or modified cars, many others are left to struggle with inadequate medical care and a lack of psychological support, raising fears of a re-emergence of "Afghan Syndrome."[427]

423 Badanin et al., 2022; Interfax-Russia, 2023

424 Borisenko, 2025

425 Novik, 2026

426 Kaleta, 2026b; Lassila, 2025

427 Horizontal Russia, 2025; Kirillova, 2023

4.7 CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND CONSULTING

The Centre for Economic Monitoring, Analysis and Consulting/Автономная некоммерческая организация «Центр экономического мониторинга, анализа и консалтинга» (TsEMAK) is a Moscow-based ANO registered in December 2022. It was founded by Aleksei Vitalievich Povtorenko and the current general director is Vladimir Konstantinovich Shirokov. [428] Povtorenko has a background as **adviser to the head of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs**, and one Rosmolodezh-related report says he served as responsible secretary of the agency's public council.[429] It is therefore likely that TsEMAK is one of a number of vehicles shared by Kiriyenko and the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs to manage their patriotic education entities and programmes.

TsEMAK is best described as a **state-adjacent back-office, procurement, finance/legal, and IT service hub** oriented toward non-profits in the youth-policy and patriotic education sectors. Its centralised procurement activity is targeted at nongovernmental organisations "in the sphere of development and support of youth" and applies to activities financed by federal-budget subsidies. Its service descriptions cover procurement design, pricing validation, grant/subsidy reporting, internal controls, legal support, work on accounting systems, and website/portal support. The organisation also markets a proprietary software product, **"FinAnalitik",** described as a program for contract accounting, cash-flow forecasting, budget-vs-actual tracking, and VAT/payment-calendar functions.[430]

Some 2,500 procurement notices in databases and on TsEMAK's customer page show repeated work for or alongside ANO More Than Travel, Tavrida.Art, and the Directorate of the Exhibition of Achievements Russia, the operator of National Centre Russia. In addition, it provides support to Centre VOIN branches, including equipment purchases for "application of unmanned systems" and mountain-training equipment. This puts TsEMAK squarely in the administrative infrastructure of Russia's youth-policy and military-patriotic programming ecosystem.[431]

TseMAK should therefore be considered an enabler of public-facing media, patriotic education, tourism, events, logistics, and quasi-military youth projects inside Russia's state-linked civic infrastructure.[432] Interestingly, some directories list TsEMAK's contact email as **info@eisr.ru** on a domain belonging to the Expert Institute of Social Research. This could indicate operational overlap with other organisations connected to EISI. [433]

428 ANO TsEMAK, n.d.-a; T-Bank, n.d.; Saby Profile, n.d. ; ANO TsEMAK, 2025

429 Declarator, n.d.; Rosmolodezh, 2022; Nasha Molodezh, 2022

430 ANO TsEMAK, n.d.-b; ANO TsEMAK, n.d.-e; ANO TsEMAK, n.d.-d

431 Declarator, n.d.; Rosmolodezh, 2022; ANO TsEMAK, n.d.-b; Kontur Zakupki, n.d.

432 Declarator, n.d.; Rosmolodezh, 2022; More Than Travel, n.d.; VOIN, n.d.; Kontur Zakupki, n.d.

433 Checko and Companium registry mirrors showing info@eisr.ru contact: Checko.ru, n.d.; Kompanium, n.d.



5 DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE & PROPAGANDA

From the point of view of the Kremlin, the youth, education and patriotic initiatives described in chapter 4 are insufficient on their own. As is the enormous expenditure on traditional state media, which is believed to exceed €1.4 billion for 2026. The citizen remains at risk of influences from Western ideas in the digital sphere, specifically spread through Western social media platforms. The idea of the Runet, or "Russian-Internet" emerged precisely from a fear of such influences.

As a result of the activities of ANO Dialog, ANO Internet Development Institute, and VK Company, the average Russian is now surrounded by propaganda not only in the physical spaces where they grow up, but also online, throughout adolescence and adulthood: whether it is complaining about dysfunctional public amenities, talking with communities, consuming news, watching entertainment, watching ads, or doomscrolling social media, Kremlin ideology is ever present. This pillar of Kiriyenko's power demonstrates how the digital sphere has been adapted into a new tool of repression, integrating surveillance, data analytics, and censorship into a system of digital governance.

5.1 "RUNET"

The transformation of the Russian Internet ("Runet") over the past decade reflects a broader shift in the Kremlin's approach to governance: from selective control of political expression toward the construction of a **fully integrated system of digital sovereignty and information management**. While the legal foundations for restricting online speech were established in the early 2010s, the period between 2016 and 2026 marks the consolidation of a model in which law, technology, and ideology operate together to regulate not only what can be said online, but how information circulates, how users behave, and ultimately how society perceives reality.[429]

By the mid-2010s, the Russian state had already developed a toolkit for targeted censorship. Laws such as Federal Law No. 149-FZ "On Information, Information Technologies, and Information Protection," amended in 2012 to create a unified register of banned websites, enabled authorities to block content deemed harmful.[430] Subsequent measures—including the 2013 amendments allowing the blocking of "extremist" content without a court order, and the 2014 "Bloggers Law" requiring high-traffic online authors to register with Roskomnadzor—extended this framework.[431] These early instruments, however, were still largely reactive: they focused on **removing undesirable content or actors after the fact**, rather than systematically shaping the digital environment.

The period beginning in **2016** marked a decisive transition from reactive censorship to **proactive surveillance and infrastructural control.** The key turning point was the adoption of the so-called **Yarovaya amendments** (Federal Laws No. 374-FZ and 375-FZ, adopted in 2016 and implemented from 2018).[432] These measures fundamentally expanded the state's ability to monitor digital communications. Telecommunications operators and Internet Service Providers were required to store the content of users' communications for up to six months and metadata for up to three years, and to provide this data to security services upon request.[433]

429 Soldatov and Borogan, 2015

430 Federal Law No. 149-FZ "On Information, Information Technologies, and Information Protection."

431 Federal Law No. 97-FZ (2014) ("Bloggers Law"); amendments to extremism legislation (2013).

432 Federal Laws No. 374-FZ and 375-FZ (Yarovaya amendments), 2016.

433 Federal Laws No. 374-FZ and 375-FZ (Yarovaya amendments), 2016.

Equally significant was the requirement that data be stored on servers located within Russia, reinforcing earlier data localisation provisions (Federal Law No. 242-FZ of 2014).[434] Taken together, these measures transformed the Runet into a space in which **surveillance was not exceptional but systemic.**

This shift coincided with a broader reconceptualization of the Internet as a domain of national security. Rather than viewing online dissent as isolated acts of opposition, the Kremlin increasingly framed digital communication as a vector of **foreign interference and destabilisation**.[435] This perception, rooted in the protests of 2011–2012 and reinforced by geopolitical tensions following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, justified the expansion of state control over digital infrastructure.

The next phase in the evolution of the Runet was defined by the move toward **digital sovereignty**, formalised in the **Sovereign Internet Law (Federal Law No. 90-FZ, 2019)**.[436] This legislation marked a qualitative leap in the state's ambitions. Whereas earlier laws targeted content or users, the 2019 framework sought to **reconfigure the architecture of the Internet itself**. It mandated the installation of deep packet inspection (DPI) equipment on network infrastructure, allowing authorities to filter and block traffic in real time. It also established a national domain name system (DNS) and granted Roskomnadzor the authority to centrally manage Internet traffic in the event of a perceived "threat" to stability.[437]

The significance of this law lies not only in its technical provisions but in its underlying logic. It institutionalised the idea that the Runet should be capable of functioning **independently from the global Internet**, enabling the state to isolate the domestic information space if necessary. Although full technical autonomy has remained difficult to achieve in practice, the law provided the legal and infrastructural basis for **selective disconnection and traffic control**, tools that would become increasingly important in later years.

At the same time, the state expanded its capacity to regulate online expression through broadly defined legal categories. Amendments adopted in 2019 introduced administrative liability for "disrespect" toward the state, its symbols, or public authorities, as well as for the dissemination of so-called "fake news."[438] These provisions granted Roskomnadzor wide discretion to determine what constituted false or harmful information, effectively enabling the regulator to act as an arbiter of truth in the digital sphere. Further amendments in 2020 extended these provisions to cover misinformation related to public health, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the flexibility of the framework in responding to different types of crises.

By the early 2020s, the Russian state had thus assembled a multi-layered system of digital control comprising **surveillance (Yarovaya), infrastructural management (Sovereign Internet Law), and content regulation ("fake news" and extremism laws)**. However, it was the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 that triggered the most rapid and far-reaching expansion of this system.[439]

Within days of the invasion, the Russian parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Code introducing severe penalties for the dissemination of "knowingly false information" about the Russian Armed Forces (Article 207.3), as well as for "discrediting" the military (Article 280.3).[440] These provisions extended beyond

434 Federal Law No. 242-FZ (2014) on data localisation

435 Giles, 2016

436 Federal Law No. 90-FZ (2019) ("Sovereign Internet Law").

437 Federal Law No. 90-FZ (2019) ("Sovereign Internet Law").

438 Federal Law No. 31-FZ (2019) on "fake news" and "disrespect."

439 Human Rights Watch, 2022.

440 Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Articles 207.3 and 280.3 (2022 amendments).

traditional media and applied to **all forms of online expression**, including social media posts, comments, and even symbolic acts. Penalties ranged from fines to prison sentences of up to fifteen years, marking a return to levels of repression not seen since the Soviet period.[441]

The practical effect of these measures was to **eliminate the possibility of independent reporting or dissenting commentary on the war within Russia's digital space**. Major independent media outlets were blocked or forced into exile, while international platforms such as Facebook and Instagram were restricted or designated as extremist organisations. Although some users continued to access these platforms via VPNs, the overall information environment became increasingly closed and state-controlled and heading into 2026, VPNs have themselves become a target of restrictions.

Crucially, the wartime censorship regime did not operate in isolation but built upon the legal and technical infrastructure developed in the preceding years. The existence of DPI systems facilitated the blocking of platforms and content, while data retention requirements enabled the identification and prosecution of users. In this sense, the post-2022 crackdown should be understood not as an abrupt departure but as the **activation and intensification of an already established infrastructure**.[442]

From 2022 onward, the scope of regulation continued to expand, encompassing not only political speech but also broader aspects of social and cultural life. Amendments to the Foreign Agents Law removed remaining constraints on designation, allowing individuals of any nationality to be labelled as foreign agents based on broadly defined criteria, including the receipt of non-financial "foreign influence." The consequences of such designation extended into the digital sphere, requiring individuals and media outlets to label their content accordingly and exposing them to further legal risks.

At the same time, the category of "extremism" was increasingly used to suppress dissent. Organisations such as Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation were designated as extremist, making any association with them—including online activity—a criminal offence. In 2025, new provisions introduced liability for **searching for or accessing extremist materials online**, including through VPNs, effectively **criminalising not only expression but also information-seeking behaviour**. This marked a significant escalation, as it extended state control from the regulation of content to the **monitoring of user intent**.[443]

Another important development was the tightening of control over digital identities and platforms. The 2024 law on bloggers required influencers with more than 10,000 followers to register with Roskomnadzor and provide personal data, while also restricting their ability to monetise content if they failed to comply. This measure aimed to bring influential online actors into a regulated framework, reducing their autonomy and integrating them into the state's broader system of oversight.[444]

In parallel, ideological regulation became an increasingly prominent component of the censorship architecture. Building on earlier laws concerning religious feelings and historical memory, new provisions adopted in 2025–2026 prohibited the dissemination of content deemed to "discredit" or contradict "traditional Russian spiritual and moral values," as defined in the 2022 Presidential Decree on state

441 Reporters Without Borders, 2022

442 Amendments to the Foreign Agents Law, 2022.

443 Russian legislation on extremist content access (2025).

444 Russian Bloggers Law amendments, 2024.

policy in this area.[445] These measures applied not only to cinema and television but also to online platforms, granting authorities the power to demand the removal of content within 24 hours.

The expansion of censorship into areas such as LGBT expression, "child-free propaganda," and even discussions of drugs or alternative lifestyles illustrates the **broadening scope of state control over the digital sphere**. The Runet is no longer regulated solely as a space of political communication but as a domain in which **social norms, cultural values, and individual behaviour are actively shaped and enforced**.

Recent developments, including amendments to the Law "On Communications" in 2026 granting authorities the power to shut down Internet or mobile communications, demonstrate the extent to which the state has consolidated control over digital infrastructure. Reports of temporary Internet disruptions in major cities during 2026 suggest that these powers are not merely theoretical but are intended to be operationalised.[446]

In sum, the evolution of the Runet between 2016 and 2026 reflects a shift from a relatively open, albeit regulated, information environment to a **highly controlled, increasingly sovereign digital space**. This transformation has been driven by a combination of legal innovation, technological investment, and ideological consolidation, all underpinned by a persistent perception of the Internet as a threat to regime stability. Kiriyenko had a hand in the technical and ideological components of the Runet, as he viewed the digital domain as an area of profound opportunity. The result is a system in which the boundaries between security, governance, and information control have become increasingly blurred, and in which Kiriyenko's power vertical grasped unprecedented capacity to shape both the content and structure of the digital public sphere. However, challenges related to unpopular Internet blackouts during the spring of 2026, rumoured to be enforced by the FSB as part of a wider conflict between the siloviki and Kiriyenko's bloc, could be weakening Kiriyenko's hand.

5.2 VK COMPANY

VKontakte is the largest Russian social media platform. It is commonly referred to as the Russian Facebook, and was founded by Pavel Durov in 2006 – who was ousted from VK's leadership during the takeover by Kremlin-aligned oligarch Alisher Usmanov, and who later established the Telegram messaging app. Currently, VK Company is indirectly controlled by state-owned companies and the Kovalchuk family, while its CEO is Vladimir Kiriyenko, son of Sergey Kiriyenko.

Over the last few years, VK has become a multiplatform social media, designed to substitute Western platforms and form the backbone of the Runet. Apps owned by VK Company Limited cover all types of services and include: VK Video (alternative to YouTube), VK Messenger, VK Clips (alternative to TikTok), VK Dating (dating app), and VK Music. Since 2023, VK Workspace, a platform for businesses meant to serve as an alternative for Microsoft Office, became free of charge to encourage its use by Russian enterprises. Moreover, the company owns social networking platforms Odnoklassniki and Moy Mir, messengers TamTam and MAX, the payment service VK Pay, video games platform VK Play, educational platforms such as GeekBrains, advertisement platform Youla, the Russian Android app store called RuStore, and other services. Building on its platforms, VK Company has also developed a superapp Sreda[447] (Среда), which is a digital workspace for civil

445 Presidential Decree No. 809 (2022) on traditional values.

446 Amendments to the Law "On Communications," 2026.

447 Previously referred to as КС АРМ ГС (Автоматизированное рабочее место государственного служащего)

servants that includes services such as e-mail, calendar, video calls, messaging, cloud workspace, and organisational structure management. According to its website, it has more than 350,000 users.[448]

VK Company has extensive ties to the Kremlin. Since the end of 2021, its CEO is Vladimir Kiriyenko, who was previously the Vice President of Rostelecom, the state-owned telecommunications company. In December of 2021, when Vladimir Kiriyenko took the post of CEO, VK underwent an ownership restructuring, pulling it even closer into the Kremlin's grasp. As a result of the previous owner Alisher Usmanov[449] selling his shares, 57.3% of voting shares in VK came under the control of MF Technologies. Sogaz (gas industry insurance company) and Gazprombank (bank facilitating Russian transactions tied to the invasion of Ukraine[450]) each own 45% of MF Technologies, with the remaining 10% under the control of Rostec (state-owned company producing weapons).[451] The largest share of Sogaz (34.8%) is controlled by Yuri Kovalchuk through Aquilla LLC.[452] Therefore, VK effectively came under indirect state control. Moreover, Stepan Kovalchuk, a relative of Yuri, is the Vice President of VK responsible for media strategy. Stepan Kovalchuk was reportedly the architect of the campaign that fostered the switch from YouTube to VK Video by paying prominent bloggers large sums of money to promote the platform.[453]

From 2005-2011, Vladimir Kiriyenko was the Chairman of the Board of Directors of **Volga TV (Телекомпания «Волга»)** based in Nizhny Novgorod and had a 52% stake in the company. The company was owned by **Vadim Vorobyov** (friend of Sergey Kiriyenko and Vice President of Lukoil at the time). Vladimir Kiriyenko's time at Volga TV marked the beginning of his involvement in regional media, which eventually led to senior executive roles in major Russian technology and telecommunications firms.[454]

In 2005, Kiriyenko Jr. became part of the Board of Directors **Garantiya bank (Банк «Гарантия»)**, which his father founded in 1993. The bank merged with **Joint Stock Company Sarovbusinessbank**, a regional bank based in the Nizhny Novgorod in late 2005, which Kiriyenko Jr. co-owned with Vladimir Travin, another close friend of his father, and his shares at the bank are allegedly under the care of his former university classmate at the Higher School of Economics and Skolkovo, **Robert Gndolyan.**[455]

According to tour operator records, Kiriyenko Jr. frequently travels for leisure.[456] In 2026, he reportedly travelled to Argentina via Dubai together with his wife, Yulia Sergeyevna Kiriyenko and friends. Additionally, Kiriyenko Jr. has a long history of offshore investments that have come under international scrutiny amidst the war in Ukraine and international sanctions imposed upon him.[457]

448 Sreda, n.d.

449 Oligarch and ally of Putin.

450 For more see: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2024

451 The Bell, 2021

452 The Bell, 2021

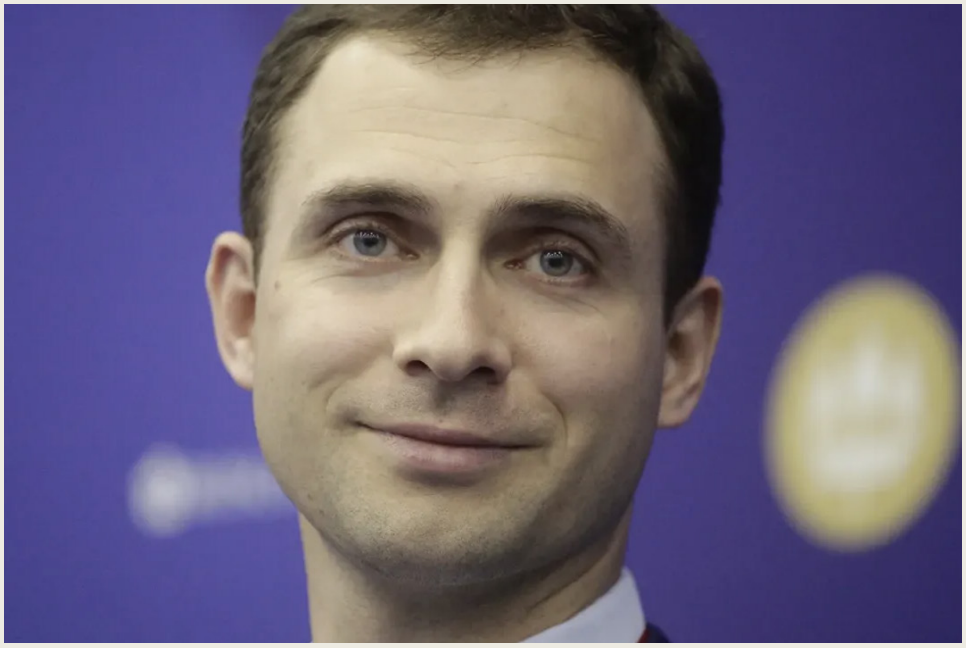
453 Proekt, n.d.-b

454 Korolev & Pertsev, 2021; TASS, n.d.; Rostelecom, 2016

455 Kremlin.ru, n.d.-a; Delovoy Kvartal, n.d.; Korolev & Pertsev, 2021; Skrynnikova & Skobelev, 2021

456 Skrynnikova & Skobelev, 2021

457 Korolev & Pertsev, 2021; Sanctions Search Office of Foreign Assets Control, n.d.; European The Moscow Times, 2025a Commission, 2022;



Vladimir Kiriyenko[458]



Vladimir Kiriyenko presenting at a Rostelecom conference in September 2018.[459]

458 Photo accessed from: Skrynnikova & Skobelev, 2021

459 Photo accessed from: Korolev & Pertsev, 2021

In an effort to strengthen Russia's Internet isolation, VK developed the national messenger MAX. While WhatsApp and Telegram are the most popular messaging platforms among the Russian population (used by 74% and 57% respectively),[460] the Kremlin has cracked down on the apps. Since the summer of 2025, WhatsApp and Telegram calls have been throttled and eventually access to Telegram was fully blocked by Roskomnadzor in April of 2026. In parallel, the regime has pursued a policy of encouraging a switch to MAX. Since September 2025, a new law "On the Creation of Multifunctional Information Exchange Service" has been in force,[461] which requires all smartphones, tablets, etc. sold in Russia and Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine to pre-install MAX. Initially, registration was only possible with a phone number from CIS[462] countries, although this possibility was extended to a total of 40 countries (including for instance, Türkiye, UAE, Thailand, Indonesia, and Iraq).[463] Since it is intended to be a superapp, MAX is used not only for messaging but also state services and payments. It is integrated with Gosuslugi, meaning that citizens can use it for identity verification or access to documents such as their passport or driver's license. As of end February 2026, access to Gosuslugi was blocked for 72 hours if one does not have the MAX messenger.

The state is actively pushing a switch to MAX: companies, educational institutions, and group chats of residents in apartment complexes are required to migrate to the platform. The abovementioned restrictive measures on WhatsApp and other messengers coincided with the roll-out of MAX. Moreover, the app is being marketed as a success: according to a VK press release from December 2025, the app immediately reached 75 million users.[464] However, it is believed to collect extensive data on its users. Russians appear to be aware of this and have adapted accordingly, keeping so-called "Maxophones" – separate mobile devices with the MAX app, used only to communicate through the messenger.[465] The Telegram channel Fairdaily reported that even officials, MPs, and managers of state companies are taking such precautions.[466] Lastly, some users have reported that the desktop version of MAX automatically subscribes to certain channels – such as that of prominent propagandist Vladimir Solovyev – and that unsubscribing proves difficult.[467]

As of mid-April 2026, there are reports of plans to introduce a National Information Platform. This platform would be based on the Dzen news aggregator, developed by VK. A law establishing it will be discussed in the Duma in May 2026.[468] The aggregator is planned to be present in all social media, video, and e-commerce platforms and will be financed through ad revenue. The news outlets planned to be included in the platform include RIA Novosti, TASS, RT, Tsargrad, Gazeta.ru, Komsomolskaya Pravda, and Izvestiya[469] – making it essentially impossible for the user to escape state propaganda.

460 Levada-Center, 2025

461 Kremlin.ru, 2025c

462 CIS refers to Commonwealth of Independent States

463 Vedomosti, 2026a

464 VKontakte, 2025

465 Bodyagina, 2026

466 Faridaily, 2026

467 Meduza — LIVE, 2026

468 Polonskaya, 2026

469 Infographic of Dzen.ru as shown in: Kotrikadze, 2026

Finally, Spherum (Сферум) is an encrypted Russian educational platform developed by VK Company and Rostelecom to provide video conferencing, messaging, and digital educational materials for schools. The Spherum platform operates as a closed system, requiring registration via VK ID or Gosuslugi via the Unified Identification and Authentication System (ESIA).[470] In 2025, Spherum was integrated into MAX, which will become the primary interface for its services.[471] That same year, Digital Development Minister Maksut Shadaev announced that MAX had met all FSB security requirements for GosUslugi integration.[472] Parallel registration on VK and Sferum eliminates anonymity online and puts users under the Kremlin's watchful eye.[473] An investigative report stated that in 2022 (the first year of Russia's war against Ukraine), Russia's Education Ministry advised teachers to use VK Messenger and Spherum instead of WhatsApp or other foreign messenger apps for class communication.[474]



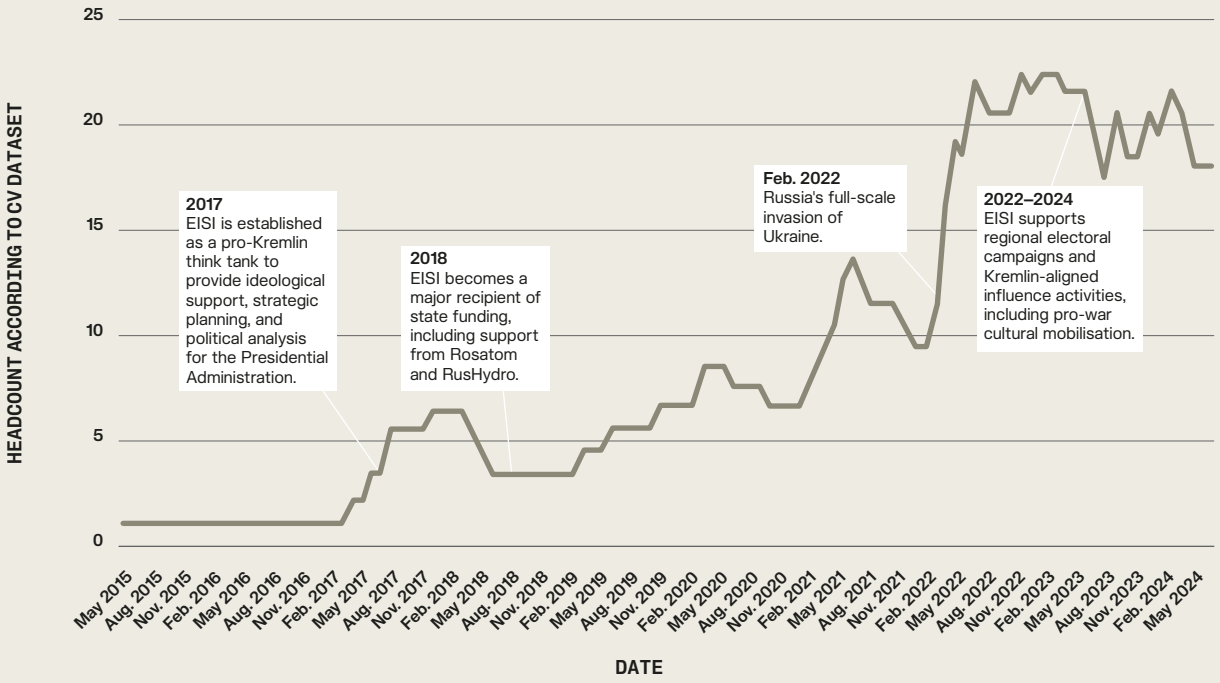
Maksut Shadaev.[476]

Maksut Shadaev is the Minister of Digital Development of Russia, a position he has held since 2020. Reportedly, he was the first to present Vladimir Putin with the idea to make MAX into a Russian superapp.[475] As Digital Minister, he has also been responsible for the roll-out of the measures implemented in the spring of 2026, namely cracking down on VPN use and restricting access to Internet.

Shadaev has been described as a protégé of Sergey Kiriyenko.[477] In 2017 he was appointed as an advisor to the First Deputy Chief of Staff – a role he combined with working for the Moscow Region government. [478] As advisor to Kiriyenko, his work focused on coordinating information policy of regional governments on social media and was reportedly unpaid. Moreover, Shadaev's paths also appear to have crossed with Kiriyenko Jr. In September 2018, Shadaev was appointed the Vice President for Digital Platforms at Rostelecom,[479] thus placing him at the company at the same time as Vladimir Kiriyenko, who was then its Vice President.

470 Elzes, 2025
471 Helsinki Times, 2025; Shirobokova, 2025
472 Elzes, 2025
473 Bilokobylskyi, 2024; Antonov & Rogov, 2025
474 Meduza, 2022a
475 Meduza, 2025a
476 Photo by: Maxim Shemetov, accessed from: Marrow, 2023
477 Intelligence Online, 2022
478 Samokhina & Pertsev, 2017
479 The Russian Government, n.d.

THE EXPERT INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH (EISI) - CV-BASED OBSERVABLE HEADCOUNT



5.3 EXPERT INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

The **Expert Institute of Social Research (EISI) (Экспертный институт социальных исследований – ЭИСИ)** is a prominent Russian pro-Kremlin think tank established in 2017 to provide ideological support, strategic planning, and political analysis for the Presidential Administration. It plays a key role in helping the Kremlin generate new ideas and justify Putin's decisions to the public. It operates as a government-organized non-governmental organization (GONGO) and is closely tied to Kiriyenko. The director of EISI is Anna Fedulkina, while the chair of the Supervisory Board is Oksana Gaman-Golutvina, who is a professor at the Higher School of Economics (Высшая школа экономики) (ВШЭ) and a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.[480] Until 2025, Gleb Kuznetsov was the head of its Expert Council,[481] a long-time acquaintance of Alexander Kharichev.

480 HSE, n.d.

481 Vinokurov, 2025

Gleb Kuznetsov (Kuznetsov) is the former head of the Expert Council at **The Expert Institute of Social Research (EISI)**. When Sergey Kiriyenko was appointed First Deputy Chief of Staff in October 2016, he began assembling a team of political technologists to overhaul domestic policy. Kuznetsov, already an established consultant, was brought into this inner circle to provide ideological and strategic support. Prior to 2016, Kuznetsov worked with various Kremlin-linked groups, such as the Social Research and Center for Current Politics. It is likely they crossed paths during Kiriyenko's tenure at Rosatom or through mutual connections in the Russian political consulting world before their formal work together in the Kremlin began. Kuznetsov has been a vocal proponent and strategist for Kiriyenko's hallmark policy of replacing traditional public politics with "social technology," and appointment of "young technocrat" governors. As a domestic policy advisor, Kuznetsov frequently publishes essays that align with Kiriyenko's vision and was tasked with developing an optimistic "vision of the future." [482]



Gleb Kuznetsov.[483]

EISI staff and experts produce reports which analyse new populism, foreign enemies, COVID's global impact, and introduce new terminology for Russian politics, like "new wave governors." Media reports suggest that EISI's analyses of the world reveal much about the Kremlin's own modus operandi and Kiriyenko's domestic priorities, in particular. EISI acts as a key hub for managing the intellectual aspects of domestic policy, with a focus on influence activities (spreading Kremlin-aligned propaganda) and elections. For example, the institute's experts play a central role in managing regional electoral campaigns, providing analytics, strategic planning, and producing favourable media content to ensure legitimacy for Kremlin-backed candidates. EISI also works with other Kremlin-linked organizations like DA TEAM and the Foundation for Civil Society Development (FCSD) for media and analytical tasks. It is reportedly connected to pro-Kremlin artists and musicians, including those in the "Za Rossiyu" concert tour widely known as a series of state-sponsored, patriotic musical marathons demonstrating support for the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[484]

482 Intelligence Online, 2023; Pertsev, 2019b; Kopalyan, 2025

483 Photo accessed from: United Russia, 2021

484 Russian Election Monitor, 2025; Inca Digital, n.d.; Pertsev, 2022f ; Walters, 2017

The think tank's analyses and events also act as scientific and explanatory support vis-à-vis the public for the Kremlin's policies. For instance, during a roundtable at Rossiya Segodnya agency[485] about the changes of ministers following Vladimir Putin's re-election in 2024 (as a result of which Andrey Belousov replaced Sergey Shoigu as the minister of defence), EISI experts reportedly encouraged journalists and its other participants to view the change as a natural part of staff policy, rather than elite in-fighting.[486] During another EISI roundtable, also at Rossiya Segodnya, experts highlighted that the trend towards large families is growing in Russian society, and that media as well as artists should be engaged to promote demographic growth[487] – all messages in line with the regime's ideology.

Through its award competitions, EISI also contributes to the "forging of cadres." It organised the "Digorya" Award of Young Political Scientists of Russia, designating winners in three categories: "Political research", "Political technology", and "Political communications".[488] The Chairman of the Award's Expert Council was Alexander Kharichev.

EISI is reported to have quickly become a major recipient of state funding. For example, a year after its launch, it received around ₽1 billion (€13 million at the time) from state-owned companies. According to Russian media reports from 2017,[489] Rosatom and RusHydro financed EISI with ₽400 million each.[490] It's interesting to note that the **Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISI)**, another think tank under the PA, and EISI arguably act as the two core pillars of Kremlin expert support; EISI manages the internal narrative and regional governors, while RISI provides strategic analysis on global threats and foreign interference. Both have combined influence in policy toward Russia's "Near Abroad."

5.4 DIALOG & DIALOG REGIONS

In February 2018, **Alexey Sergeyevich Goreslavsky (Алексей Сергеевич ГОРЕСЛАВСКИЙ)** was appointed Deputy Head of the Department for Public Projects within the Presidential Administration. As part of his role, Goreslavsky oversaw the development of a digital incident management system that tracked public sector organisations' responses to citizen complaints.[491] The principle was simple: a curated Internet can be an effective tool of governance. Digital 'chatter' could be used to gauge public sentiment, engage with concerned citizens, and intercept emerging crises. The "Incident Management System" idea began to catch on more widely, formally at the discretion of the governors, informally at the insistence of the Kremlin.

485 Rossiya Segodnya is a state-owned news agency and parent company of outlets such as Sputnik and RIA Novosti. Its editor-in-chief is Margarita Simonyan. Not to be confused with RT (Russia Today), the international propaganda TV channel, whose editor-in-chief is also Margarita Simonyan.

486 Vinokurov, 2024

487 Lenta.ru, 2025

488 Digorya, n.d.

489 Popova, 2017

490 Meduza, 2017; Arenina & Korostelev, 2023a

491 The social media "Incident Management" management system was created based on the order of the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation dated July 5, 2018, No. 347.



Alexey Goreslavsky.[492]

The Presidential Administration's thinking during this period is unambiguous. As digital tools became seen as a necessary means to manage the population, thoughts turned to a Russian "splinternet". In May 2019, Putin ratified a law to protect the Russian segment of the Internet from external threats; or to isolate the Russian population from the rest of the world, depending on the perspective.[493] Such was Goreslavsky's growing influence over the public sector's digitalization that he is sometimes referred to in Russia as the "curator of the internet" and his name is synonymous with this period of Internet regulation in Russia.

Autonomous Non-Profit Organization "Dialog" (ANO Dialog) was established in November 2019 on the order of Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin and the Moscow Department of Information Technologies. Goreslavsky took the helm, with Vladimir Grigoryevich Tabak (ТАБАК Володимир Григорович) his Deputy (Tabak would eventually take over in 2021 when Goreslavsky moved to ANO IRI). Kovalchuk-owned corporation Medialogia and Rostelecom were named as the technical partners for the new initiative.



Vladimir Tabak.[494]

Dialog was intended to act as a hub for the establishment of this new Russian Internet. Formally, it was focused on conducting monitoring and analysis of feedback from Moscow City and Moscow Oblast residents, engaging in "internet sociology" (i.e., public opinion surveys), conducting digital public communication

492 Source: Press Office of the National Centre RUSSIA, 10.08.2025; https://russia.ru/

493 "On Amending the Federal Law 'On Communications' and the Federal Law 'On Information, Information Technology, and Telecommunications Protection'" Adopted by the State Duma on April 16, 2019 Approved by the Federation Council on April 22, 2019 Vladimir Putin Moscow, Kremlin May 1, 2019 No. 90-FZ.

494 Dialog, 2024a

projects, and exchanging best practices with other regions of Russia. The press release at launch stated: "We understand that we need to react to citizens' requests even faster. It is necessary to expand the range of internet sociological tools to understand what issues concern residents and what services interest them".

Dialog's first year was transformative. As the pandemic hit in early 2020, Dialog was mandated by the Government and Moscow City to stand up an information centre for monitoring the coronavirus situation. Dialog's monitoring capability targeted social media and some messaging services and became used to enforce an emergency law that criminalized coronavirus misinformation.[495] The information centre was officially tasked with:

- Collection, analysis, and provision of accurate information on the situation with coronavirus spread and measures against this infection
- Analysis and forecasting of the situation with coronavirus infection abroad
- Identification and refutation of false information about coronavirus, the dissemination of which may pose a threat to people's lives and health, as well as lead to other serious consequences
- Provision of recommendations to regions for combating the spread of infection, based on measures that were considered to have been effective in Moscow.

In March 2020, Putin provided budgetary financing of ₽23.1 billion (€200m) to Dialog through the program "Digital Economy of Russia until 2024."[496] The organization was formally entrusted with overseeing the creation and operation of Regional Governance Centres (RGCs)[497] that would take the Moscow incident management model and extend it across the country. Meanwhile, Dialog's public communication capability earned plaudits. It was awarded the important task of boosting voter turnout for a referendum on constitutional amendments rushed through during the summer of 2020, while coronavirus had brought the rest of the country (and world) to a standstill. Its propaganda affirmed the safety for citizens to come out to vote during the pandemic to, among other things, abolish statutory limits to Putin's presidential term. This was viewed as a major success for Kiriyenko, with 65% of the population voting and 78% favouring the constitutional amendments.[498]

In interviews from the period, Goreslavsky spoke openly about Dialog's purpose and role. When the interviewer described Dialog as a new "digital power vertical" from the Kremlin to the regions to the municipalities and the people, Goreslavsky felt that the image was a little strong. However, there can be little doubt that he was describing a system that would revolutionalise Russian public administration.[499] Previously, citizen complaints could expect to receive an official response within 30 days. Now, online messages would be answered within 24 hours, in his view mirroring how corporations engage with their consumers. In July 2020, Dialog

495 Federal Law of 1 April 2020 No.99-FZ "On Amendments to the Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offenses" and Federal Law of 1 April 2020 No.100-FZ "On Amendments to the Code of the Russian Federation on Criminal Offenses". The laws introduced penalties for spreading false information about the health crisis. The penalty ranged from a fine to up to 3 years in prison.

496 The national programme "Digital Economy" (Цифровая экономика) ran from the end of 2018 until the end of 2024. It included several national projects focusing on: AI, information infrastructure, information security, or regulating the digital space. The programme was led by the Digital Ministry and partly funded from the federal budget.

497 In Russian: Центры управления регионами (ЦУР/TsUR). This could be translated as Regional Control Centres, Regional Management Centres, or Centres for the Development of Regions. We have chosen Regional Governance Centres (RGC) to best express the spirit of the original Russian.

498 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

499 Vinokurov & Korolev, 2020

established a subsidiary, ANO Dialog Regions, as the administrative vehicle for rolling out Dialog's model to the rest of the country.

Perhaps the most important point in Dialog's strategic plan was that the Internet must be viewed as the present and future of Russian propaganda. Dialog emphasizes that 45% of Russian residents obtain their information from the Internet, compared to 42% who rely on television, and that the Internet is the dominant source of information for Russians under the age of 44. Dialog positioned itself as a competitor and successor to television propaganda, which, as a sector, had traditionally operated with a significantly larger budget.

The "digital power vertical" idea was nonetheless integral to the project, since it demonstrates how Dialog fits within Russia's analogue power structure. Through a series of interconnected tools, digital platforms become the foundation for understanding, surveilling, and influencing both regional politicians and the population. For example, at the Presidential Administration level is a tool created by Medialogia called "Prisma", which gives the political leadership oversight over incidents in all regions, as well as data necessary to "manage" internal policy for projects like parliamentary and presidential elections. In reference to Prisma, Goreslavsky said in 2020: "We regularly send reports about incidents to Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko". [500] Over just a couple of years, Kiriyenko and Goreslavsky had overseen the creation of a real-time digital governance and propaganda system for the domestic population, that implicated all political and public sector employees in its smooth functioning.

Organisational Structure

According to investigative journalists, Dialog received around ₽9 billion from the Ministry of Digital Development in 2023 (around ₽1.8 billion to Dialog and ₽6.5 billion to Dialog Regions). Both organisations are, as of late 2021, managed by Vladimir Tabak and deputies Andrey Tsepelev and Kirill Istomin.



Andrey Tsepelev.[501]

An internal Supervisory Board meeting protocol from December 2023 offers insights into how Dialog is structured. As of early 2024, the whole entity had 3,113

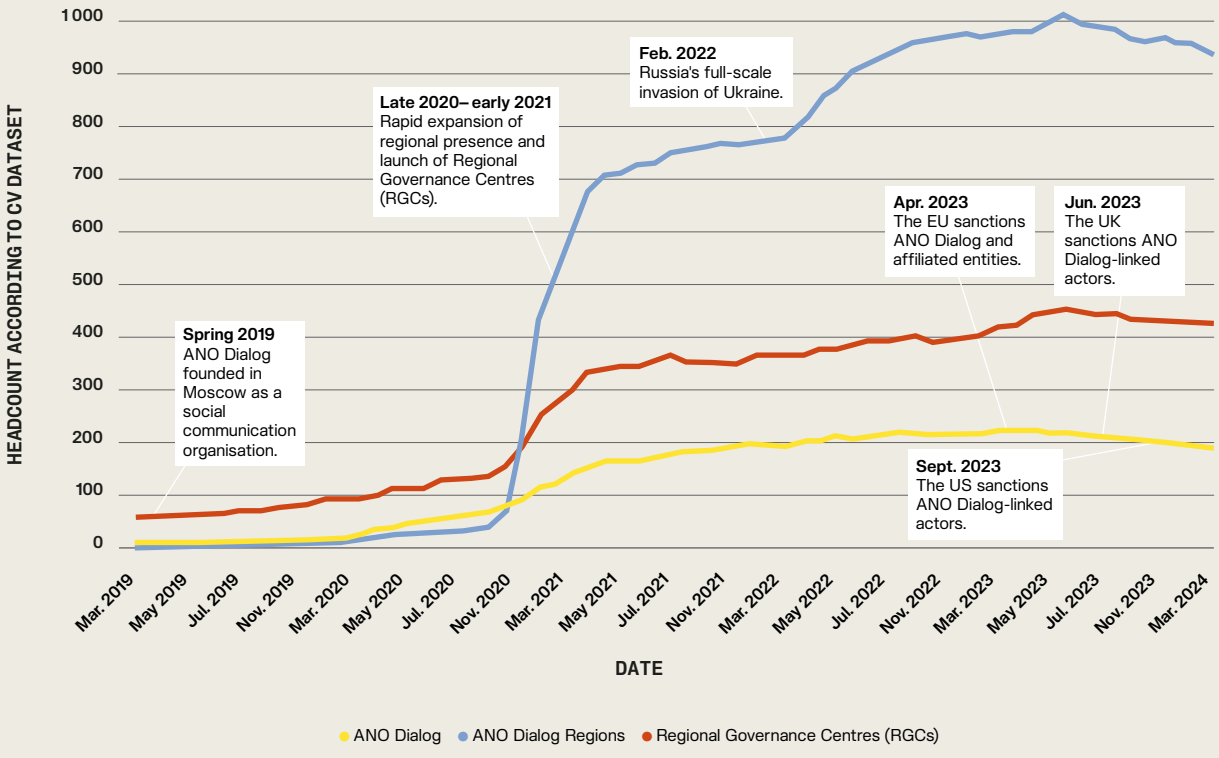
500 Vinokurov & Korolev, 2020

501 Photo accessed from: Press Office of the National Centre RUSSIA, 10.08.2025; https://russia.ru/

employees, of which 370 were at Dialog and 2,743 at Dialog Regions. Within Dialog Regions, 490 staff were based at the central office and 2,254 at 88 Regional Governance Centre (RGC) offices, including in Sirius (a region created during the Sochi Olympics, bordering Abkhazia) and 4 in the occupied regions of Ukraine. Dialog Regions also managed 8 RGC within Presidential Representative Offices in federal districts. The structure therefore mirrors the Russian approach to administration by having a relatively slim centre and considerably more resources placed in the regions, in essence adding a digital layer upon a traditional analogue structure.

Overlapping with this formal structure are 957 pre-existing Municipal Governance Centres (MGC)/муниципальные центры управления (МЦУ/MCU) in 58 constituencies, which are co-opted for work on local information campaigns. An internal meeting protocol explains that MGCs have a "minimal number of active staff members who previously handled social media work" and who are now working on behalf of Dialog's agenda. Apparently, this placed a great deal of stress on workloads. Furthermore, many regions lack the resources to create and operate MGCs, which implies gaps in coverage. Therefore, an internal analysis from late 2023 candidly claims that "most MGCs cannot fully ensure the implementation of the objectives set by Resolution No 1844-r dated 20 November 2020 of the Government of Russia." A 2024 proposal would see 7 inter-municipal MGCs created to cover gaps (at a total cost of ₽136m/€1.3m), and a proposal for 2025-2026 included a supporting RGC Competence Centre to create a "unified methodology for an intermunicipal model" and to facilitate the commencement of MGCs in all remaining municipalities.

ANO DIALOG NETWORK - CV-BASED OBSERVABLE HEADCOUNT



ANO DIALOG NETWORK'S CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside ANO Dialog, ANO Dialog Regions, or CISM in the same CVs

ANO DIALOG UMBRELLA
(Target organisation)

648
employers share at least one CV-link with the ANO Dialog umbrella

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

1	Sberbank	53 shared CV-links
2	Internet Development Inst.	41 shared CV-links
3	HSE University	29 shared CV-links
4	RANEPA	26 shared CV-links
5	Rostelecom	26 shared CV-links
6	RO Knowledge/Znanie	25 shared CV-links
7	VK / Mail.ru	25 shared CV-links
8	Moscow Government	20 shared CV-links
9	Yandex — 19 shared CV-links	
10	ANO RSV	18 shared CV-links
11	MTS	18 shared CV-links
12	United Russia	18 shared CV-links
13	State Duma	16 shared CV-links
14	TASS	16 shared CV-links
15	ANO DVFM	15 shared CV-links
16	RGC / TSUR	14 shared CV-links
17	VTB	12 shared CV-links
18	Movement of the First 11 shared CV-links	

A shared CV-link means that the same person listed one ANO Dialog umbrella employer and another employer in their career history. The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

Dialog engages with four federal executive authorities involved in incident management: The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor); Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education; and Ministry of Economic Development of Russia. Six more federal executive bodies are connected to the Incident Management System but do not work within it: Federal Service for Supervision of Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor), Investigative Committee of Russian Federation, Ministry of Civil Defence Affairs, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters of Russia (EMERCOM of Russia), Federal Service on Surveillance over Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzor), the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, and the Federal Registration Service for State Property Registering, Cadastre and Cartography.

Regional & Municipal Governance Centres

RGCs are framed as operational and competence support for all governmental and regional institutions that receive public feedback through the Internet. An appointment as Director of an RGC must be approved by the regional governor and Dialog Regions, and the work is split 50/50 between tasks directed by the region and by Dialog. The tasks of RGC include providing operators for federal informational tasks, feedback management, and social media operations for heads of regions in their respective areas. In one internal slide deck, the RGC initiative was framed as a "Transformation of state communication with society". More fully, Dialog supports RGC with:

- Conducting information campaigns (federal and regional levels)
- Developing public communication systems for government bodies, local self-government authorities
- Developing and using IT products to respond to citizens' requests effectively
- Personal pages of leaders (heads of municipalities, governors)
- Live broadcasts
- Quick snapshots of public opinion through online surveys and focus groups
- Creating an owned infrastructure of digital informational channels such as public accounts and Telegram channels
- Analytical support for management decisions including monitoring and feedback statistics
- Managing risks associated with government bodies operations while training their staff members accordingly

Examples used in internal briefings show citizens contacting public bodies for information about power cuts and maintenance on water supplies, with exemplary responses from the authorities. Others show standardized social media pages for institutions like hospitals, alongside informational posts about the benefits of sleep and vitamins for young children. Other examples are framed as incident and risk management, whereby engagement with the public is used to understand emerging risks in neighbourhoods. This is backed by claims that critical risks can be identified in as little as 7 minutes. Dashboards offer heat maps and newsfeeds which show the relative numbers of problems in regions and engagement numbers on posts. The "wide range of analytical tools and expertise" at their disposal supports the idea that RGCs are more than PR hubs and also act as "think tanks" for governors and regional leaders who wish to use data to improve their governance.

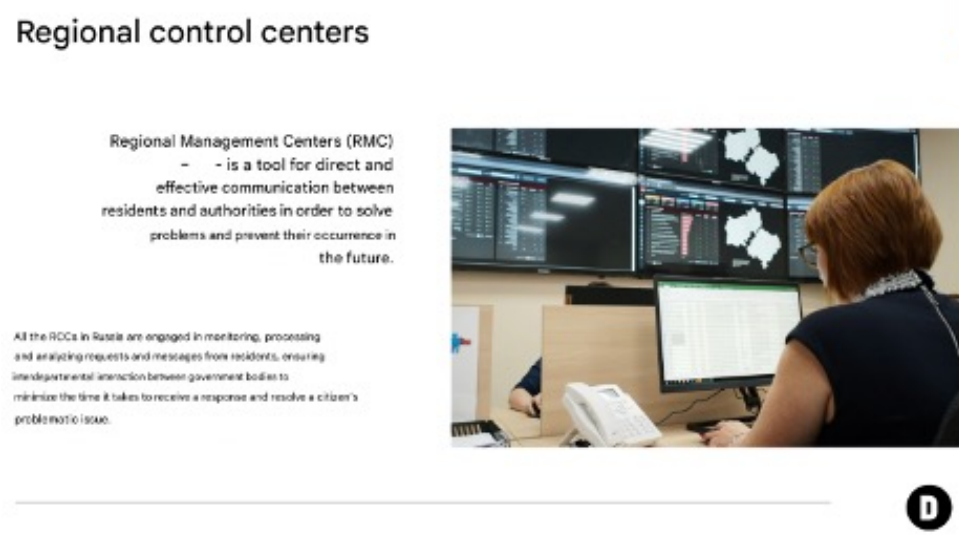


Image: The screenshot from Dialog's website, describing the "Regional Control Centres" the public surveillance product, which in essence combines the social listening and customer communication tools. Machine-translated from Russian.[502]

RGCs cooperate with Municipal Governance Centres (MGC), which were established based on the Presidential Decree from 4 June 2023. By the end of October of that year, 957 MGCs were created. The idea of the RGC-MGC cooperation is to enable implementation of "the concepts of information centres at the municipal level". RGCs provide methodological and resource support, including access to digital systems for various tasks such as ensuring feedback from municipal residents, conducting information campaigns, identifying risks, refuting misinformation, and training local government specialists in social media management. Each MGC develops its own strategy for information work and designs a set of activities using Dialog guidelines. Staff go through a training programme and work on rotating schedules to offer complete coverage.



30th January 2020. Vladimir Putin visiting the Moscow suburb RGC

The Municipal Governance Centres are funded 50/50 by ANO Dialog and the municipal administration. The latter also provides the workspace and technical support. Furthermore, the MGC's functioning is based on two pillars: feedback and information. The MGCs provide feedback to citizens through tasks such as editing responses from local government bodies, preparing standard responses for the employees at the local governments, and training them. On top of that, MGCs prepare analytical briefings to support strategic planning of municipalities. When it comes to the information activities, MGCs create and disseminate content on groups for "preventative information". Their information activities follow that of the local government plan, and include informing at 3 stages: announcement, progress of works, and result.

502 Source: Dialog.info, n.d.-d

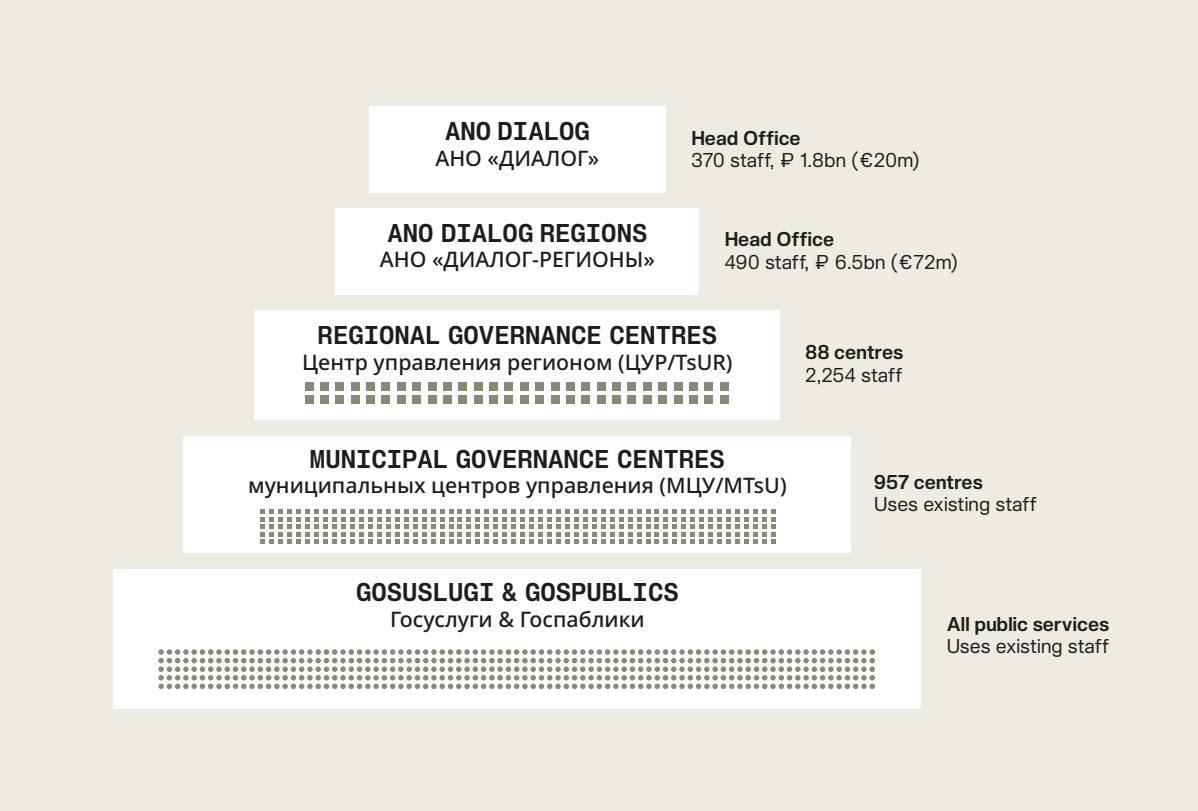
An internal review of activities up to the end of 2023 demonstrates a fixation on the "scalability" of the RGC model. It notes that the Ukrainian RGCs were established within just 6 weeks during 2023, and that staff have full access to key national digital systems. Although there is no data on the current total number of staff working on Dialog projects at RGCs and MGCs, reports suggest that Moscow's RGC has 122 employees representing 30 ministries and agencies, and St Petersburg's has around 250 staff. Accounting for the remainder, the average RGC would have just 23 staff. Indeed, according to internal documents, Dialog claims that the average RGC has 25 employees. Given that there are undoubtably other large RGCs, it would seem likely that many have a small number of staff unable to provide the 24/7 coverage that Dialog boasts. As of 2023, MGCs employed 4,618 people, not including Moscow, St. Petersburg and Sevastopol, and an overwhelming majority of them are women. An internal slide deck reveals that MGCs' main issue is a shortage and overworking of staff.

An additional infrastructural cost was in the development of dedicated data centres supporting each RGC. Special data processing centres were most likely created at federal level. This implies around 80 centres that were estimated by one of the contracting organisations to cost ₽60m-100m (€600,000 – €1m) each. In addition to the RGC, MGC and data centres, 79 content centres, staffed in part by employees from regional authorities, were established across regions to perform the following basic functions:

- Management of flagship public accounts
- Content production for state-owned publications
- Control over information placement in state-owned public accounts/pages
- Monitoring responses to comments in state-owned public accounts
- Methodological support for operators

By the end of June 2023, content centres had been created in each region of the Russian Federation, which were subsequently launched in September of 2023. A typical structure would see 6–15 employees under a director responsible for coordination with the RGC, a deputy director responsible for legal and organizational work, a content creation group, a social media monitoring group, and a team of analysts monitoring responses to comments. Their job was to enforce policy; in essence to both provide support to the regional and municipal operators and to check on their outputs. For example, by 2024, all government pages should have an avatar, description, cover photo, and established electronic feedback form. Institutions should produce at least 3 posts per week (including federal, regional, and local institution-level content).

Content centres also help to facilitate the localization of content. For example, they handle federal information from the Presidential Administration and Government via Dialog, regional information from RGC and cities, and news about the work of local institutions. They offer training and methodological guides for Governance Centre staff, and also for the broader GosPublics network of public services such as kindergartens, schools, health care, cultural, and sports bodies. The goal is to produce engagement. However, an internal study found that the average post received just 175 views, with 3-4 reactions and a 1.9% engagement rate. Healthcare, kindergartens, cultural and sports bodies had very low activity levels, and were considered in the analysis to not yet exploit the full potential of the system. Moreover, Oblasts in the Caucasus and Far East had the lowest share of institutions with official pages which post regularly. Another issue highlighted internally was that around 57% of GosPublics do not post content from the federal or regional level. These issues were to be solved by enforcement from federal and regional executive bodies, KPI tracking and the introduction of Content Centres.



The functioning of the RGCs and MGCs and their use of the Incident Management System (which will be elaborated on in the following sections) aims to give the Russian population the impression that their grievances are being heard, and that the state functions efficiently – while at the same time, implementing the "digital power vertical" by exercising control over regional politics and monitoring the information space in every corner of Russia. The importance of engaging with citizens in the online sphere is repeatedly emphasised in internal documents. Dialog maintains that engaging with comments of citizens, even when they do not directly address the state, should be viewed as a best practice.

The "Dialog" model of digital public relations

Dialog and Dialog Regions are responsible for the overall model of government publications on digital media. They divide state entities into three types of digital presence:

- Flagship communities: government and socially significant public organizations' information systems, cities and municipal districts, core universities, main hospitals, large polyclinics, important educational institutions, cultural establishments, sports facilities etc.
- Active public groups include small and medium-sized communities of municipalities, schools, hospitals, polyclinics, kindergartens, sports institutions, cultural organizations, etc.
- Public business cards: municipalities with fewer than a thousand inhabitants and all organizations in such municipalities; morgues, cemeteries, forensic experts, audit institutions, other small establishments.

Flagship public pages require a high-quality content strategy and promotion as they account for 53% of the audience, while less prominent active communities need at least three posts per week. The management of "business cards" (a simplified form of web presence) according to ANO Dialog's recommendations is optional but requires mandatory verification in the Unified System of Identification and Authentication with a high-quality design approach.

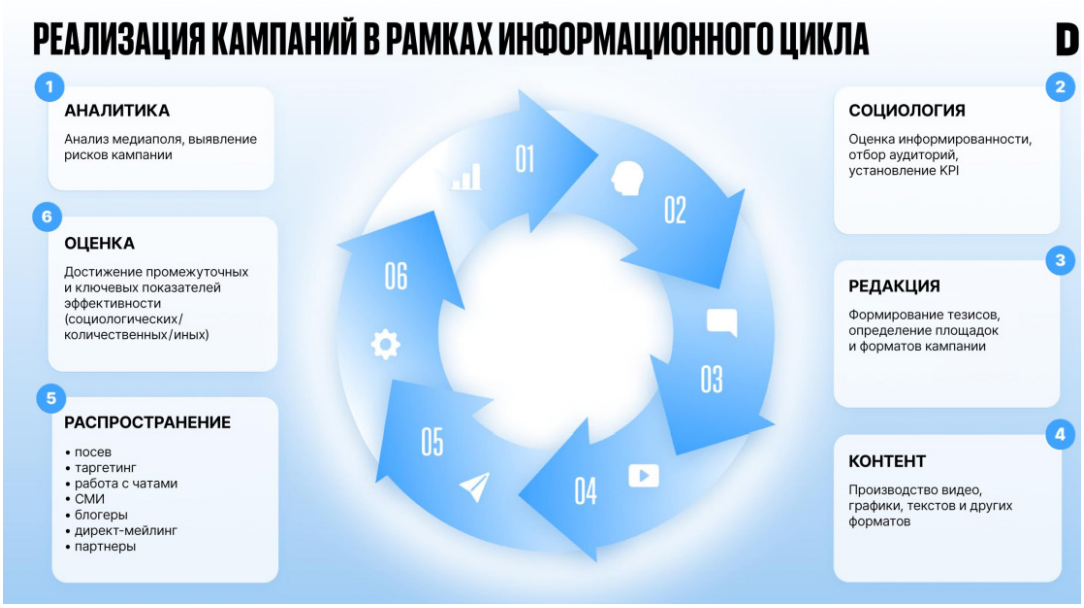
Dialog cooperates with a wide range of partners in implementing joint projects. At an aggregated level, it claims to have informed audiences about socially significant events and positive changes in Russia through 41 partnerships, resulting in over 337 million campaign views overall. Its partners include public organisations such as the Agency of Strategic Initiatives (Агентство стратегических инициатив). According to internal documents, thanks to its cooperation with the Agency, more than 10 million complaints were added to Dialog's dashboards. Private companies are also among Dialog's partners, for instance, VKontakte,[503] with which it organises educational programmes, or Avito with which it implements projects for federal government bodies.

Its main specialism is in providing media analytics data transfers to inform the digital activities of governmental partners. This means in practice that Dialog surveils not just the Russian population, but the rest of the state. For example, Dialog claims to have supplied over 3,000 analytical and other documents about digital media to the Coordination Centre of the Government of the Russian Federation. It holds regular training events, conducts a performance assessment of governmental digital presence twice a year, and "provides comprehensive information support for analytical monitoring of decisions made by the Government of Russia".

Communication planning follows a standard public relations campaign design approach consisting of an iterative, circular process:

- **ANALYSIS:** Analysis of the media environment, identification of campaign risks
- **SOCIOLOGY:** Evaluation of awareness, audience selection, establishment of KPIs
- **EDITING:** Formation of messaging, determination of platforms and formats of the campaign
- **CONTENT:** Production of videos, graphics, texts, and other formats
- **DISSEMINATION:** * seeding » targeting » chat work * Media » bloggers » direct mail » partners
- **ASSESSMENT:** Achievement of intermediate and key performance indicators (sociological/quantitative/others)

503 VKontakte is the leading social media platform in Russia, commonly referred to as the Russian equivalent of Facebook. Its CEO is currently Vladimir Kiriyenko, son of Sergey Kiriyenko.



Slide from Dialog's internal presentation titled "Campaign Execution in the Information Cycle".

A great deal of energy seems to be focused on developing basic sociological knowledge to support the creation of resonant messaging, interpreting audience attitudes, and improving visual aspects such as readability. Logic models are applied to communication planning to demonstrate use of KPIs, audience segmentation, and evaluation, in order to produce metrics that demonstrate changes in awareness, loyalty, or engagement. In sum, the approach is similar to any Western public relations planning model.

Where Dialog differs is in its privileged position within the Russian information environment. It is not simply a well-resourced PR agency but has the full backing of the Presidential Administration through the “power vertical”. While this process is not completely joined up, it is fully connected to the Russian e-government system, the Unified System for Identification and Authentication (ЕСИА, Единая система идентификации и аутентификации). 244,000 state-owned accounts have been created and verified within this service, including 170,000 on VKontakte, 54,000 on Odnoklassniki, and 20,000 on Telegram. The total audience of these public pages and channels is estimated at 157 million subscribers. Every week, around 1.2 million pieces of content are published on the state-owned network, generating up to 255 million views and 3.3 million reactions. Dialog is responsible for the guidelines, best practices, content sharing, and evaluation of all these state-owned accounts.

Additional tasks include creating, or buying, Telegram channels and other influential social media accounts or groups that should (according to Dialog) supply pro-government information. Dialog closely monitors Yandex News and VK groups for informational triggers and has developed fast mechanisms for requesting removal of content critical to the regime. Dialog staff regularly use search engine optimisation to amplify their stories to the top of the Yandex News feed and offer training and advice to the regions on how to do the same. Dialog Regions also oversees an infrastructure of “unofficial” VKontakte and Odnoklassniki groups and Telegram channels used for “highly native” information campaigns at both regional and federal levels. According to an internal document, they secretly manage:

- 143 regional public groups on VKontakte and 69 communities on Odnoklassniki, with a total of 3,953,722 subscribers. Elsewhere, they claim to run an unofficial network of 197 accounts capable of earning in excess of 600,000 views during an information campaign.
- 245 regional Telegram channels and 31 federal channels with a total of 2,123,680 subscribers.
- According to data collected at regional level, 64 Telegram channels (26%) and 27 VKontakte/Odnoklassniki communities (18%) secretly controlled by Dialog Regions are included in the top 5 regional public accounts by subscribers; 143 Telegram channels (58%) and 36 VKontakte/Odnoklassniki publics (25%) in the top 10.

Furthermore, Dialog provides the infrastructure, strategy, and content support for the **GosPublics** initiative. GosPublics is a public feedback system within the Ministry of Digital Development that connects public and budgetary institutions' pages. It allows the staff of all public services to be present as public relations on behalf of the Russian state. Support and training for this are extensive. For example, since 2021, the Forum of Excellent Teachers (FOR), which is jointly conducted by the Ministry of Education and Dialog, attempts to turn teachers into digital influencers. As of end 2023, the GosPublics system generated on a weekly basis around 150,000 posts, 150 million views, and 2 million reactions. It claimed to have 115 million subscribers of which 45 million were unique users. According to Dialog's data, the average region of Russia has a total of 2,000 GosPublics accounts. On top of that, the GosPublics managed by Dialog are integrated with GosUslugi, the e-government service of Russia. This means that when e.g. browsing the social media page of the local medical clinic, a user can book a visit directly on the page. Other examples include signing up your child to kindergarten through its GosPublics page.



Slide from Dialog's internal presentation titled "The GosPublics Ecosystem around the Citizen".

Perhaps somewhat disturbingly, the above slide entitled “The GosPublics Ecosystem around the Citizen” shows the public encircled by a range of institutions: the Presidential Administration, the Government and ministries, administrations of regional, city/township, district, cultural centres, hospitals, museums, libraries, polyclinics, youth clubs, sports centres, schools, and kindergartens. Elsewhere, Dialog refers to this as patriotic material that should accompany every Russian citizen throughout their life, in a “cradle to grave” propaganda package.[504] The ambition is clear: a total surveillance and propaganda system in which all public actors are active participants, and from which there is no alternative. A continuation of the system of patriotic education into the mundane digital spaces of everyday life.

Tools and capabilities

Dialog maintains over 20 bespoke tools designed to facilitate this wide-ranging work. This section offers an overview of those tools. The first group of tools were developed by Medialogia and were among the original capabilities established before, or early on in Dialog’s creation:

Incident Management is a system for monitoring and processing citizens' messages on social networks (VKontakte, Facebook, Odnoklassniki, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, some messenger apps, forums and blogs, as well as online video sites). According to Dialog, in the first quarter of 2023, 81% of “incidents” were identified on VKontakte, 10% on Telegram, 7% on Odnoklassniki, and merely 2% on Western platforms. The Incident Management System was created based on the order of the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media on 5 July 2019. In an interview with Kommersant, Goreslavsky claimed that the origins of the Incident Management System began in 2018, shortly after the presidential elections. “We looked at and tested a wide variety of systems aimed at changing work processes and, accordingly, the mentality of officials. This is not just monitoring; it is, in essence, a system for controlling execution”, he said about the tool.

The Incident Management System appears to be a core function of the RGCs’ and MGCs’ work and is also used by the Kremlin’s Government Coordination Centre. The system monitors all social networks by keywords and collects everything found every day in real-time. There are 12 subject categories: housing and utilities, urban development, education, healthcare, roads, etc. This is typically the top 10 list of household problems that people encounter and about which they usually express various forms of dissatisfaction. All this is collected within a region where geolocation tags are present. According to leaked methodological guides, content is assessed using a traffic light system. Red covers extraordinary events at federal scale, large socio-political events (such as protests or opposition politicians), or where there is an audience of over 1 million people. Yellow corresponds to resonant statements that are negative to the leadership of the country or a region, scandals connected to high profile political and business leaders, and anything that engages 100,000 to 1 million people. Green are mainly domestic and social incidents that attracted the attention of up to 50,000 people.

504 Roonemaa, Vunsh, et al., 2024

From January to November of 2023, the Incident Management System processed nearly five million incidents. Over 12,000 operators within entities across Russia subordinate to ANO Dialog were involved with incident processing. The Incident Management System automatically monitors 150 million accounts on social media and works 24/7. RGCs deal with around 500,000 requests on social media per month. Dialog boasts an average of around a 3-hour response to online complaints. A leaked slide deck reveals that in 2023, Roskomnadzor, the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Economic Development used the Incident Management System in their work, while 6 other state bodies who should make more use of it (according to Dialog) did not.



Slide from Dialog's internal presentation, showing the integration of AI into Incident Management.

Dialog was set to integrate AI into its Incident Management System in 2024, to automate its processes. Artificial Intelligence is supposed to manage incident reporting in the system based on the social media comment/post of a citizen. It should then automatically send the incident to the person responsible and prepare a draft response. Other reports state that the tool is now "capable of analysing large amounts of data from any subject area and providing a complete cycle of preparation and decision-making, from identifying the problem and collecting initial data to forming a draft solution, its adoption, and follow-up".[505]

Another tool available to Dialog employees is GOSTwriter (in Russian: ГОСТрайтер), a Telegram bot which generates short news stories based on prompts. However, it is unclear whether this tool is still in use given the introduction of AI systems into the RGC workflow.

505 Savaleva, 2024

Other main tools include:

- **Prisma** for Presidential Administration oversight, as described by Goreslavsky, it is based on the Incident Management System, and gives the Kremlin "a certain set of permissions in the system".
- **Heatmap of Russia's RGCs** is an information system that provides a comprehensive picture of all issues concerning residents and key technical performance indicators to support management decision-making at all levels of government.
- **Digital Analytics Dashboard** (VDL/ВДЛ). The VDL digital analytics dashboard is an information system for independent real-time monitoring of the information environment by senior officials and their deputies in Russian regional entities to support management decision-making. It allows monitoring on the country level, Okrug level, or region-level. The VDL dashboard was set up for senior officials in 26 regions, deputies of senior officials in 58 regions, and has a total of 278 administrative users.
- **GosPublics** is the term used to describe all digital webpages/accounts/blogs of public services and their staff. It unites the social networks, messengers, and webpages of government bodies into one network. As of June 2023, GosPublics accounts published 99 thousand posts weekly, and received 148 million views and 2,2 million reactions. Yet, their engagement rate remained low – at only 1,5%.
- **Risk Management** is an information and analytical system that deals with informational risks. The functional purpose of the system includes monitoring negative news; identifying informational hazards; analysing speed and scale of risk propagation; involving responsible employees to address a given hazard; evaluating velocity and quality in handling information threats. The system identified 24,839 risks with varying degrees of criticality during the calendar year 2023. Its instructions had been adopted by 33 regional authorities by end 2023. Dialog claims that the response time by the Control Center and regions to the 1,371 moderate-to-high severity risks did not exceed two hours.
- **Risk Calendar** is a predictive analytics system for timely processing of risk topics in the information environment. In 2023, "Risk Calendar" was implemented in the regions so that they could forecast risks on socially significant topics. Work also began on creating analytical clusters based on RGC data in 10 regions, to unite efforts between RGC and regional stakeholders in identifying risk-prone topics, efficient information exchange including industry data, and comprehensive analytics support for the highest decision makers.
- **EDG Violations System** (Система «ЕДГ-Нарушения») is a specialized autonomous system for working on election campaigns of any level throughout the country. The system provides automated campaign work in areas such as monitoring, informing, collecting and analysing data, categorizing it, processing violations, and refuting misinformation within the framework of the campaign.
- **Services with Us,** a feedback platform that is a key component of the digitalization process, allowing citizens to submit complaints and suggestions directly to government bodies online.
- **Together We Solve** processes queries received through the State Services Portal/GosUslugi, mobile applications, and feedback widgets on government websites. It is supposed to help the state to hear citizens on various digital platforms, solve their problems, coordinate national projects, and provide assistance programmes. It claims to handle over 48 million enquiries per year.

The next set of tools were established by Dialog by 2023:

- **Fakes** is a system to counter the spread of misinformation.
- **Zephyr** is a deepfake detection system with audio-visual content monitoring. Zephyr had two versions: Zephyr 1.0 in 2023, which allegedly was able to identify deepfakes and voice spoofing, transcribe audio and video, and monitor foreign content with translations into Russian. In 2024, the 2.0 version of the tool was introduced with more developed detection capabilities, e.g. of audio synthesis. The tool was patented, and as part of the 2.0 version roll-out, Dialog created an internal support team and began forecasting false information based on analysis of text with AI. Notably, Dialog boasts that Zephyr identified a deepfake which manipulated a pre-existing video of Putin, and was able to be debunk it within 60 minutes.
- **"NOODLE"** («ЛАПША», an expression for bullshit) is a fact-checking service for the general public. The system was created to verify and refute false information, allowing users to submit content through an online form or via chat bots on social media platforms and messaging apps. The project's website also provides registered users with the ability to publish their own refutations of "fake news" stories.
- **The Dialog Regions educational platform** is a multi-format information system for training public sector representatives in the skills of working with media and communications. Dialog boasted that as of 2023, the platform had more than 30,000 users, 25 educational courses, 40 masterclasses and offered over 100 webinars in a year.
- **The Personal Communications System** allows for personal communication between the population and government officials (e.g. Presidential Envoy or governors), including by email and SMS. Dialog was in the process of developing this service on social media and messaging apps. As of 2023, 67 senior officials used the tool to send out personal messages. Dialog gathered 7.6 million email addresses based on a database from a vote about improvement projects in 2021 and 2022.
- **PULSE Clicker** is a programme for online focus groups that is used during public speeches of the President of Russian Federation and high officials from regions. It helps to identify which statements expand or narrow down target audience groups. RGCs also use the tool during officials' press conferences to identify what content should be disseminated to specific target groups.
- **Infocards/Infomaps** is a data collection system for top public groups, media outlets, and opinion leaders in regions.
- **Alert Monitoring System** is a system for prompt information environment surveillance of social networks, messengers and news resources regarding specified events, incidents or situations related to the political activities of prominent individuals. It provides automated collection and semantic filtering of data from open sources with an output of collected publications either to be analysed via web interface or sent as notifications through Telegram channels.
- **BRIDGE** («МОСТ») is a system for automating processes to monitor changes in citizens' attitudes toward national project programmes.
- **Mobile app.** In around 12 regions there is an app that users can install, take a photo of something (such as a problem with a social service), and send it directly to the appropriate institution.
- **Fakes Dashboard** (Дашборд Фейков) is a system which aggregates and shows false information, as well as its debunking status. It also serves as "hub" for receiving and answering citizen's alerts about misinformation with the support of automated chatbots.

- **GosPush**, while not a tool in itself, it is one of Dialog's projects. GosPush is a partner network which provides information on socially relevant topics and state projects through various channels, including through websites of the partners, e-mails, social media and blog posts, corporate media or screens (e.g. in public spaces or public transport).

An additional six in-house prospective services were due to be implemented in 2024:

- **Survey Builder** is a comprehensive system for panel-based sociological research that collects citizens' general opinions on socially significant issues and analyses aggregated data.
- **The Social Research Panel** is an independent platform for conducting sociological studies.
- **Chatbot Builder** is a service for creating chatbots on VKontakte, Viber and Telegram platforms.
- **InfoTsUR** or Info-RGC («ИнфоЦУР») is a unified information centre for RGCs designed to coordinate work in the new regions on informing about provided support measures, assistance and integration. The InfoTsUR system consists of five moderation centres: four regional and one federal through which federal-level news feeds are processed. It has been implemented in the occupied territories of Ukraine, which is discussed in further detail below.
- **Media Planner,** a tool for planning information campaigns in new regions is being developed.
- **Municipalities of Russia** is a portal for providing legal advice and information support on various issues related to municipal administration.

Dialog is also responsible for state branding (Госбрендинг), creating logos and merchandise for agencies, ministries, foundations, and special projects (e.g. Dialog's New Media Masterclass, and a circus festival called "Without Borders", or in Russian «Без Границ»). The bodies for which Dialog has designed state branding include:

- Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs (ФАДН, Федеральное агентство по делам национальностей) – Dialog created the design of the website, social media post templates, as well as merchandise.
- Federal Agency for State Property Management (Росимущество)
- Ministry of Economic Development (Министерство экономического развитя)
- Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare (Роспотребнадзор)
- The Circle of Kindness Foundation (Фонд Круг Добра) – a foundation supporting children with rare diseases, funded from the state budget and established based on Putin's decree from 2021.
- Other public institutions

In a leaked slide deck, the organisation revealed the objectives of its branding work, which entail ideological-strategic and practical tasks. They are the following:

- **IDEOLOGICAL-STRATEGIC TASKS:**
  - "Building trust between the state and citizens through visual communication. Not only on the federal level, but also the local one."
  - "[Earning] Loyalty of groups that had an unfavourable attitude toward the government."
  - "Forming a community of designers for state designs."
- **PRACTICAL TASKS:**
  - "Development of a federal standard of visual communication"
  - "Quality control on all stages (making briefings, choosing contractors, assessing proposed options and results of design choices"
  - "Optimisation of time and expenses"

These tasks reveal that design choices are meant to cultivate an aesthetically pleasing, and by extension, positive view of the regime, to convince even those with "unfavourable attitudes".

DOMESTIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

Given its extensive social media infrastructure within Russia, Dialog executes local and country-level information campaigns. In 2022, it created more than 170 of them, many of which were of an ultra-patriotic nature, aiming to strengthen support for the invasion of Ukraine. Examples include:

- **#WeWork (#МыРаботаем)** – a video campaign posted on social media in which workers (e.g. from shipbuilding or bread factories) describe their "endless work" in the face of Western sanctions. Employees of 1,236 enterprises took part in the campaign. Moreover, it generated 21,000 publications, received over 50 million views, and received endorsements from senior officials and coverage by news outlets.
- **#ForWork (#ЗаРаботу)** – is a similar campaign. Dialog describes it as a project "about the power of Russia", which portrays how enterprises work to support the war effort. The project spanned from October 2022 to September 2023, and had 7 phases, including for instance, how Russian enterprises provide for the mobilised, students from different regions working in the enterprise alongside their studies, or people displaced from occupied territories working in Russia (among other phases). Examples include a video of a couple from Mariupol, who moved to Chelyabinsk because "we did not have the right to speak Russian in the shop" and is currently working in an industrial plant. Visits of Putin to different factories were also covered as part of this campaign.
- **"Who, if not us!" (Кто эсли не мы!)** - a campaign focused on Russian soldiers, volunteers, medical personnel and media workers on the frontline. Dialog boasted the campaign went beyond the standard formats – it included, for example: graffiti of the slogan "Who, if not us!" and a Russian flag painted in many places across the country; a clothing line and candy with the project logo; as well as songs released by the rapper Ivan Kramer and the band «ПослеЗавтра». This was additionally accompanied with an online campaign on Telegram, VKontakte and Odnoklassniki. In total, there were 160 pieces of content. Posts on VKontakte and Odnoklassniki received over 175 million views, while those on Telegram received 35 million views.

- **Alyoshka Chocolate in Belgorod Oblast** - Alyonka is a well-known chocolate and candy brand in Russia, its packaging has the face of a little girl called Alyonka. After the Russian invasion, an 8-year old boy from Belgorod called Alexey dressed up in military uniform and saluted Russian soldiers invading Ukraine – which was quickly picked up by Russian propaganda.[506] As part of this campaign, Belgorod Oblast created a special edition of the chocolate called "Alyoshka" (diminutive from of the name Alexey) with a picture of the boy. This campaign appears to have been heavily promoted by Dialog – the story was extensively covered, the Belgorod Oblast governor even gifted Vladimir Putin the chocolate, and the campaign received over 20 million views on Telegram.
- **"Heroes of the Z Special Operation" (Герои Спецоперации Z)** – campaign about individual soldiers and their role in the invasion. It received 163 million views and contained more than 15,000 posts on social media.
- **#MyCrimea (#МойКрым)** – a campaign created in collaboration with ANO Integration Senezh. The campaign was launched by the Russian actor Sergey Bezrukov on 18 March 2022, who published a post in which he described his vacation in Crimea with the hashtag #MyCrimea, and encouraged others to visit. As a result, the campaign received over 15 million views and more than 23,000 posts.

Other campaigns:

- In 2024, Meduza reported on leaked Dialog documents revealing that the organisation targeted Russians abroad with manipulated clips from independent Russian media outlawed in the country.[507] The actual videos were published several years prior but were edited to seem like encouragement to vote in upcoming elections. Subsequently, using targeted ads, the clips were shown on social media to Russians living abroad. However, as Meduza claims, the campaign was not successful.

According to the Bell, following the full-scale invasion, Dialog also began supporting the communication efforts of the Defence Ministry. Reportedly, Tabak himself assessed the ministry's communication as late and ineffective, which led to the Presidential Administration becoming involved in its information policy.[508] The focal point for Dialog's contact with the Defence Ministry was Tikhon Makarov, one of Tabak's deputies.[509] As part of these activities, Dialog was responsible for creating the "Tribunal" Telegram channel which published information about Ukrainian "war criminals", particularly those from the Azov battalion, that was frequently mentioned in Russian propaganda materials about Ukraine.[510] Lastly, posts critical of the Wagner Group leader, Evgeniy Prigozhin, were also disseminated by Dialog.[511]

506 Talakhadze, 2023

507 Reiter & Zholobova, 2024

508 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

509 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

510 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

511 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

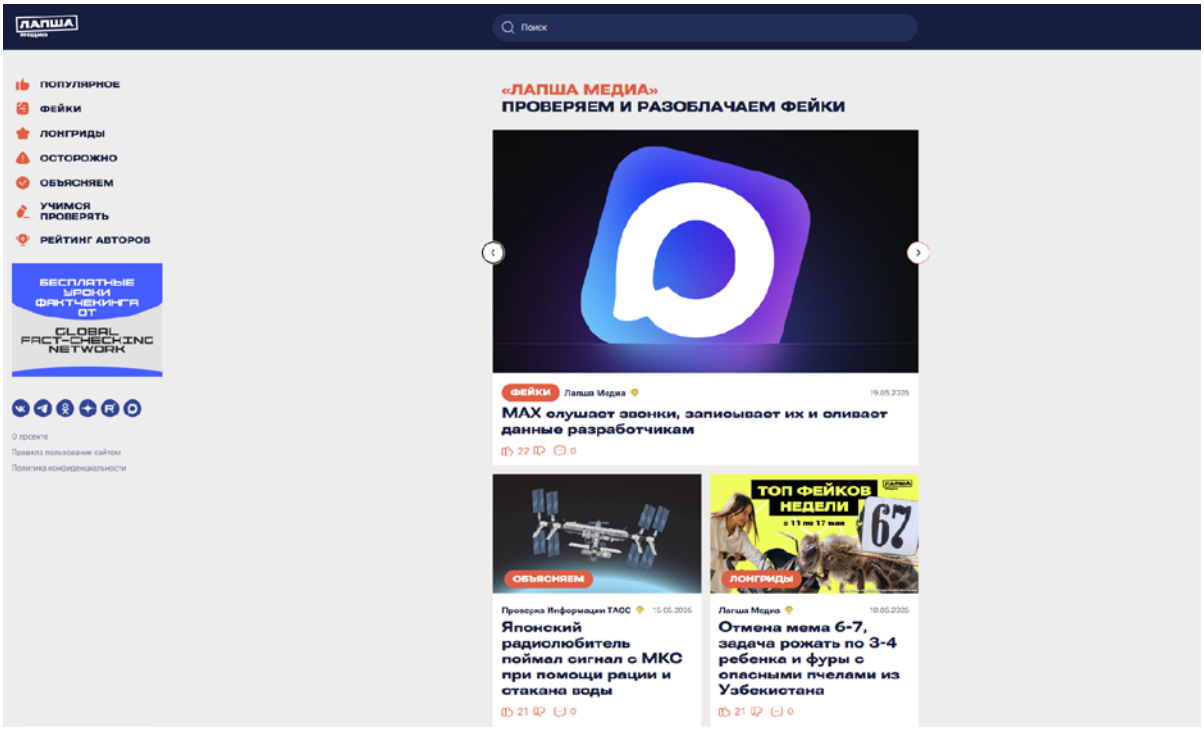
Countering "fake news"

One of Dialog's key strategic directions is debunking false information. The organisation's goal is to create an ecosystem for fighting "fake news" to support the enforcement of Russia's "fake news" laws. This ecosystem is made up of five pillars:



Screenshot from Dialog's presentation outlining the steps of creating an ecosystem for fighting "fake news"

- Creation of a market of fact-checkers. In 2023, Dialog established a network of 14 fact-checking organisations by partnering with 8 media organisation and 6 higher education institutions. According to Dialog's data, partners identified 2,538 instances of fake news and published 1,954 materials relating to them.
- Training and involvement of the regions – scaling the system, as with RGCs and MGCs.
- Technological products – Dialog-owned tools such as Zefir (mentioned above) and dashboards.
- Monitoring of fakes and deepfakes.
- Lapsha Media is a fact checking project based on the LAPSHA (NOODLE) tool mentioned in the section above. In 2023, Dialog actively developed Lapsha Media. The project had 1.58 million subscribers and supposedly reached an audience of 389 million. Yet, similarly to other social media activities, it received a low engagement rate of only 1.1%. The fact checking service is active on the following media platforms: VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, YouTube, MAX, Telegram, and YandexZen. Another aspect of their counter-misinformation activity is marking and taking down fakes from social media sites. In 2022, Dialog marked 76,315 pieces of content identified as fake and deleted 514,702 links from VKontakte and Odnoklassniki. Lastly, they identified 3,955 distinct false claims.



Screenshot from the Lapsha Media website.[512] The top article debunks the claims that "MAX listens to your calls, saves them, and sends data to developers."

Training and education initiatives

Dialog Regions is mandated to create an educational ecosystem for developing digital competencies among civil servants. The organisation received its educational license on December 28, 2021. The educational platform was developed through collaborations with universities, establishing professional and educational standards, holding training seminars, and developing systems of professional assessment. In 2023, Dialog Regions conducted the following:

- Educational events and seminars: 2,489 educational activities with a total of 146,944 trained specialists. The pool of accredited experts exceeded 600 people.
- New Media Workshop: the project's audience grew to over 800 people in two years and "NMW" graduates have launched more than 130 media projects, including those with grant support. The reach of publications within information campaigns by alumni exceeded 700 million views. Some of the teachers of the programme include high-profile propagandists such as Vladimir Solovyev[513] and Aram Gabrielnyanov,[514] or state officials tasked with communications e.g. Boris Belyakov.[515] The Director of the New Media Workshop is Mikhail Kanavtsev. In October of 2022, the New Media Workshop 2.0 was announced, co-organised by Dialog, along with the Senezh Management Workshop, ANO Russian Reporters (АНО «Русские репортеры»), "Russia – the country of opportunities" (ANO RSV) and supported by the Presidential Fund of Cultural Initiatives.[516]

512 Accessed from: Lapsha Media, n.d.

513 V. Solovyov is a Russian TV propagandist with his own evening show on Rossiya-1 (one of Russia's main TV channels). He is known for his ultra-patriotic and radical statements, e.g. calling on the Kremlin to invade countries. Solovyov is currently under sanctions by the EU.

514 A. Gabrelyanov is a media tycoon, owner and former director of the News Media holding. He is currently under EU sanctions.

515 Belyakov is the spokesperson of the Russian Prime Minister's Office.

516 Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives, 2022

- Educational programs with universities: 51 professional education programmes in the regions trained 2,517 specialists and provided practice for 479 people at the Centre.
- Online educational platform: as of beginning of April 2026, the Dialog website boasts more than 180,000 users of the platform.[517]
- "InfoBez" (ИнфоБез, can also be translated to InfoSec) – an information security programme for civil servants co-organised with the Digital Ministry in 2022. The training focused on identifying phishing messages and using a tool developed for the programme to send out training phishing messages. 76 federal executive bodies and 2,200 regional executive bodies took part in the course. It was completed by a total of 231,819 people.

Administrators of state public pages undergo a special online course called "Academy of State Public Pages" on the educational platform "Dialog Regions". Administrators from 95% of flagship and active public pages (some 98,000 staff) completed this training program and are required by the end of 2023 to publish federal and regional news in their respective areas weekly. Training programmes offer points and certificates for mini courses, with guides and quizzes, as well as 30-minute tests to examine responses to problems.

Collaborations with higher learning institutions give credibility to the training. Receiving a first cohort in autumn 2022, the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) began offering a course in Internet Communications in the Public Sector, which was added to the master's program Strategic Communication Management. The course teaches digital communication skills to officials using "unique" methods possessed by Dialog's experts, including how to use the "Incident Management" feedback tool, fact-checking and combating fake news, online sociology, and management decisions based on data analysis. The course is aimed at advanced specialists and claims to teach communications planning and evaluation, crisis assessment and resolution, management, analytics, and forecasting.

In January 2022, Dialog signed a cooperation agreement with Russian Technological University and Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology – (MIPT) to conduct a series of studies dedicated to the role of artificial intelligence in communications between the state and society. Experts from Dialog and scientists from RTU and MIREA would examine the domestic and foreign experience of applying artificial intelligence solutions in building communications between government bodies and citizens, assess their effectiveness, and also propose new technological solutions that can be used to improve feedback quality with the state.

Also in 2022, under the same agreement, HSE launched a joint project with Dialog Region's Lapsha (Noodles, or "bullshit") platform to "verify information circulating on social networks and promote techniques of factchecking". The same year, Dialog announced the creation of a 72-hour training programme for digital specialists at Moscow State University (MGU) called Digital Media Communications in the Modern World. The programme was designed for employees and members of the human resource reserve of Dialog Regions for effective problem-solving, forming a reserve of leaders for digital teams. In 2022, MGU together with Dialog also launched a master's programme in Artificial Intelligence and Digital Communications in State Administration covering topics such as:

[517] Dialog, n.d.-b

- Current foundations of design and management of teams in the public sector
- Online sociology
- Targeted advertising and evaluation of the effectiveness of information campaigns
- Artificial, hybrid intelligence and scenarios of their use
- Media analytics and big data
- Communications between structures of government power and citizens
- Economics and management within digitalization
- Analytics and development
- Social, economic, and political strategies

In cooperation with ANO Russia - Land of Opportunities (RSV), Dialog supplies modules in strategic communication on PR basics, digital storytelling, media strategy, and crisis communication. Over 70 heads and leading specialists of press offices of federal and regional authorities, as well as public and commercial structures, have become participants in the programme. "The outcome of the training will be the formation of a community of specialists who can work with modern tools to convey the state agenda."

On top of that, Dialog provides training in crisis communications, as well as support in crisis management. As part of one of its training activities, it organises simulations to prepare employees to react under pressure. At the same time, Dialog provided support for content creation and PR campaigns, during e.g. the 2021 fires in Yakutia. The organisation has also formed educational partnerships on the regional level. For example, it launched a partnership with the Yugra State University (located in the Khanty-Mantsi Autonomous Okrug), in which students will complete internships at the RGC, and specialists undergo training organised by ANO Dialog's experts.

Sociological research

Dialog is also in part a fully functional sociological data analysis agency. This capability is central to building, targeting, and measuring the impact of their campaigns. Reportedly, providing online sociological surveys for Vladimir Putin is Sergey Kiriyenko's "favourite toy".[518] The Sociological Department claims to use unique proprietary methods to collect, process and analyse large-scale data from citizens online. This includes trying to understand people's reactions to events and their motivations. In 2023, the sociological unit implemented the following flagship projects:

- Survey of 8,090 investors as part of the "Regional Investment Standard" project.
- The Strategic Initiatives Agency's quality of life rating for 900,000 respondents was presented to the President of Russia in a report format containing Dialog research results.

[518] Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

- Launching a separate brand, the **Weber Sociological Agency**. Publications on research topics have garnered over 12 million views (as of 2024). Weber conducts surveys on a range of different topics, for instance on parenting issues (styles of raising a child, buying toys for them, what types of cartoons do children watch, etc.). The launch of Weber was held at the VK headquarters in Moscow, during which the results of a survey about Western companies leaving Russia was presented.[519] Notably, Weber is the first online sociological agency in Russia which has been authorised by INSOMAR, the Russian Institute of Social Marketing.[520]

In total, Dialog's sociologists had by the end of 2023 conducted 9,400 studies and surveyed 6 million people. The plan for 2024 was to launch a new platform to facilitate surveys. Dialog described the Sociological Panel concept as "an operator of dialogue between power and society" offering a voice to the people. They claimed that "Our platform is a place where everyone can express themselves and be heard!"[521] Through the panel, citizens can participate in surveys about their satisfaction with infrastructure, education, or healthcare services.

The results of a September 2023 sociological survey grants some insight into the types of data Dialog's sociologists regularly generate; in this case, data that justifies Dialog's mission and purpose.

About government presence:

- 62% of respondents confirm the importance of communication between citizens and government via social networks. 59% believe that being able to reach out to authorities on social media is a sign of an open government.
- The development of communication with citizens on social media is a responsibility of the state according to 54% of respondents.
- 61% of respondents see more positives in being able to contact government agencies through social media than negatives (37%) or equal amounts of both (24%). The advantages include convenience and accessibility as well as efficiency.
- According to 77% of respondents, regional leaders should focus on developing feedback in social media networks.
- The majority (83%) believe that officials are required to respond to citizens' inquiries on their official pages.
- An absolute majority of respondents (80%) believe that public attention contributes to problem resolution. 63% percent are willing to share information about any issue on social media platforms.

About experiences of contacts:

- Most of the respondents (62%) have contacted government agencies with various issues at some point in time. The most popular communication channels are Gosuslugi, personal visits, and official websites of departments.

519 Parshin, 2025

520 Институт Социального Маркетинга – National Institute for Opinion Surveys and Marketing

521 Dialog, n.d.-c

- According to the survey, only 14% of respondents contacted authorities via social media; most of them did so publicly in comments or posts rather than through private messages.
- The main request concerns issues of housing and communal services (utilities), social benefits and pensions, as well as territory improvement.
- Most of those who contacted government agencies received responses to their inquiries regardless of communication channel.

Ideal scenarios and key social media searches:

- The most important aspects when dealing with government authorities are the quality of decisions and responses as well as strict adherence to law.
- For 70% it is important to see the whole process of solving a problem and not just the result.
- For an absolute majority (91%), it is important to receive a response from state authorities when the problem cannot be resolved.
- When assessing the process of submitting applications through social networks, the lowest indicators are recorded for quality and speed of resolution, while the highest are for convenience and openness.

As part of Dialog's response to this feedback during 2024, the following development vectors were identified:

- Process automation: implementation of artificial intelligence to assist operators in pre-preparing responses and auto assigning incidents.
- Expansion of the state communication ecosystem.
  - Expanding the bank of key phrases for incident monitoring.
  - Attraction of socially important feedback operators ready to engage in systematic incident processing (mostly major institutions).
  - The priority of incident handling in state-owned social media accounts (the expected increase in incidents due to the creation of these public pages is approximately one million per year).
- Preventive information sharing.
  - Preventive information taking seasonality of problems into account and adjusting the region's communication based on current feedback from residents.
  - Developing model scenarios for problem-solving based on successful experience and practice.
  - Systematic assessment of regional information campaign quality.
- A pilot project on preventive information was implemented in the Vologda region regarding heating issues. The number of incidents during the evaluation period decreased by about 25% compared to the same period last year.

Election-related activities

Dialog's dominance in the Russian social media ecosystem is key to ensuring election outcomes that favour the regime. In September of 2023, regional elections took place, including by-elections of deputies to the State Duma, as well as local elections in several regions. Around 6 months later, presidential elections granting Putin a fifth term as President were organised. Internal slide decks indicate many of Dialog's tools and capabilities were employed to guarantee a desired electoral outcome at local and national level.

- During the regional elections, Dialog put its communication model into practice, following the six steps of the information cycle within an electoral campaign. RGCs seem to have been heavily involved in supporting social media communications of local candidates.
- Analytics – Dialog conducted an information environment analysis, identifying the most popular social networks (VKontakte, Telegram, and TikTok), media outlets, bloggers or Telegram channels in the region holding elections. Subsequently, any topics relating to the candidate, their opponent, or any other adjacent topics were monitored. The Incident Management System was also used to keep tabs on any emerging issues and requests toward the authorities.
- Sociology – Polling about the most pressing electoral issues and optics of the candidate were conducted. These entailed "mass online surveys in the Dialog method", based on which campaign topics were adjusted. Moreover, focus groups of 8-10 people were organised, diving deeper into the image of the candidate and content posted on social media as part of their campaign.
- Editing – this stage included designing the campaign messaging and its themes. The campaign topics suitable for regime candidates listed by Dialog are the following: "ideology" (the invasion of Ukraine, patriotism, sporting achievements, traditional values), "openness of the candidate" (responding to comments on social media, meeting and calling people, holding press conferences – anything which creates a positive image of the candidate), "wins and caring for the people" (ameliorating infrastructure, communal services, or social benefits), "small things" (solving small issues - for instance, when a citizen complains online that the main street needs renovating, the RGC subsequently identifies this request, and the incumbent candidate announces that funds in the budget have been allocated to renovating the road). The content was planned and posted by RGCs and the press team.
- Content – a wide range of photos, videos, posts, memes, infographics, press conferences, and online surveys posted to the candidate's profile.
- Dissemination – the content was disseminated through available channels: candidates' website and profile pages, GosPublics, unofficial channels, Telegram, targeted ads, bloggers, news outlets, email newsletters, and chatbots. A notable case are the unofficial channels, which seem to have spread grassroots-like content, e.g. an ordinary citizen shared information about the help they received from the region – sometimes without even mentioning the governor's name. Well-known bloggers posted in support of the candidate or their policies in the region, which also aimed to increase ratings. Lastly, to create a sense of overwhelming support, bots left positive comments under the candidate's posts.
- Assessment – evaluating KPIs, analysing engagement rates, etc.

Similar measures were taken during the presidential elections in March of 2024. To legitimise voter turnout, posts encouraging citizens to vote online or in-person were spread. This similarly includes posts in official GosPublics and unofficial channels, newsletters in GosUslugi, targeted ads, or publications by well-known bloggers – all measures within Dialog's competences. Moreover, a comprehensive federal-level survey about support for each of the presidential candidates, as well as perceptions of fairness of the elections were conducted. The layout of the results suggest it was likely conducted using Dialog's sociological tools.

In sum, ANO Dialog is a Kiriyenko-controlled entity that manages perceptions of public services, conducts digital censorship, and political interference in a format designed to improve the efficiency of the power vertical between the Presidential Administration and local and regional politicians. It applies managerialist principles and generates data and analysis to inform governance. In chapter 6, we will also assess Dialog's role in foreign interference, as a contributor to information influence campaigns targeting Ukraine and Europe.

Activities in the occupied territories of Ukraine

Shortly after the full-scale invasion, Dialog was quick to put in place a network of Telegram channels spreading disinformation. In March 2022, Dialog created 68 Telegram channels targeting territories which it seems Russia expected to occupy, such as Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, Nikopol, Zhitomir, Dnipro, Odesa, Luhansk, Donetsk, Kyiv, and Kharkiv regions. They had similar naming patterns, e.g. "Main in Energodar" or "Main in Melitopol" or "Actually in Donetsk", "Actually in Kharkiv". Other channels in the network, for instance, "Zaporizhia Herald" mentioned publications of the "War on Fakes" account more than 200 times, signalling clear links with Dialog's disinformation assets.

A year later, Dialog moved to implementing its digital vertical infrastructure on the occupied territories. According to a financial and economic feasibility study of creating an Info-RGC system in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, a series of meetings took place in April and May 2023 under the direct chairmanship of Kiriyenko. At these meetings, it was decided that a Regional Governance Centre office and 5 moderation centres be established in Ukraine, using Moscow's RGC as a template.

News management process:

- The federal executive authorities, regional executive authorities, regions in charge of construction projects or local self-government bodies upload the factual information and materials to Info-RGC system for further dissemination as news items.
- The moderator assigned to the relevant department determines placement of information and target audience, then passes it on to the editor.
- The moderation centre editor adapts news if necessary and passes it on to designers or videographers for content creation and further placement.
- The news is spread to federal, regional and municipal media outlets, online publications, government social accounts and content hubs with networks of unofficial sources.
- The system generates a report and sends it to either the RGC or federal moderation hub for analysis and work adjustments.

Leaked documents describe the following functions of RGCs in the occupied territories of Ukraine (translated manually from Russian):

- *"Coordination of monitoring and processing activities for all types of appeals and messages from citizens of the Russian Federation, foreign nationals and stateless persons, as well as citizens of the Russian Federation permanently residing outside its territory, and legal entities in any organizational-legal form regardless of their place of state registration (hereinafter referred to as "citizens" and "entities"), received by authorities and organizations including through federal, regional or municipal feedback systems for message processing; also includes messages published publicly on social networks, messengers, other electronic mass communication media.*
- *Interaction with citizens via social media, messengers and other electronic communication channels on the topics related to regional control centre activities.*
- *Quick response to directions and topics of RGCs activities through cooperation with authorities and organizations.*
- *Provision of additional information for territorial and strategic planning of the development of subjects of the Russian Federation.*
- *Conducting information campaigns to counter the spread of unreliable information – a set of activities aimed at informing users and target groups about reliable information as part of implementing and developing an integrated system for combating unreliable information in the Internet, using social networks, messengers, and other means of electronic communication taking into account geographic location or/and other characteristics of the target audience.*
- *Conducting information campaigns on the activities of RGCs – a set of measures in the areas of 'Feedback' and 'Information', carried out using social networks, messengers, and other means of electronic communication taking into account geographic location and/or other characteristics of the target audience."*

The total cost for this initiative during 2023 was ₽183 million (€1.8m), with ₽2.5 billion (€25m) allocated to Dialog's digitalization projects in the territories 2024-2027. However, figures vary between documents, which makes the exact sum difficult to assess with confidence.

The Info-RGCs played an active role in the run up to the presidential election campaign. Over the course of two weeks at the end of February, through the Info-RGC of Donetsk over 1,500 pieces of content were published, with a reach of over 26.5 million users. A similar amount of content was disseminated in Luhansk, although it received a much smaller reach (over 2 million). More than 750 materials were published in occupied Zaporizhia, and almost 350 in occupied Kherson. The content addressed six topics, which reveal the intended propaganda effect. Those include countering "fakes", security, legitimacy, expected result, unity and support, as well as special projects. Therefore, the RGCs focused on content legitimising the election result, creating a sense of security and discrediting the Ukrainian narrative about the occupied territories.

Similarly to domestic information campaigns, those targeting the occupied territories entailed the spread of content by prominent Telegram channels and comments under posts to create an impression of widespread support. The well-known Telegram channels sharing content about the occupied territories included: Kotsnews, Neoficjalnyi Bezsonov, NE. САХАР, Повёрнутые на Z войне, and АРХАНГЕЛ СПЕЦНАЗА Z. Comments endorsed Putin for president, or supported any propaganda message in the post. In Zaporizhia and Kherson around 1,500 comments were posted in each, while in Luhansk and Donetsk the amount was even higher – over 3,000 and 4,000, respectively. Nevertheless, the matter of comments was also relevant during the election period – as part of the information policy on the occupied territories, the RGCs were entrusted with generating "at least 70% of pro-Russian comments" under posts by the Telegram channel ЧП Донецк. In the end, then, it was a numbers game.

However, setting up RGCs and developing their activities was not the only task of Dialog. According to a document from May 2023 on information policy on the territories, ANO Dialog, along with state bodies, was set to conduct media trainings for representatives of the occupied territories. Moreover, Dialog was responsible for conducting A "New Media Workshop" for media employees in the occupied territories, determining KPIs for growth of its VK and Telegram channels, and introducing a system informing the head of the so-called Luhansk People's Republic about incident management.

To reinforce Dialog's agenda during the early months of the invasion of Ukraine, on 1 July 2022 the State Duma passed a new law proposed by the Ministry of Digital Development obliging state bodies to create official pages in social networks by the end of the year.[522] Estimates at the time suggested that the "digital vertical" comprised of 72,000 state webpages with a combined audience of 47 million users. Tsepelev said of the new law:

"Our proposed suggestions have been taken into account when drafting the bill. Experts suggested not only placing official information in government public accounts but also publishing informal, useful, interactive, and even entertaining content. Interesting content allows engaging residents in solving important tasks related to territorial development."[523]

Indeed, much of the 'spontaneous' patriotic content spread on the Russian internet during the first weeks of the war was commissioned by Dialog. The new digital power vertical would turn the promise of e-government services into a digital leviathan in which state institutions and employees take on a performative role in shaping the illusion of a modern, patriotic Russia. And if they don't, the Kremlin knows. Tightly controlled by Kiriyenko and fully integrated into his machinery for controlling domestic politics, Dialog represents the application of Kiriyenko's managerial approach to internet governance through digital public services, creating – by design if not execution – a digital splinternet that fully surrounds the citizenry.

About 60 people were involved in Dialog's operation to spread fake news about Ukraine. Representatives of the pro-Kremlin Telegram channel Readovka[524] and Mash also attended meetings at Dialog's office. Among Dialog's contractors are Vladimir Solovyov and military correspondents Boris Rozhin (author of the Telegram Z-blog Colonelcassad) and Daniil Bezsonov (author of the Telegram Z-blog NeoficialnyiBeZsonoV and former Deputy Minister for Information of the

522 December 1, 2022 marked the entry into force of amendments to the Federal Law "On Ensuring Access to Information on Activities of State Bodies and Local Self-Government", commonly known as the "Law on Government Publications". Dialog Regions provides comprehensive methodological support to regional governments for compliance with federal legislation.

523 Agenda-u.org, 2022

524 Readovka was reportedly sold in 2025 to Andrey Tkachenko.

Russian-backed Donetsk Republic), "War Against Fakes," and "Lapsha Media." The "War Against Fakes" channel was made to look like a fact-checking account, while it is reportedly coordinated by Makarov – one of Tabak's deputies in the Dialog management structure – and serves as Kremlin propaganda outlet.[525] In 2022, Dialog transferred more than €50 million to the company Rockk Media, which belongs to Elena Berdova – the relative of former husband Anton Berdov of propagandist Kristina Potupchik, according to reports.[526]

Self-branded as 'fighters against Western disinformation'[527] and 'bridges between the government officials and society,[528] the Dialog organisations actively spread online propaganda about Russia's annexed territories in Ukraine and play a key role in the government's domestic surveillance of the Ukrainian population and civil servants. Dialog employees have reportedly gone directly to Russian platforms with requests to take down content. After the full-scale invasion, they asked Yandex Zen to take down three videos posted on Ilya Yashin's blog in which he talked about Alexei Navalny, the war, or the case against journalist Alexander Nevzorov under the "fake news" law.[529]

Since the full-scale invasion, Dialog has been a part of Russia's information warfare aimed at Ukraine and the West. Examples or Dialog-linked influence operations include the spread of false claims such as:[530]

- Ukrainian soldiers are selling their military awards on eBay.
- Women are being mobilised into the Ukrainian army.
- Employers in Poland are offering Ukrainian refugees humiliating jobs such as "animal masturbator".
- Ukrainian soldiers are receiving pills that make them more aggressive on the battlefield.
- Senior officials in the Ukrainian government own luxury real estate in Switzerland.
- Authorities in Kharkiv requested that residents in an apartment building leave their doors unlocked for soldiers to set up firing positions. This claim circulated in the summer of 2022 and originated from a Z-blogger Alexander Kots, who shared alleged photos of notes with the request on apartment doors.

525 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

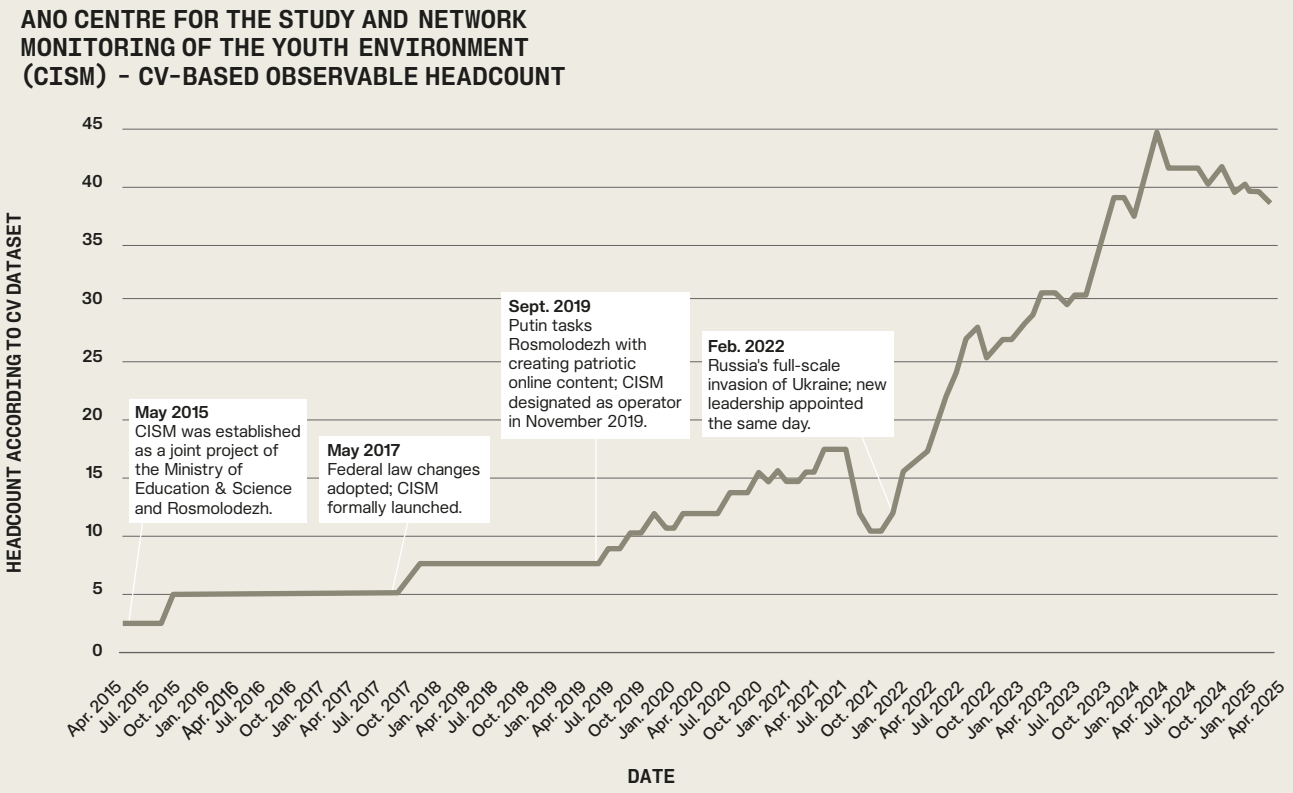
526 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023

527 Dialog, 2024b

528 Dialog, n.d.-a

529 Laws No. 31-FZ and No. 32-FZ signed on 4 March 2022. The laws amended the Criminal Code and introduced prison sentences for "discrediting" and spreading "false information" about the Russian Armed Forces.

530 Zholobova, Reiter, Pankratova & Pertsev, 2023



5.5 CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND NETWORK MONITORING OF THE YOUTH ENVIRONMENT

ANO Centre for the Study and Network Monitoring of the Youth Environment (CISM) (ЦЕНТР ИЗУЧЕНИЯ И СЕТЕВОГО МОНИТОРИНГА МОЛОДЕЖНОЙ СРЕДЫ «ЦИСМ») was created according to the Presidential bill "On Amendments to the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of May 30, 2017 No. 657, and launched in May 2018 as a joint project of the Ministry of Education & Science and the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh). According to press releases, Putin personally intervened in this issue due to concerns over the "spiritual education of children and adolescents" in the context of Internet influence over youth (others suggest that the idea was Natalia Kasperskaya's).[531]

Its first head was Denis Zavarzin, who was previously deputy director of Rosmolodezh. According to Zavarzin's boss at the time, Alexander Bugaev, ANO CISM's job was to search the Internet for information that threatens the life and health of children, and to report results directly back to Rosmolodezh.[532] For the first three years, the annual budget was ₽628m (€6.3m) a year, although this was a fraction of the resources put aside for the larger federal project targeting youth, "Social Activity", that reached ₽17.5 billion in 2022, ₽12.5 billion in 2023, and ₽11.7 billion in 2024.

531 Titov, 2021; Sostav, 2019

532 Mironova, 2019



Denis Zavarzin.[533]

In a wide-ranging interview from September 2021, Zavarzin was candid about CISM's purpose and role. The 5 priorities for monitoring were:

- Suicidal and depressing content
- Information about armed attacks on educational institutions
- Anarchism
- Ultra-movements
- The spread of criminal communities

The earliest monitoring software was capable of semantic analysis of open social media accounts and groups (not private groups or messenger apps), and accounts would be flagged to human operators in case of sudden escalations in rhetoric. The main indicator was sudden changes in the volume of posts. Around 100 accounts were flagged per month to law enforcement on the basis that they potentially represented a threat to security. According to Zavarzin, during the first 3 and a half years of operations, "We can say that with the help of our system, 14 attacks on schools were prevented and 18 people were prosecuted".[534] Despite this, CISM was criticised for failing to identify school shooters for example in Kazan (spring 2021) and Perm (September 2021), raising questions about their methodologies and actual purpose.[535]

Zavarzin offered an interesting snapshot of the pre-invasion social media climate for Russian youth. He claimed that some 61 million social media accounts belonging to youth engaged with "destructive content" at least once (although within that number were likely multiple accounts belonging to the same people). Around 1.5 million accounts were more systematic consumers or producers of problematic content. Almost 14,000 sites and accounts were blocked at CISM's recommendation by late 2021, by reporting to Rosmolodezh who would then make a case to media regulator Roskomnadzor. Zavarzin claimed that CISM did not engage in dealing with protests, opposition, or other political issues.

533 Photo accessed from: CISM, 2019

534 Titov, 2021

535 Privin, 2026

As of 2021, Zavarzin said that CISM had over 40 employees, the majority of which were programmers responsible for their developing their bespoke monitoring software. They also had an analytical unit and a unit for methodological support. Contractors Kribrum, Brand Analytics, and Medialogia provided technical support.[536] Much like ANO Dialog, CISM also signed agreements with universities, such as Russian Technological University MIREA resulting in the creation of a joint Centre for Cyberpsychology and Applied Big Data Analysis at the Institute of Information Technologies.[537]

On 24 February 2022, the same day as the beginning of the so-called Special Military Operation, Maxim Nikolaevich Lupin (Максим Николаевич Лупин) was appointed head of CISM. Mikhail Evgenyevich Burlakov (Михаил Евгеньевич Бурлаков) was made deputy director general. Zavarzin moved to the oversight position of Head of the Department of Network Projects and Countering the Promotion of Extremism Among Youth, within Kiriyenko's Public Projects directorate.[538]



Maxim Lupin.[539]

Lupin's suitability for the role was not obvious though he had previous connections as a cybersecurity specialist for the pro-Kremlin veterans' organization Combat Brotherhood, that is long associated with anti-Ukrainian hybrid activities in the occupied territories as well as GRU-connected cyberattacks on US targets.[540] Lupin was also associated with ZephyrLab during 2018, a company that builds websites for ministries in the Russian government including Gosuslugi.[541] The change in leadership indicates a change in direction in conjunction with the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

536 Titov, 2021

537 MIREA - Russian Technological University, 202

538 Roscongress, n.d.

539 Photo accessed from: Kongress Nauka, n.d.

540 Spisok-Putina, n.d.-d

541 The New Voice of Ukraine, 2025



Mikhail Burlakov.[542]

Under Kiriyenko's orders, Russia allegedly kidnapped and deported some 200,000–400,000 Ukrainian children, according to Ukrainian estimates. In the months following, the Ministry of Education was tasked with integrating the children. Funding was channelled into the socialization of Ukrainian teenagers, with a particular focus on those who might represent a threat to domestic security. Part of this preventative work was taken over by ANO CISM, whose task expanded to monitoring the "dissemination of the ideology of armed violence", "anarchism", "Nazism" and "other types of destructive information" in both Russia and the occupied territories of Ukraine.[543] This represents a widening of the mandate from suicides and school shooters to ideological support of Ukraine (falsely equated with "Nazism").

Continued investment in CISM's bespoke software led to the creation of the Automated Information System "Prevention" (Профилактика), which, by 2024 tracked "more than 540 million profiles" (or an estimated 85%) of children and teenagers active on social networks, including those in the occupied territories. Using AI to analyse the accounts, Prevention develops risk profiles for suicide, terrorism, and extremism, and integrates the data with the databases of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Each child is assigned a "destructive coefficient" and "opposition coefficient", that potentially puts them in a "red zone". In addition (and perhaps making up for weaknesses in the monitoring software), a network of internet users appears to be involved in paid "denunciations;" in essence a grants system for manually reporting schoolchildren to CISM for further investigation.[544]

Drawing on the opportunities afforded by AI and big data, the Prevention software is capable of de-anonymising accounts, linking accounts to photos, addresses and phone numbers, and conducting detailed analysis of online behaviour across platforms.[545] According to court decisions across the country, CISM prepares dossiers of information in preparation for cases against children who criticise the army on social media, leading to fines of ₽30,000. While the organisational budget has remained steady, the number of staff by 2024 exceeded 150, due in part to

542 Photo accessed from: CISM, 2023

543 Yapparova, 2024

544 Privin, 2026

545 Yapparova, 2024

CISM integrating its operations into 14 regional "information security centres".[546] It is unclear how such a change in scale took place with ostensibly the same budget as 2019, suggesting alternative budgetary sources.

The picture that emerges of CISM is of an organisation that dovetails neatly with Dialog with youth as its unique specialisation. It provides data for Dialog and Roskomnadzor to act upon: initially law enforcement and social services in the case of dangerously extremist teenagers (i.e. suicide risks and potential school shooters) and developed into a form of sociological and ideological control over youth networks. This trajectory continued in late 2023, when CISM together with the Governor of the occupied Zaporizhzhia region created **ANO "Center for Special Network Observations" (CSSN)** (АНО «Центр специальных сетевых наблюдений» - ЦССН) to monitor for extremism and terrorism in the occupied territories. This apparent trajectory however only tells part of the story.

In July 2025, Europol conducted Operation Eastwood, an enforcement action across 12 European countries against the hacker group **NoName057(16)**.[547] NoName057(16) first appeared at the onset of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and is best known for conducting distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks in Europe and Ukraine. On 11 March 2022, they said in their first Telegram post, "We are carrying out massive attacks on eerie propaganda sources that openly lie to people about Russia's special operation in Ukraine, as well as on websites belonging to unfortunate Ukrainian hackers trying to support Zelenskyy's neo-Nazi regime".[548] The connections between CISM and NoName057(16) will be further outlined in the chapter on foreign interference.

5.6 INTERNET DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Internet Development Institute (ANO IRI)/Автономная Некоммерческая Организация Институт Развития Интернета (ИРИ) plays a central role in the funding and creation of mediated propaganda in today's Russia. It supports the creation of "socially relevant" content – in the Kremlin's understanding of the term – by awarding state subsidies for anything that can be accessed through the Internet and aligns with Russian ideological narratives: primarily films, TV series, video games, reels, and advertisements. Its projects include a melodramatic TV series set during the invasion of Ukraine; a show about a Soviet intelligence operative in East Germany during the USSR's collapse (eerily reminiscent of Putin's own history); video games in which players fight an alien from a parallel universe that escaped from a US military base; or a game set against the backdrop of the Polish invasion of the Russian Empire in the 17th century.

IRI has become a dominant actor in the Russian entertainment industry. Its 2025 budget amounted to ₽25.3 billion (€250m), an almost eight-fold increase from 2020, when it equalled just ₽3 billion. Moreover, the organisation has secured funding from the state until 2030.[549] It has faced claims of causing inflation in the cinema and television industry,[550] while Meduza reported that its large budget has attracted even artists whose views do not align with those of the state.[551] This would appear to be a success for the initiative, indicating that it has structurally reformed the domestic media industry around the prerogatives of the totalitarian regime.

546 Sostav, 2019; Yapparova, 2024

547 Europol, n.d.

548 Møller, 2025

549 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025

550 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025

551 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023



IRI Headquarters, Tverska Street in Moscow[552]

However, propaganda was not the original purpose of ANO IRI. It was established in 2014 by Sergey Plugotarenko (director of the Russian Association of Electronic Communications/Российская ассоциация электронных коммуникаций (РАЭК) at the time) and Sergey Grebennikov (then director of ROTsIT/Региональный общественный центр интернет-технологий (РОЦИТ), the Regional Public Centre of Internet Technologies) to "foster dialogue between the government and participants of the Internet ecosystem".[553] One of its first tasks, ordered by Putin, was to elaborate a 10-year plan for the development of the Runet, which sketched out ideas of the "splinternet" and emphasised concepts like "digital sovereignty".[554] IRI subsequently received grants from the Presidential Administration to organise Internet+ forums, bringing together different industries (e.g. Internet+Sport) and facilitating the development of a domestic digital economy.[555] Soon after launch, Vyacheslav Volodin – First Deputy Chief of Staff with responsibility for matters of the Internet – left the Kremlin and IRI's staff was drastically reduced.[556] It wasn't until 2019 that the ANO resurfaced. In October 2019, the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh) was tasked by Putin to designate an organisation which would serve as a coordination centre for creating Internet content that would "strengthen civic identity and spiritual values among young people".[557] A month later, Rosmolodezh designated IRI, and granted it a subsidy of ₽2.4 billion (€24m) for these activities.

IRI's links to the state have been evident since its inception. Plugotarenko and Grebennikov's initiative was supported by Volodin and German Klimenko, one of Putin's key advisors on matters of the Runet. The Education Ministry and the Internet Initiative Development Fund/Фонд развития интернет-инициатив (ФРИИ) – the latter is not a government body, but a state-affiliated venture capital fund established by the Agency for Strategic Initiatives – are also considered co-founders of IRI. Currently, IRI's website lists five founders: the Ministry of Education, the Media-Communication Association, ROTsIT, the Internet Initiative Development Fund, and the Expert Institute for Social Research (ЭИСИ) – all in some way linked to the state.

552 Photo accessed from: Yandex Maps, n.d.

553 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

554 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

555 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

556 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

557 The Insider, 2019

Kremlin oversight can also be seen through the choice of IRI's leadership. The First Director of IRI was Dmitry Pavluchenkov, formerly an executive at the Internet Initiative Development Fund.[558] In 2019, IRI's Director became Anton Klyuchkin, who stepped back to Deputy Director when Alexei Goreslavsky took the helm in 2021. Prior to leading IRI, Goreslavsky was the Deputy Director of the Department of Public Projects and subsequently headed ANO Dialog. Kremlin oversight is reflected in the composition of the Supervisory Board. From 2015 to 2017, German Klimenko was the Board's Chairman – while serving as Putin's Runet advisor 2016–2018. In 2017, Leonid Levin, former Deputy Chief of Staff of the Russian Government Office, replaced Klimenko as Head of the Board. Currently, the Chair of the Supervisory Board is Sergey Kiriyenko.



Sergey Plugotarenko.[559]



Sergey Grebennikov.[560]



Alexei Goreslavsky.[561]



Vyacheslav Volodin.[562]



German Klimenko.[563]

558 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

559 Photo: АНО «Цифровая экономика», accessed from: Dg-yug.ru, 2023

560 Photo accessed from: Oprf.ru, n.d.

561 Photo accessed from: Internet Development Institute website.

562 Photo: duma.gov.ru accessed from Wikipedia, n.d.-b

563 Photo: Svklimkin/Wikimedia, accessed from: Pigman, 2018

Organisational Structure

Since 2019, the Internet Development Institute functions as an organisation distributing state grants for multimedia Internet projects: TV shows, movies, video games, video series, blog posts, etc. According to its website, IRI has supported over 2,600 projects since 2020, and the grants are awarded based on the decision of the jury panel. IRI has two jury panels – a Supervisory Board and a Production Board,[564] although the workflow between the two is not known. However, the final selection of the project is reportedly done by Goreslavsky, and four members of the Supervisory Board: Sergey Kiriyenko, Sergey Novikov, Margarita Simonyan, and Elena Yampolskaya.[565] In total, the Supervisory Board consists of 25 members, including prominent figures of the regime and executives of state-affiliated companies (non-exhaustive list):

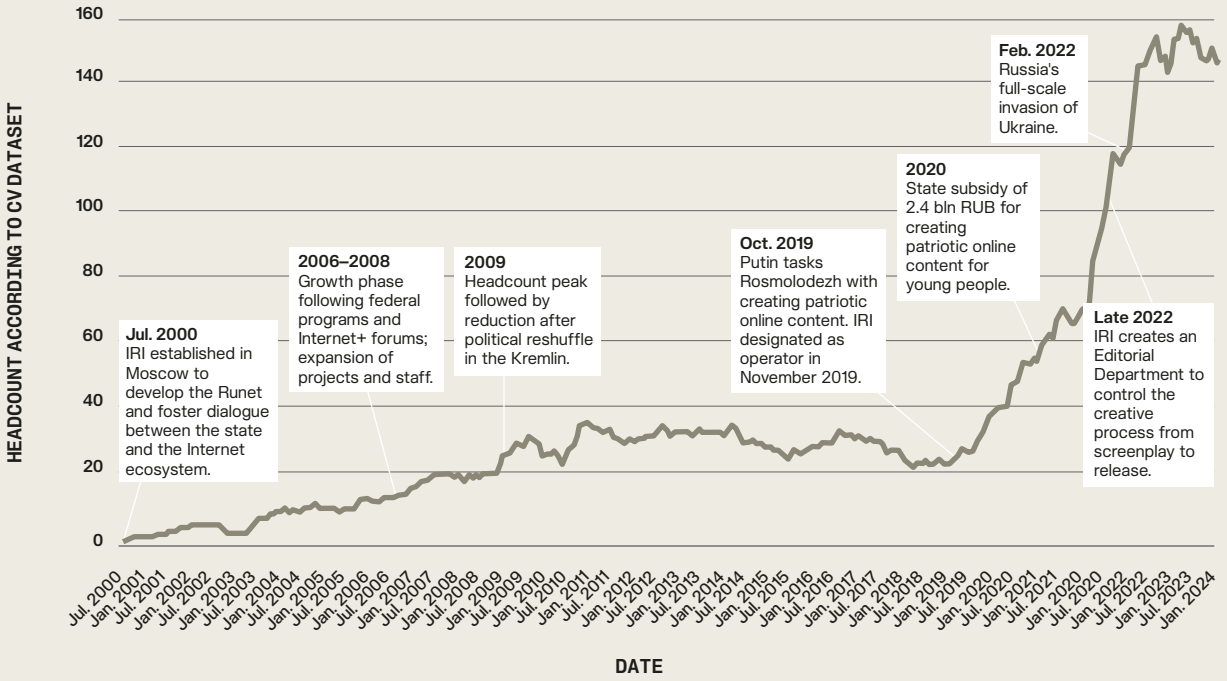
- Sergey Kiriyenko – **Chair of the Supervisory Board**, First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration
- Sergey Novikov – **Vice-Chair of the Supervisory Board**, Head of the President's Office for Public Projects
- Svetlana Balanova – General Director of the National Media Group
- Grigoriy Gurov – Head of Rosmolodezh
- Olga Liubimova – Minister of Culture
- Margarita Simonyan – Editor-in-Chief of RT
- Vladimir Medinsky – Aide to the President of Russia, former Minister of Culture
- Sergey Kravtsov – Minister of Education
- Natalia Sergunina – Deputy Mayor of Moscow
- Elena Yampolskaya – Advisor to the President of Russia
- Alexander Zharov – CEO of Gazprom Media Holding
- Dmitry Uvarov – Director of Strategic Partnership of VK
- Anton Zlatopolskiy – First Deputy Director General of the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (ВГТРК – media company owning TV channel Rossiya 1)

As of the beginning of 2024, IRI had 264 employees. Little is known about its internal structure, though since the organisation is heavily focused on project management, it is likely to retain a strong core of media production and marketing capabilities. IRI has an Editorial Department about which Goreslavsky has spoken publicly. Internal documents reveal that it was created at the end of 2022 to control the creative process "on all stages from creation of the screenplay to the release of the final content". As of 2023, it employed just 15 people.

564 Internet Development Institute, n.d.-b

565 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

INTERNET DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (IRI)
- CV-BASED OBSERVABLE HEADCOUNT



According to an internal slide deck, the content supported by IRI is classified by thematic categories. They are the following:

- Defence of national interests, as well as cultural and social (traditional) values
- Change in life quality in Russia as a sustained trend
- Heroes of our time, reasons to be proud and the big names of Russia
- We are together – projects for new territories, Special Military Operation topics

In an interview, Goreslavsky also suggested that multiculturalism is a topic supported by the ANO, and in 2023, IRI requested projects to emphasise the theme of the future of Russia.[566]

As of March 2026, there were several project categories open for tenders: (1) youth content, (2) national content, (3) debut projects, catered towards new directors and screenwriters, (4) projects of regional news outlets, (5) AI content, (6) and content for children.[567] Participants may submit up to three project ideas, and if pre-selected, must defend it in front of an expert panel, following which the final winners will be chosen. The grant-winner subsequently signs a contract with IRI, which specifies not only the grant sum or the product to be created, but also the expected KPIs. The idea of competitions to vet and select candidates is similar to those pursued by Kiriyenko's patriotic education and social mobility projects.

566 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025; Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

567 Internet Development Institute, n.d.-e

THE INTERNET DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE'S CLOSEST LABOUR-MARKET LINKS

Employers most often listed alongside the Internet Development Institute (ANO IRI) in the same CVs

IRI THE INTERNET DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (Target organisation)

304 employers share at least one CV with the Internet Development Institute

ORGANISATION TYPE

- Kiriyenko ecosystem
- State/civic sector
- Media
- Business/education/tech

TOP 18 ORGANISATIONS BY NUMBER OF SHARED CVS

1	RO Knowledge/Znanie	33 shared CVs
2	ANO RSV	22 shared CVs
3	ANO Dialog Regions	20 shared CVs
4	ANO Dialog	17 shared CVs
5	ANO "Bolshaya Peremena"	15 shared CVs
6	Channel One Russia	12 shared CVs
7	RGC / TSUR	11 shared CVs
8	HSE University	10 shared CVs
9	VK / Mail.ru	10 shared CVs
10	ANO DVFM	9 shared CVs
11	Rossiya Segodnya	8 shared CVs
12	ANO "More Than Travel"	7 shared CVs
13	Sberbank	7 shared CVs
14	EISI	7 shared CVs
15	NTV	7 shared CVs
16	Krasnyy Kvadrat	7 shared CVs
17	VGTRK	6 shared CVs
18	Structura	5 shared CVs

I A shared CV means that the same person listed both the Internet Development Institute and another employer in their career history. The ranking shows labour-market proximity, not formal cooperation.

To achieve its propaganda aims, content funded by IRI should reach a maximum number of views and engagements, which are specified in the KPIs. Goreslavsky revealed that the criteria against which they judge a project are "emotional response and social effects", measured by views, likes, comments, or reviews on Kinopoisk.[568] The potential of a project to gain views is one of the main criteria for selection. To achieve high viewing levels, some producers would boost their content by sharing it on popular VKontatke groups, as the platform counts its views from the first second, contrary to other social media wherein a user must view the video for longer in order for it to be counted as a view.[569] IRI measures viewing results with Mediascope tools, which collect data about watch time and number of devices viewing the content.[570]

Furthermore, Goreslavsky underlined the KPI-to-views ratio: a TV/film production receiving ₽10 million is expected to reach half a million views, while a production receiving more than ₽50 million should achieve 4 million views.[571] However, internal documents give insight into larger budgets. "GDR", the spy-thriller set in the late Cold War-era Berlin, which was in production in 2022-23, had a budget of ₽414.5 million and an expected KPI of 10 million views.

568 Kinopoisk is the Russian equivalent of IMDb; Stogova et al., 2023

569 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

570 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025

571 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025

Table: IRI's budget 2019–2025

YEAR	AMOUNT (IN RUB)
2019	₽2.4 billion*[572] *over the course of 3 years
2020	₽3 billion[573]
2021	₽10 billion[574]
2022	₽19 billion[575]
2023	₽20.7 billion[576]
2024	₽18 billion[577]
2025	₽25.3 billion[578]

According to a 2024 interview with Goreslavsky,[579] the budget is divided in the following manner:

- 48% - Video content (series of different formats and genres)
- 37% - Blogger content (this type of content was most numerous)
- 9% - Multi-format content
- 5% - Video games and software
- 1% - Internet projects and news

From 2019 to 2025, IRI's funds increased more than tenfold. This reflects the regime's emphasis on war-time propaganda and fits into its strategy of flooding the information space with pro-Kremlin content – also often used in its information influence campaigns abroad and especially in occupied territories of Ukraine. In 2022, IRI allocated ₽3 billion to war-related projects, which made up 100 out of a total of 776 projects it supported.[580] More recently, IRI's presence within the entertainment industry has become increasingly evident – according to Goreslavsky, in 2024, 73 out of 290 original projects on streaming platforms in Russia were produced with the support of the ANO.[581]

However, quantity does not appear to reflect quality. While Goreslavsky emphasised in an interview that it is "better to have less, but of better quality,"[582] according to sources of an investigation by Meduza and Important Stories, this is not the case. Projects are often on a strict and short time schedule, with some productions having finished filming 15 days before their premiere.[583]

572 The Insider, 2019
573 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025
574 TASS, 2023a
575 TASS, 2023a
576 Stogova et al., 2023
577 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025
578 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025
579 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025
580 Stogova et al., 2023
581 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025
582 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025
583 Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

The activities of ANO IRI and ANO Dialog are connected. Not only are both under the wing of Kiriyenko's ICT directorate in the Presidential Administration, but Goreslavsky also headed Dialog immediately before moving to IRI. Yet, more subtle links also exist – grant applicants for the "Youth content" category can receive an additional 0.5 point in their application score if they have completed the New Media Workshop organised by Dialog.[584] In the lead-up to the Russian Presidential election in March of 2024, IRI prepared a series of activities and content to be released. Internal documents show that IRI considered the support of the Directorate for Public Projects and ANO Dialog as essential for the success of the campaign. Dialog's role in particular was to share IRI content in the regions. IRI and Dialog also work together to contribute to Centre S' foreign interference activities, as will be discussed in chapter 6.

Projects

One of the main aspects of IRI's activity is the support for films and TV shows. These include almost all possible genres – dramas, comedies, thrillers, science-fiction, documentaries – and topics spanning from Ukraine and the invasion (usually portraying the country as run by fascists, controlled by the West, and suppressing the rights of Russian-speakers), Russian history (glorifying certain figures or events), relations with the West, or other topics (seemingly apolitical but with e.g. promotion of traditional values).

TV SHOWS AND MOVIES RELATED TO UKRAINE AND THE "SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION":

- **"20/22"** – TV series about the full-scale invasion. Tells the story of a couple whose attitudes toward the war differ. The man enlists as a PMC contractor (not a soldier, but a humanitarian worker), while his girlfriend is anti-war. He stops responding to her calls, so she goes to the frontline to find him. The IRI description states: *"Through the fates of the characters, the authors show how the loss of national identity and independence leads to great human tragedy. The division between "us" and "them," where "they" are enemies and second-class citizens simply because they speak Russian and are part of the "Russian world.""* The series had a budget of ₽175.6 million (€1.75 million) and premiered on February 23, 2024 on Pervyi Kanal.
- **10 Days Until Spring/10 дней до весны** – TV series made for the 10th anniversary of the annexation of Crimea. A dramatized version of events tells the story of three siblings who fight over their inheritance against the backdrop of the annexation. Budget of ₽662.4 million (€6.62 million). Goreslavsky claimed it **was the most popular IRI project on TV in 2024**, reaching 33.9 million viewers among the 40+ age group.[585]
- **The Case of Zelenskyy/Кейс Зеленского** – Documentary TV series *"about the new media-technology, used for the political rise of Zelenskyy in Ukraine (prototypes – Juan Guaido in Venezuela, Mikhail Saakashvili in Georgia). The "Case of Zelenskyy" changed the course of world history and pulled Ukraine into a big conflict which can turn into the Third World War".* It insinuates that an "Anglo-American" team of media technologists helped Zelensky to win the election. Budget of ₽58.5 million (€585,000).
- **Donbas/Донбасс** – Series which tells the story of a family spanning from the beginning of the 20th century to current times. It is supposed to "*explain why people living on that land think of themselves as part of Russia*". Budget of ₽559.9 million (€5.59 million).

584 Internet Development Institute, n.d.-c

585 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025

- **Liberation/Освобождение** – Series "about the events in Maidan, Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk". *"The series reflects the fates of the characters and the changes in their worldviews depending on the events in the country. Some become involved in the fate of their homeland, standing up to defend its interests, while others are attracted by open borders and foreign values."* Budget of ₽270.5 million (€2.7 million).



Promotional poster for the "20/22" TV series.[586]



Promotional poster for the "10 Days to Spring" TV series.[587]

HISTORICAL TV SHOWS:

- **GDR/ГДР** – spy thriller series about a Soviet intelligence officer in the 70s and 80s in Berlin. Budget of ₽414.5 million (€4.15 million). **It was the third most popular IRI TV project in 2023**, with a total view time of 11 million hours.[588]
- **Sovereign/Государь** - historical series about *Peter the Great. IRI's description states: "Peter managed to bring about a revolution in the political and social structure of Russia, 'Europeanise' it, and strengthen the country without losing it. He proved that unpopular decisions can lead to the saving and flourishing of a country."* Budget of ₽273 million (€2.73 million), released in 2025.
- **Chelyuskin. The Firsts/Челюскин. Первые** – story of the SS Chelyuskin. The crew was tasked with crossing the Northern Sea Route without an ice breaker, and the ship sank, after which the survivors set up camp on the ice. *"One of the aims of the project – create a historical connection with the image of Russia as a leading country in the conquest of the Arctic."* Budget of ₽560.3 million (€5.6 million), released in 2024.
- **The Colour of History/Цвет истории** - documentary series about WW2 using archival footage and new technologies of "livening up" the film cuts. It was supposed to be an answer to the "WW2 in Colour" series on Netflix. Budget of ₽126 million (€1.26 million), released in 2023.
- **Nuremberg/Нюрнберг** – series emphasises the role of the USRR in the Nuremberg trials and in "liberating Europe". Budget of ₽72.8 million (€728,000), released in 2023.

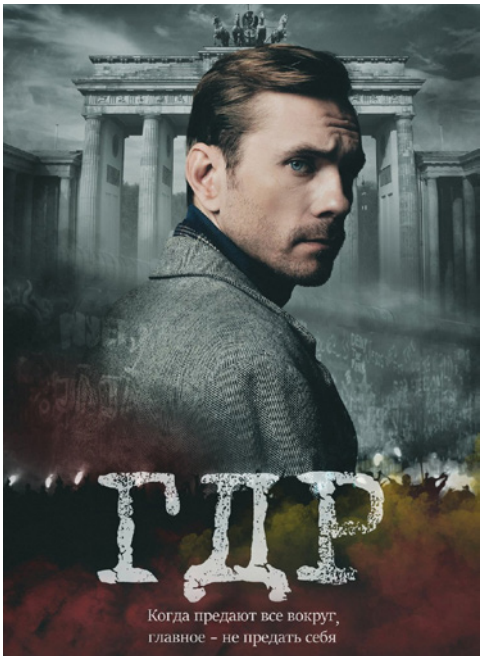
586 Kinopoisk, n.d.-a

587 Accessed from: Kinopoisk

588 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025



Promotional poster for the "Statesman" series.[589]



Promotional poster for the "GDR".[590]

OTHER:

- **The Boy's Word: Blood on the Asphalt/Слово пацана. Кровь на асфальте –** a series about youth criminal activity in Tatarstan set during the perestroika. It follows the story of a young boy who joins a gang. In an interview, Goreslavsky referred to the series as an "absolute hit project", revealing that over the period of 2022–2023 it received a total view time of 67 million hours.[591] He also stated it received much higher viewership on domestic online streaming platforms than on TV channels.
- **Oil/Нефть –** documentary series about oil and Russia's natural resources. Budget of ₽49.9 million (€499,000). Won the IRI National Internet Content Prize.
- **The Last Hero: Legacy/Последний богатырь. Наследие –** TV series which is a sequel to a franchise previously produced by Disney. It is an action series about Russian folk tale heroes. It was the second most popular IRI-supported TV series in 2024, with a total view time of 24 million hours.
- **Prison Diary/Тюремный дневник –** dramatized version of Maria Butina's story, who was sentenced as a foreign agent in the US after she tried to infiltrate the far right and NRA. Budget of ₽309.4 million (€3.09 million).
- **Mastodont/Мастодонт –** TV show about an old regional chinovnik who always dreamed of working on the federal level. One day he joins the Digital Ministry and "does not understand the modern working format". *"The TV show will show what modern public service looks like."* Budget of ₽133.8 million (€1.34 million).
- **Epicentre/Эпицентр –** series about the friendship between two young scientists working in a virology lab where a virus has mutated. The catastrophe is averted thanks to Soviet and Russian virology methods. IRI's description: *"The project shows a high level of development in Russia and security of the Research Institute thanks to the leading technology"*. Budget of ₽151.3 million (€1.51 million).

589 Accessed from: Kinopoisk

590 Photo: Kinorium, accessed from Wikipedia, 2025

591 Ignatev & Istomina, 2025

- **Large families/Многодетство –** TV series about the life of a family with many children, building a new home on land they received from the state. It is meant to promote "traditional family values". Budget of ₽177 million (€1.77 million).
- **In Short, this is the Plan/Короче, План Такой –** comedy series about a group of Russian hackers who committed cybertheft from the richest people in the world and were caught by Russian intelligence. They are faced with a choice between jail or working for the agency and decide to do the latter. Budget of ₽195.9 million (€1.96 million).



Promotional poster for the "Boy's Word" series.[592]



Promotional poster for the "Oil" series.[593]



Promotional poster for the "Last Knight" series.[594]

592 Accessed from: Kinopoisk, n.d.-d

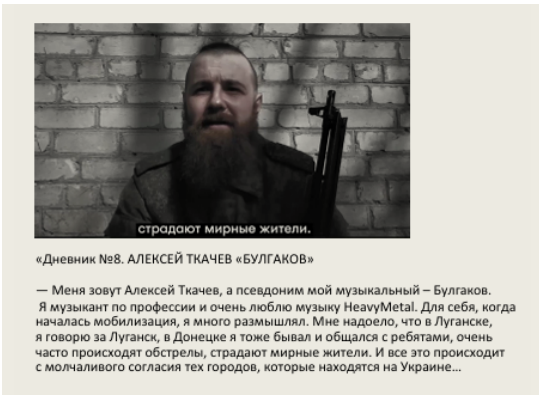
593 Accessed from: Kinopoisk, n.d.-f

594 Accessed from: Kinopoisk, n.d.-e

content takes the form of video reels, podcasts, posts, or articles and is meant to cover every aspect of the war – military, civilian, urban, humanitarian, historical, etc. Much of the content targets the occupied territories. In the first half year from the full-scale invasion, IRI-funded materials received over 88.6 million views.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS:

- **One Day: New Heroes/Один День: Новые Герои –** series of videoclips, documentaries, animated clips. They are supposed to be diaries of the war made by militia members, civilians, doctors, and "ordinary people" from Donetsk and Luhansk, who are presented as "defending their home soil". It includes portraits of "ordinary citizens" who joined the army and began to be published in July 2022.
- **On Our Own Land/На Своей Земле –** series of 11 video reels, *"talking about neo-Nazis in Ukraine".* Includes testimonies of e.g. destruction of churches by Ukrainians, or of an American who joined the Donetsk separatists after he saw civilians killed by "shelling by Ukrainian nationalists".
- **Heroes of Operation Z/Герои Операции Z –** series of 15 video reels, which began to be released in May 2022. Portraits of soldiers and their families, it also shows the delivery of "humanitarian aid" from Russia to the territories it occupies and includes deep dives on military equipment which helps the army advance on the front (see Figure).
- **This Life/Эта Жизнь –** series of 400 video reels and 50 text publications. Shows Russian citizens helping the war effort.

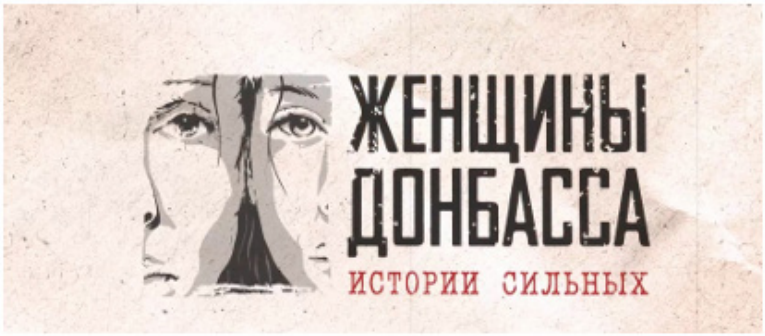


Screenshot from IRI's presentation showing example content from the "One Day: New Heroes" series.



Screenshot from internal IRI presentation showing content about the self-propelled howitzer Hyacitnh-S.

- **The First Reason–Is/Первая Причина – Это –** 10 video reels analysing the *"causes of conducting the special operation with an emphasis on historical, cultural, and political reasons".*
- **Fund Market/Фондовый Рынок –** series of posts, articles, videos, podcast episodes and a photo gallery, about how the *"information war against Russia is funded by Western funds and NGOs who are provoking Russophobia and neo-Nazism in the former USSR, especially Ukraine and Russia".*
- **Russia Against NATO/Россия Против НАТО –** 48 video reels and 80 posts. It is about Russia-NATO relations, and *"how the world politics of the last 30 years were constructed".*
- **By the experimental path/Опытным Путем –** 5 "before and after" clips of Mariupol, filmed by propagandist/war-blogger Mariana Naumova.
- **Children of Donbas/Дети Донбасса –** 5 video clips about children from the occupied territories who survived the war.
- **Saved lives/Спасенные Жизни –** a 15-part video series about the people who save animals in the occupied territories.
- **Women of Donbas–Towards the Better/Женщины Донбасса–Все К Лучшему –** multimedia series (including 30 video reels, articles in the news,



Screenshot from IRI's presentation showing the "Women of Donbas" project logo.

- **Women of Donbas–Towards the Better/Женщины Донбасса-Все К Лучшему –** multimedia series (including 30 video reels, articles in the news, posts online) about women of the Donbas. The content was also to be posted by Yulia Baranovskaya, a propagandist. The series won an IRI National Internet Content Award.
- **Steel Muscles of Russia/Стальные Мускулы России –** 40 pieces of content. The series pertains to the Donbas metallurgy industry.
- **Where They Wait (Homeland Waits)/Там, Где Ждут (Родина Ждет) –** a series of multimedia content (articles, videoclips, photo gallery) about the process of getting political asylum and citizenship in Russia.

Gaming is another industry into which IRI pours funds to support patriotic content. At the end of 2021, the ANO presented its plan for developing video games "close to the mentality, culture, and values" of Russia.[595] It then received ₽2.5 billion (€25 million) for the years 2022-2023 to create them.[596] Many IRI-supported games have been released since, including PC and mobile phone games, catered towards adults or children.

One of IRI's flagship gaming projects is Smuta. It is a game set in the 17th century, during Russia's Time of Troubles (known as Smuta in Russian), when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth invaded the Russian Empire during a succession crisis. Not only is the game set during a time of conflict with a country nowadays considered as part of the West, it also carries other ideological messages. For example, one of the foreign characters claims men dress up as women in his country, alluding to the homophobic and transphobic messages Russian propaganda often promotes.[597] According to internal IRI documents, its goal is to "increase historical awareness among youth". Moreover, the game is based on the book "Yuriy Miloskavskiy, or Russians in 1612"/«Юрий Милославский, или Русские в 1612 году», and was meant to serve as a substitute for Western video game series such as Assassin's Creed and The Witcher – which have gained wide-scale popularity.



Promotional poster of the Smuta video game.[598]

595 EUvsDisinfo, 2024
596 EUvsDisinfo, 2024
597 EUvsDisinfo, 2024
598 Photo: Cyberia Nova, accessed from: Wikipedia

Smuta appears to have been an essential project. IRI allocated the largest part of its gaming budget to its development – ₽800 million (€8 million) over the course of 2022-23, which is several times higher than the budget of any other IRI video game. Some reports even claim a sum of ₽1 billion (€10 million).[599] It was presented at the Economic Forum in St. Petersburg as the flagship national game of Russia.[600] Furthermore, the game is only available on VK Play, the Russian equivalent of Steam. Cyberia Nova was tasked with developing Smuta, a company which had never developed a standalone game before.[601] The experience of its former CEO and founder, Alexey Koptsev is equally vague – prior to founding Cyberia Nova, he worked at a gaming company called Alawar, where he claimed to have developed 20 games, although he does not name any of them.[602] Since the end of 2025, Sergey Russkih is the director of the company. Notably, the executive producer of Cyberia Nova, Evgeny Rusak, was an advisor to the CEO of Rosatom between 2012 to 2016[603] – who, at the time, was Sergey Kiriyenko. Despite all efforts, Smuta received negative reviews by users and journalists after its launch in 2024. It was often described as boring, underdeveloped, and placing too much emphasis on history.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY IRI GAMING PROJECTS:

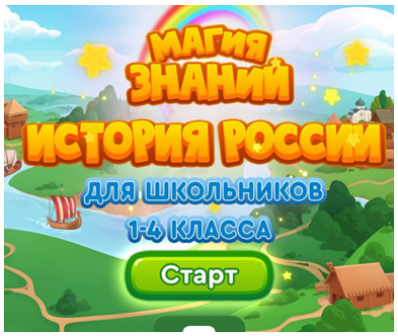
- **Front Edge/Передний край** – a game about a Russia-US war. Its scenery is reminiscent of post-communist countries, e.g. Ukraine or Latvia.[604] An internal IRI slide deck describes it as having a "high degree of realism" and that *"the player can become a participant in the fighting which he had only recently heard of on the news"*. The game can be played as different forces or vehicles and complete tasks such as "find and destroy enemy groups". Budget of ₽36.3 million (€363,000).
- **Sparta/Спарта** – game in which mercenaries of a private military company Sparta (inspired by Wagner) fight extremists in Africa. IRI description reveals the image of itself that Russia wants to project: "*a modern country with an army equipped with the latest technology, able to help countries around the world which have fallen into poverty."* Budget of ₽132 million (€1.32 million). The name Sparta appears to be a reference to a separatist unit in Donbas.[605]
- **Enemy from the Future/ Враг из будущего** – a PC game, in which the player is a member of the Special Reaction Forces engaging in battle with an alien from a parallel universe. The alien appeared because of a failed experiment in a US military scientific base. Budget of ₽92 million (€920,000).
- **Tartariya. Forgotten Reality/Тартария. Забытая быль** – a story game based on Slavic mythology, in which a young prince is taken by a sorcerer to teach him ancient knowledge and magic. The world is based on a description of Pushkin's fairytales. Budget of ₽280 million (2.8 million).
- **Secret Service/ Секретная служба** – mobile device game about the establishment of Russian counterintelligence. Set in the backdrop of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 when the counterintelligence was established to "fights with saboteurs and terrorists". Budget of ₽40.5 million (€405,000).
- **The Magic of Knowledge: The History of Russia/ Магия Знаний: История России** – educational game for kids in classes 1–4. It is described by IRI as a "series of games based on key milestones from Russian history". Total budget of ₽165 million (€1.65 million) (co-financed by IRI).

599 Gorokhova, 2024
600 Gorokhova, 2024
601 Gorokhova, 2024
602 Gorokhova, 2024
603 Gorokhova, 2024
604 EUvsDisinfo, 2024
605 EUvsDisinfo, 2024

- **Night in a Museum/Ночь в музее** – the aim of the game is to make "players from around the world familiar with Russian artists and their work". The game takes place in a museum inspired by Ermitage, Tretyakoskaya Galeriya, and the Pushkin Museum. Budget of ₽74 million (€740,000).
- **National Treasure/ Сокровище нации** – mobile game for children to develop language skills, where they can learn the official languages of the republics. Budget of ₽13.2 million (€132,000).



Promotional poster of the Sparta video game.[606]



"The Magic of Knowledge: The History of Russia" game.[607]

In 2024, the ANO announced that it will launch its own TV channel called "Us"/ «Мы». It shows IRI-supported projects of all genres – documentaries, reality TV, children's movies, artistic shows, etc.[608] It is available on 11 different TV providers. Its target audiences are individuals between 25 and 55 years old.[609] "Us" contains seven different content categories: country, people, culture, history, science, technology and work. The website states that the Media-Telecom group – managed by Kovalchuk's National Media Group and Rostelecom – is responsible for production, display, distribution, and marketing of "Us".

Another aspect of IRI's activities are award ceremonies. On its website, it boasts having given out 580 awards and organised 369 festivals and competitions. This demonstrates an alternative means of boosting interest in producing patriotic content within the domestic industry, again through the idea of patriotic competition. The National Award for Internet Content was established by IRI in 2021, and the first award ceremony was held in 2022. It usually takes place in late spring or early summer and includes several categories. For example, in 2024, there were 21 – 2 thematic, 4 special, and 15 main categories corresponding to content types.

606 Image accessed from: Steam

607 Screenshot from IRI presentation.

608 Internet Development Institute, n.d.-a

609 Internet Development Institute, n.d.-a

EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES:

- Debut
- 3-minute Video Content
- Short Film
- Musical Track
- Internet Journalistic Project
- Podcast
- Best Telegram Channel
- Hero of our Time
- Power in Truth
- A Unique Perspective

Pro-war and ultra-patriotic content made by Kremlin-linked authors tends to win the awards. For instance, in 2022, well-known Z-bloggers won in the category "Power in Truth". These included Alexander Kots and Yuriy Kotenok, as well as other bloggers. Winners in other categories over the years have included a RuTube show by Vovan and Lexus (famous for their prank calls to world leaders); the Telegram channel Readovka (integrated in the Dialog network, whose founder was involved in the SDA's counter-campaign against Ukraine[610]); Vladimir Solovyev; as well as IRI-supported projects "The Boy's Word", "GDR", and the documentary "Oil". Kiriyenko himself handed out the awards during some of the ceremonies.



Сергей Кириенко на вручении Национальной премии интернет-контента пророссийским «военкорам». 2 июня 2022 года

Kiriyenko presenting an IRI award to Z-bloggers in June 2022.[611]

610 Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2025

611 Photo accessed from: Reiter, Zholobova & Korotkova, 2023

SOCIAL ADVERTISING

In 2021, based on the amendments to the Law "On Advertising" signed by Putin that same year, IRI became the sole operator of social advertisements in the Runet. Its website boasts a total of 824 social advertising campaigns and more than 225 Internet resources in the operator's pool. Furthermore, they claim the ads were shown over 83 billion times. Since 2023, over 120 platforms began displaying IRI's ads, including Yandex, VK, and RuTube. The campaigns are implemented in cooperation with other organisations, which submit their advertisement proposals through a tender. Topics of social campaigns operated by IRI include: blood donations, mental health awareness, calls for volunteers in animal shelters, and also more ideological ones, such as promotion of family values, or remembrance of the victory and heroes of the Great Patriotic War.[612] In 2025, IRI launched a project in collaboration with bloggers, wherein they post social advertisements on their channels. According to the ANO's website, 30 influencers took part in the campaign.

Leaked internal documents reveal that IRI aimed to increase the volume of its social advertisements. To do so, the ANO's leadership advocated for amending the Law "On Advertising" to include other types of platforms such as marketplaces or sites with listings, and place obligatory quotas on how many ads they must display. The proposed quota would correspond to the number of users of the platform. This provides an important complement to the work of Dialog, helping to fill the Runet with patriotic content in different formats.

Among proposed measures aiming to increase the effectiveness of its campaigns, IRI lists the following:

- A further restriction of access to foreign Internet platforms which would increase traffic on Russian platforms.
- Obliging advertisers to place social ads pertaining to specific topics.
- Establishing a fixed percentage of social ads which the platforms can disseminate without the involvement of the operator (IRI).
- Obliging platforms to ensure that IRI can decide the format and setting of the ad placement.

In 2025, new legislation came into force which made the proposals a reality. Amendments to the Law "On Advertising" obliged marketplaces and platforms with listings with over 200,000 users daily to display social advertisements. The quota placed on platforms corresponds to 5% of the total number of Russian users who access the service at least once a year, or 5% of all of its advertising volume in a year.[613] As a result of this legislation, these sites must install software recommended by Roskomnadzor to count users, distribute ads provided by IRI, and provide IRI with information about how many users visit the sites.[614] In parallel, Russia imposed legislation which banned advertising and paid partnerships on Facebook and Instagram, as Meta was designated an "extremist organisation" soon after the full-scale invasion.[615] Placing advertisements on these platforms now results in fines.

612 Internet Development Institute, n.d.-d

613 Nordic Star Law Offices, 2025

614 Nordic Star Law Offices, 2025

615 Mustaeva, 2025

5.7 PUBLIC RELATIONS & ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Within Kiriyenko's digital surveillance and cultural propaganda architecture are several commercial creative agencies. We discuss three of the more fully integrated agencies as an example, though there are likely many more. These agencies provide cutting-edge commercial capabilities to the system, usually on the instruction of ANOs.

Internet Agitation Agency

The **Internet Agitation Agency** was a political-technology and online-campaign consultancy that appeared in 2016–2017 under the brand "Агентство «Интернет-агитация»" with a website, a Moscow office, and two named principals: Andrey Tsepelev as chief executive and Valeriy Solovyov[616] as technology director. Its own materials described it as a specialist in election-focused internet campaigning, social-media targeting, "influence agents," geotargeted ad placement, robotic calling, and data-driven voter segmentation. [617]

Its portfolio fell into two clusters. First was domestic electoral work: the agency's own presentation and contemporaneous interviews claim successful 2016 State Duma work and 2017 gubernatorial internet campaigns, while investigative reporting later tied it to the online component of the 2019 campaign of Alexander Beglov in Saint Petersburg, including the use of fake commenters. The second was foreign political influence: Proekt reported that Solovyov took part in the 2019 operation in Bolivia to support Evo Morales, where he was said to manage the Prisma social-media monitoring system created by Medialogia in 2011 and associated with ANO Dialog.



Andrey TSEPELEV[618] and Valeriy SOLOVYOV[619]

616 We were unable to establish evidence of a family relationship to famed propagandist Vladimir Solovyov.

617 Donis, 2017

618 Photo accessed from: Fedpress.ru, n.d.

619 Photo accessed from: Federal Press, n.d.-b

By 2019, Tsepelev moved to ANO Dialog Regions at which he would become deputy director general, and since 2021 he has also served as first president of the Association of Internet Technologists.[620] In September 2024, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the OFAC attributed Dialog and Dialog Regions for acting on behalf of the Russian government in malign influence operations implemented by the Social Design Agency and Structura National Technologies (see chapter 6).

The Internet Agitation Agency looks less like an isolated private consultancy than an early-stage node in a wider Russian ecosystem that links political technology, state communications, election management, and later "fact-checking" and foreign-information influence projects. The operational know-how visible in the agency's 2016–2019 materials reappear, in more institutionalised form, in the later Dialog apparatus and, by 2025, in the creation of the Global Fact-Checking Network orbit involving Dialog, TASS, the New Media School, and the Association of Internet Technologists. The Internet Agitation Agency can therefore be firmly established as a forerunner of Kiriyenko's outsourced domestic and foreign influence capability.[621]

The most concrete early artefacts are a self-published slide deck uploaded by Solovyov, a 2017 interview in Kyrgyz media, a Facebook page for the agency, and directory traces that place the office at Petrovka 17/2, office 107, in Moscow, with the website i-agit.ru. Taken together, those sources establish that the agency was publicly operating as a named internet-political consultancy by 2017.[622]
The leadership structure shows Tsepelev as general director and Solovyov as technology director; the 2017 K-News interview names the pair in the same roles. Tsepelev's later public biographies say he had previously worked at the strategic communications agency "Niccolo M," the oldest PR agency in Russia, founded in 1989 and named after the 16th century Florentine political strategist Niccolò Machiavelli, and then became general director of Internet Agitation Agency in 2016.[623] In a 2011 LiveJournal post, Solovyov wrote that he and Tsepelev together built Niccolo M's new website. Solovyov's public profile lists his earlier work in digital marketing and cinema-related online projects.

The agency's materials claim that Tsepelev and Solovyov coined the term "internet-agitation" in March 2016 and built it into a distinct subfield of Russian political technology. A 2017 interview makes the same point in plainer language: they present themselves as the people who fused traditional political technology with internet operations. Public-facing traces are dense in 2016–2019 and then stop. What becomes visible after that is not the agency brand so much as Tsepelev's migration into larger institutions. That pattern strongly suggests that Internet Agitation Agency ceased to exist as a distinct public-facing vehicle by around 2020.

The agency was open about its early project portfolio. It claims a 2016 case in the Neftekamsk single-member State Duma district, a broader 2016 internet campaign for United Russia candidates in Vologda Oblast, and three victorious gubernatorial internet campaigns in 2017, specifically saying that Kirov Oblast and Mari El were among them. The same presentation also advertises turnout-oriented products such as a rap video for Mari El, social-media "information waves," geolocated banners, mass online video distribution, robotic calling, electoral databases, and AI-based psychographic profiling making use of 260 data points.[624]

620 Dialog, 2022
621 Novaya Vkladka, 2025
622 Solovyov, n.d.
623 Nikkolo M, n.d.
624 RBC, 2017

The most consequential domestic project attributed to the agency is the 2019 online campaign for Beglov in St. Petersburg. Proekt reported that Beglov's social media campaign was led by Tsepelev and Tabak, and that its task included ordering fake comments from outsourced bot operators. In the same reporting chain, Proekt described Internet Agitation Agency as an organisation that had already worked with several governors' social-media campaigns, including Dmitry Azarov before the Samara election.[625]



Solovyov & Tsepelev.[626]

The most consequential foreign project attributed to Solovyov is a 2019 Bolivia operation. Proekt reported that a group of Russian political consultants was sent to Bolivia to support Morales's re-election effort in a campaign aligned with the overseas interests of Rosatom. According to that account, Russian consultants worked on online messaging, promoted the programme slogan "Una Bolivia para toda la gente," and attacked critics; Solovyov was specifically described as the consultant responsible for managing the Prisma monitoring system. Proekt further reported that the selection of specialists was coordinated by staff around Sergey Kiriyenko.[627]

ANO Dialog materials show Tsepelev as head of its competence-development centre from 2019 and then deputy director general of Dialog Regions by January 2022. The Association of Internet Technologists' website says that it was founded in January 2021 and that Tsepelev was elected its first president; the same page states that the association's mission is to improve the effectiveness of digital tools in electoral, governmental, and political campaigns. That language places his post-agency work squarely inside a formalised state-politics digital infrastructure.

The broader analytical conclusion is that Internet Agitation Agency was not just an election consultancy with some state-adjacent clients. It appears, rather, to have been an early operational platform for a cohort of internet-political technologists whose methods—targeted messaging, social-media management at scale, influence agents, behavioural segmentation, and online narrative control—later migrated into more formal institutions tied to the Russian state. Its personnel trajectory is therefore at least as fascinating as its project list, tying it to Kiriyenko's ecosystem through elections and Rosatom.

625 Proekt, 2019b

626 Photo accessed from: Proekt, 2019b

627 Proekt, 2019b

DA-TEAM

DA-TEAM (ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ДА-ТИМ») refers to two closely linked Russian companies: **DA-TEAM LLC**, established in 2017, and **DA-TEAM Production LLC**, established in 2018. Both are founded and run by **Pavel Vladimirovich Rychkin**, who is listed as CEO of both entities. DA-TEAM Production LLC is registered in Moscow. Available sources indicate 20-25 employees. Although Rychkin is the formal head, investigative reporting alleges that the real power behind DA-TEAM is **Stepan Kovalchuk**, a VK executive and great-nephew of Yuri Kovalchuk. This alleged connection is not confirmed by open company registries or financial documentation.[628]

DA-TEAM works across media production, digital content, advertising, and social media campaigning. DA-TEAM LLC has reportedly provided services to **RZhD TV**, **PAO Rosseti,** and **Roskosmos** among others. DA-TEAM Production LLC has no cited open-registry evidence of state contracts, but its public portfolio includes state-linked patriotic propaganda projects. However, investigative reporting suggests that the company received around ₽700 million (€7m) in contracts from EISI, IRI, and other funders during 2021–2022.[629]



Real Baikal | Bam-50 | Your move 2.0

Project reel from the DA-TEAM website.

Projects include **Baikal Real**, a film ordered by Russian Railways[630], and **Tvoy Khod**,[631] an interactive VKontakte vertical series for the ANO “Internet Development Institute” (IRI). The series used popular bloggers to portray student life while viewers influenced the plot. Some associated VK clips promoted patriotic and state-aligned themes, including the Great Patriotic War, Russian space history, and narratives involving people from the occupied Donetsk region.[632] Over 350 such clips are currently available. Russian state and mainstream media reported that the documentary **“Mama, I Want to Be a Cosmonaut”** was produced by DA-TEAM Production with support from IRI, and the Runet Prize shortlist suggests that **“Politologist Mark Arkadyevich 3”** was created with IRI support.[633]

According to investigative journalist reports, DA-TEAM has been engaged in commercial cooperation with experts and media persons to shape public opinion. DA-TEAM is believed to be a contractor for the Expert Institute for Social Research (EISI). According to reports, the following people and entities have received money from the Kremlin through DA-TEAM: Igor Ugolnikov, Bogdan Sidorenko, Postnews media-outlet, Fontanka media-outlet, and Alexei Pivovarov. For instance, Azhur Media, the publisher of Fontanka, allegedly received almost €5.6 million from DA-TEAM in 2022–2023.[634] It has also been alleged that DA-TEAM’s production quotas and “creative briefs” are routinely shared with Kiriyenko’s deputies.[635]

628 Spark-Interfax, n.d.-a
629 Arenina & Korostelev, 2023a
630 DA-Team, n.d.-a
631 Tvoy Hod, n.d.-a
632 Tvoy Hod, n.d.-b
633 DA-team, n.d.-b
634 Arenina & Korostelev, 2023b
635 Laine & Morozova, 2024

DA-TEAM appears to sit at the intersection of state-linked media production, digital influence work, and Kremlin-aligned patriotic propaganda. Its formal and reported clients connect it to major state or state-adjacent institutions, including Russian Railways, Rosseti, Roskosmos, ANO IRI, and allegedly EISI. Its projects combine entertainment formats with patriotic, youth-oriented, and political messaging.

The alleged Kovalchuk connection places the organisation within a broader media and influence ecosystem linked to VK, Kremlin domestic-political management, and the Presidential Administration's information operations. Even where formal registry evidence is limited, the pattern of projects, clients, reported funding flows suggest that DA-TEAM functions as a production and distribution node for state-aligned influence activity, targeting both Russian domestic audiences and foreign audiences in Ukraine.

GAMBASHIDZE & TUPIKIN AFFILIATED ENTITIES



Gambashidze (l) and Tupikin (r).[636]

Ilya Gambashidze and Nikolay Tupikin shot to notoriety when they were sanctioned for their work on the so-called Doppelgänger influence operation (for a detailed treatment, see Chapter 6). However, their organisations Social Design Agency (SDA), Structura National Technologies, ETYUD, Sociomarker, OSION, Netar, Biblioring, CASPIAN 2030, and "TAMBOV LAND" (among others) form a tightly weaved network of vehicles supporting domestic and CIS-focused political campaigning and influence work, under an affiliation with Kiriyenko's IT Directorate. Most interesting in the domestic context is leaked documents that reveal a great deal about how Kiriyenko oils his system through fake tenders and procurements.

636 Gnida Project, 2026

Prior to the exposure of Doppelgänger, Gambashidze was probably best known for his work in local government elections. Gambashidze had worked as an adviser to the deputy chairman of the State Duma and the governor of Kalmykia in the North Caucasus. The innovative use of technology for political goals can be seen in two 2023 domestic political projects. The first was an homage to the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia's late founder Vladimir Zhirinovsky, taking the form of a chatbot in his likeness under the name "Neural Network Zhirinovsky." The second was a May Day rally organised on Minecraft together with a "Zhirinovsky monument".[637]

Local political activities continue in Tambov. In 2023, ANO FOR SUPPORTING CIVIL INITIATIVES "TAMBOV LAND" was created to increase support for the "Special Military Operation". The Tambov Land public movement and the Committee for Public Support of the Russian Army collect and distribute "humanitarian aid". Aid collection points for residents of the LPR, DPR, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions are currently organised in Tambov and Michurinsk.[638] The Tambov Region Volunteer Cyber Squad is a project of the Committee for Public Support of the Russian Army, also part of the "Tambov Land" movement. It is an association of cyber squads from various educational institutions in the Tambov region. The cyber squads' main task is to expose "fake news" about the Russian army and the socio-political situation in the country.[639] A local journalist's write-up of the events positions Tambov Land activities close to ANO Dialog and ANO CISM in intent:

A Youth Cyber Squads Gathering will be held in the Tambov Region in August and September. Sixty Tambov residents aged 18 to 35 will participate. The event will focus on improving social media monitoring to identify destructive content. The Youth Cyber Squads Gathering is planned as part of the All-Russian Competition for Comprehensive Youth Policy Development Programs in the Subjects of the Russian Federation, "Region for the Young." As a reminder, cyber squads were established in the Tambov Region in 2019. They bring together student volunteers from universities and colleges across the region. The volunteers identify and refute inaccurate content about the actions of Russian military personnel, providing links to the original source of the information. Fake news regarding the socio-economic situation in the region is also being debunked. Another important focus of the cyber squads is identifying individuals promoting drugs, suicide, terrorism, and extremism. This information is forwarded to law enforcement agencies.[640]

Unsurprisingly, the Cyber Squads of Tambov use social media to spread posts and videos that in various ways undermine or ridicule Ukraine for Russian audiences, using classic SDA methods.[641] OOO Biblioring, a Gambashidze company that is also listed as a client of SDA, organizes competitions for Russian children living abroad; the winner will be invited to Moscow.[642] In 2025 Ilya Gambashidze, together with Nikolay Tupikin and their Union of Journalists of CIS (also controlled by them), established ANO of STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS **"CASPIAN 2030"**.[643] The business address is the same as Structura. CASPIAN 2030 held "the first International Environmental Forum of the Caspian States" in Dagestan in December 2025 (Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Iran).[644] Future projects seem to focus on the Arctic region, another area of special interest to Kiriyenko.[645]

637 Kupfer, 2024; Pankratova & Reiter, 2023

638 Tambovskaya Zemlya, n.d.-b

639 Tambovskaya, n.d.-a

640 Bezformata, 2024

641 Kurnysheva Dusalieva Russkaya, 2023

642 Spark-Interfax, n.d.-b; SP Agency, n.d.; Biblioring "Otkroy Rot" Biblioring, 2021

643 They purchased the domain: https://caspy2030.ru/ (not active yet)

644 Nia.eco, 2025

645 Seldon.News, 2025

Across a network of entities connected to Gambashidze and his loyal associates is a pattern of abuse of procurement systems that extract resources from Kiriyenko's empire. It is likely that this is a form of payment or mutual enrichment that keeps the wheels of Kiriyenko's empire greased, and these entities are not an unusual example. A typical scenario is for entities with the same owners to bid against one another for the same funding. For example, in 2020 the Gambashidze company OOO "ETYUD" competed with SDA for a €1.8m tender for the development of automated information systems for a State Budgetary Institution in the Moscow City administration. Other entities have received funding in the millions for IT work that seems closely connected to ANO Dialog. For example, Gambashidze's 2023 company Sociomarker received €5.5m from Moscow Region for:

> *Providing services for organizing the collection and categorization of data on the topic of developing a strategy for interaction between government bodies and the population of the Moscow Region through collecting feedback to formulate practical recommendations for changing editorial policy, improving coverage, and strengthening trust in municipal media, Telegram channels, and social networks in the Moscow Region.*

SDA and Structura were the only bidders for a number of tenders from ANO Dialog, ANO IRI, and the Crimea-based state autonomous organisation "Media Center". Media Center functions as a Kremlin-affiliated entity tasked with disseminating pro-Russian content, including reinterpretations of cultural and historical artifacts in the occupied territories. In many of these cases, Gambashidze only seems to have provided 3rd party services, at more or less the same cost as the services cost to purchase directly. It may be in some cases that the "procurement" is in fact a method of paying for SDA or Structura to gain access to a service such as botnets.

For example, in October 2022, the procurement officer at Dialog Regions sent an inquiry for a service titled "program support using non-exclusive license," together with a detailed capability specification for a chatbot service. The first bot, "Anti-Fake Teacher", operates on platforms such as Telegram, VK Messenger, WhatsApp, and Viber. Its primary purpose is to counter "fake narratives" in real time while also collecting user data. The second bot, "Teacher of the Year", is designed to gather user data by involving citizens in a voting process and operates exclusively within VK Messenger. Dialog also requested access to the service's online dashboard, dashboard.fstrk.io.

A week later, Dialog Regions announced the results of the procurement process. According to the official protocols, two bidders participated: Structura, offering €1,450,000, and SDA, quoting €1,500,000. Following the committee's decision, Structura was declared the winner of the bid. There are several such examples of these types of procurements within the leaked SDA documents from 2022-2024.

Together, these examples suggest that commercial creative agencies play key roles in Kiriyenko's architecture by both delivering key capabilities and providing opportunities for laundering of funds. They seem to have access to and sometimes create ANO tools and capabilities. Their staff become fully integrated into the ecosystem. The result is often co-delivery of political information manipulation targeting both domestic and foreign audiences.



6

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

In addition to his domestic responsibilities, Kiriyenko plays an important role in the Kremlin's attempt to maintain and increase Russian influence abroad. His objectives include countering the West globally, securing Russian ideological control over occupied territories including in Ukraine, undermining Western support for Ukraine, and securing access to natural resources. By using Rosatom and his digital surveillance pillar as resources and cooperating with organisations such as the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), the Russian Red Cross, and the Russian Orthodox Church, Kiriyenko is integral to promoting the Russian regime's ambitious global agenda.

This involves the use of, among other things, soft power, information influence operations, hybrid attacks and sabotage, investments and energy relations, intelligence activities, and election interference. Rosatom plays a key role in Russia's relations with China, India, Turkey, Hungary, Iran, and several countries in the Global South. Additionally, Russian operations connected to Kiriyenko target the Arctic, the US, Russia's "near abroad" including Ukraine, and several EU member states. Kiriyenko's influence over these activities illustrates both his central position in the Russian political ecosystem, where he is a key player in both domestic and foreign affairs, and the threat that Russia poses to EU interests and values.

6.1 ROSATOM & FOREIGN POLICY

As Director of Rosatom, Kiriyenko pioneered a highly effective corporate management style tailored for autocratic governance. He consolidated hundreds of disjointed, secretive Soviet-era laboratories, mining hubs, and weapon facilities into one vertically integrated, state-controlled global juggernaut. When Putin brought him to the Presidential Administration, Kiriyenko directly copied this corporate playbook. He restructured the Presidential Administration like a modern corporation, introducing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), corporate training programmes, and team-building metrics for regional governors and political appointees.[630] Much of this – both domestic and foreign – reads like a playbook for Kiriyenko's style of leadership.

Rosatom is a vertically integrated multi-industry holding company that unites over 450 enterprises across the entire nuclear technological chain. It is organised into several core corporate divisions governing everything from uranium mining and engineering to wind energy, nuclear medicine, and the Northern Sea Route.[631] Kiriyenko joined shortly before the **Federal Agency on Atomic Energy**, acting as a regulatory government executive body, became the **Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation.** This hybrid "state corporation" model allowed it to perform ministerial state functions while operating with the commercial flexibility of a private conglomerate.[632] In conjunction with this move, Rosatom also assumed control over the entire commercial nuclear icebreaker fleet (Atomflot), thereby integrating the Northern Sea Route and Arctic region into Kiriyenko's portfolio. At the same time, Kiriyenko oversaw Rosatom's expansion into long-term cooperative projects in foreign countries, expanding its governance model to international markets such as Turkey, Iran, and Bolivia.

Under Kiriyenko's leadership, Rosatom and its ZATOs (Закрытое административно-территориальное образование; restricted-access "closed cities" in Russia that house the key production plants, research institutes, and military facilities) **often structured the local political field. The company engaged in election manipulation through turnout engineering, collecting signatures, and supplying observers, and employer-linked electoral management.** While roughly three-quarters of Russia's publicly acknowledged closed cities are managed

630 Dobrev, 2016; Rosatom, n.d.-b

631 Rosatom, n.d.-a

632 Rosatom, 2022; State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom, 2026; Mukhatzhanova, 2007

by the Ministry of Defence, Rosatom directly administers a core network of nuclear-specific municipal centres. Rosatom is known to have influenced mayoral appointments and treated ZATOs as corporate-political territories.[633] These cities are physically enclosed by double perimeter fences, walls, and watchtowers. Armed security personnel guard entry points, and everyone passing through must show a special internal passport or an official invitation. Despite the heavy military and industrial security, these are fully functioning cities housing anywhere from 30,000 to over 100,000 residents, including scientists, technicians, support staff, and their families.[634] Much of this election interference activity is under-reported, which is suggestive of Rosatom's control over media in the ZATOs. The best-documented cases include the following:

- **Sarov**[635] in 2010, where a Rosatom representative sat on the commission recommending the city administration head after United Russia won 30 of 34 seats;
- **Zarechny**[636] in 2012–2013, where reporting suggested that Beloyarsk NPP representatives won 12 of 20 seats and Rosatom-backed figures then moved into city leadership;
- **Novouralsk**[637] in 2012, where Russian press explicitly wrote that Rosatom was seeking "its own candidate" for mayor amid anger over layoffs at the Ural Electrochemical Combine; and
- **Ozersk**[638] in September 2015, where the city head and city manager were both chosen from Mayak management.[639]

According to a 2017 Russian media report, insiders believed that mobilising corporations could increase voter turnout in Rosatom territories from 50% to 70%. Therefore, there seems to be a strong overlap between Kiriyenko's elections work with Rosatom and how the territories were later used as election-management assets from his position in the Presidential Administration.[640] Studies show that the Russian regime relied on administrative resources, employer leverage, and municipal appointment systems, not just ballot stuffing.[641] In terms of foreign political influence, a strong example is South Africa, where project-linked influence operations included elite negotiations, confidentiality clauses, and a secret memorandum for building public acceptance of nuclear power.[642]

Since joining the Presidential Administration, Kiriyenko has retained his influence at Rosatom. He continues to serve as chair of the supervisory board. The corporation operates as a tool of Russian influence globally, leveraging nuclear energy cooperation to sway governments and populations. Russia's nuclear portfolio, valued at over $139 billion, spans 54 countries and remains largely unaffected by Western sanctions. Rosatom's subsidiary, TVEL, controls a significant portion of the global uranium conversion and enrichment market. It may therefore be assumed that Rosatom provides at least some of Kiriyenko's power and influence base.

633 Mistry, 2026; NIA Nizhny Novgorod, 2010

634 Mistry, 2026; Domingo, 2025; Aftergood, 2011

635 Sarov (Arzamas-16): Designs nuclear warheads and conducts supercomputer modeling at the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics (VNIIEF)

636 Zarechny (Penza-19): Produces precise technical instrumentation, software, and electronic control systems for Russia's defense sector and nuclear plants.

637 Novouralsk (Sverdlovsk-44): Enriches uranium for nuclear power plants and export markets at the Urals Electrochemical Combine, the world's largest enrichment site.

638 Ozyorsk (Chelyabinsk-65): Processes spent nuclear fuel, produces isotopes, and handles nuclear waste at the infamous Mayak Chemical Combine.

639 NIA Nizhny Novgorod, 2010

640 Nagornykh, 2017

641 Ross, 2007

642 Hunter et al., 2014

There is considerable strategic value to Rosatom's foreign activity. Russia provides low-interest loans to countries for nuclear power plant construction, securing stable income and influence during repayment. These loans are often tied to fuel supply contracts spanning the plant's 60-year lifespan. Rosatom's growing ties with developing countries strengthen Russia's international support, making it harder for the US and allies to impose sanctions.



Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyenko says the partnership deal will provide up to eight nuclear reactors to South Africa by 2023.[643]

Rosatom currently has dominance in the global nuclear power plant market, supplying over 70% of exports. This continues to benefit Russia and its war machine. Following U.S. sanctions and the banning of Russian uranium imports in May 2024, Rosatom has focused its legislative/administrative efforts on domestic uranium enrichment expansion and finding new non-Western markets. Despite being subject to sanctions by some nations, Rosatom continues to supply fuel and build reactors in countries like China, India, Turkey, and Hungary. Furthermore, Rosatom's opaque activities involving a network of companies in countries with weak anti-money laundering systems facilitate the generation of criminal proceeds. **Most importantly, in the context of hybrid operations, Rosatom's global presence allows Russian intelligence to collect scientific and technical intelligence.**



Russian President Vladimir Putin (2nd right) looks on as Hungary's former Prime Minister Viktor Orban (left) shakes hands with Russia's nuclear agency Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyenko (right) during a meeting at the Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow on January 14, 2014.[644]

643 Photo by: epa, accessed from: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2014b

644 Photo by: AFP, accessed from: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2014a

Kiriyenko's role is critical in accelerating Russia's strategic ambitions in the **Arctic**, and his reach into the Arctic also ties back to his affiliation with Rosatom. Kiriyenko holds control over the entire ecosystem of the Northern Sea Route through Rosatom. This includes managing navigation, hydrographic support, and controlling key seaports through entities like **FESCO**. Kiriyenko is one of three top Kremlin-linked figures (along with Igor Sechin and Kirill Dmitriev) who have consolidated control over the region's rare earth minerals, oil, and gas. He oversees the exploitation of key Arctic rare earth deposits. Beyond direct industrial management, Kiriyenko is involved in political personnel decisions in the Arctic regions, strengthening his influence through the appointment of loyalists, such as in the Chukotka region.

Additionally, energy is the heart of the partnership with Iran, with Russia being a major investor in Iran's oil and gas sectors. **Kiriyenko is viewed as a primary architect of the strategic partnership between Russia and Iran**. His work during his tenure at Rosatom created the technical foundation for the current alliance. He oversees Russia's broader strategy of building a sanctions-resistant alliance with Iran to counter Western influence. Under Kiriyenko's leadership, Rosatom completed one nuclear power plant unit in Iran, known as Bushehr Unit 1, which was connected to the grid in 2011. He also oversaw a 2014 agreement establishing a framework for expanding Iran's nuclear capacity (a total of eight nuclear reactors) with Russian assistance, which remains the blueprint for current construction efforts at Bushehr Units 2 and 3. Kiriyenko was also instrumental in drafting the legal and political frameworks for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty signed in January 2025 by President Putin and President Pezeshkian. Rosatom recently suspended active construction on Bushehr Units 2 and 3 and evacuated non-essential staff due to regional military tensions and strikes near the facility in March 2026.



A photo released by the office of Iran's Senior Vice-President shows the head of Russia's federal atomic agency, Sergey Kiriyenko, at a 2016 ground-breaking ceremony for its second nuclear power plant.[645]

645 Photo by: Uncredited / AP, accessed from: AP, 2016

6.2 RUSSIAN INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISI) provides strategic analysis on global threats and foreign interference, acting as a sister organisation to EISI. Both focus on influence in Russia's "near abroad." RISI is often used to push, or develop, Kremlin perspectives on foreign policy, particularly regarding Ukraine, Belarus, and the Balkans. **RISI experts view post-Soviet states as temporary, created by Russian catastrophes such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, and believe their sovereignty should be eliminated through incorporation into a restored Russian Empire**. RISI believes Russia's oil, gas, and nuclear reserves will ensure its global influence and long-term ability to oppose Europe and the United States.[646]



RISI Headquarters.[647]

RISI is recognized as a think tank that often operates under the umbrella of the **Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR).** Founded by Boris Yeltsin in 1992, RISI operated for nearly two decades as Military Unit 61360, a direct division of the SVR until it was transferred to the Presidential Administration in 2009. Its mandate was to provide the intelligence service with academic-style research to support foreign policy decisions. In fact, RISI was directed by retired SVR Lieutenant-General Leonid Reshetnikov from 2009–2017, and Mikhail Fradkov took over as the head in 2017, at the same time it was transferred from the SVR to the Presidential Administration. Fradkov is a veteran official who previously served as the Prime Minister of Russia (2004–2007) and the Director of the SVR (2007–2016). RISI's background as a former SVR-affiliated institute means it remains a critical link between intelligence assessments and the formulation of official Russian state narratives and policies. However, since Kiriyenko has expanded his remit to include Russia's "near abroad" foreign policy, this shift brings his work closer to the traditional geopolitical domain of RISI, potentially increasing coordination and or friction between the two groups that are often perceived as playing a greater role in the development of Putin's thinking.

In recent years, the collaboration between Kiriyenko and Fradkov has evolved into a unified "hybrid" strategy where domestic political techniques are extended to manage foreign influence, particularly in the former Soviet states. For example, Kiriyenko has become the Kremlin's point man for the occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, frequently visiting those territories to outline policy

646 Goble, 2015

647 Photo accessed from: Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, n.d.-b

priorities and announce investments. While Kiriyenko manages the political ground game, Fradkov's RISI provides the underlying geopolitical analysis and intelligence support needed to navigate these breakaway territories. Ultimately, the two men effectively run a two-pronged attack in strategic regions for the Kremlin. Fradkov's RISI develops the strategic narratives and active measures (intelligence-backed strategies), while Kiriyenko's departments and think tanks (like EISI) operationalize these narratives through social media campaigns, soft power projects, and local political grooming.[648]

6.3 DIRECTORATE FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

In late 2025, President Putin established a new Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation (USPS) (управление президента по стратегическому партнерству и сотрудничеству (УСПС), which merged the abolished Directorate for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Directorate for Border Cooperation—two departments previously run by **Dmitry Nikolayevich Kozak** who resigned in September 2025 following a power struggle with Kiriyenko over the Kremlin's foreign policy direction.



Putin with Kozak circa 2016.[649]

As Kiriyenko increasingly gained de facto responsibility for managing Kozak's affairs in Russia's neighbourhood, he allegedly argued that additional directorates should be transferred from Kozak to him, and The Directorate was successfully placed directly under Kiriyenko's control. **Vadim Titov (Вадим Титов)** was appointed to lead the new directorate. Titov is a longstanding, trusted Kiriyenko associate from their overlapping years at Rosatom, where Titov managed the corporation's international operations which focused on the post-Soviet region and especially Central Europe. While the appointment was formalized by a decree signed by Putin, it is widely regarded as a strategic move by Kiriyenko. Titov has no conventional diplomatic background; like Kiriyenko, he is primarily a political operative.[650]

[648] The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, n.d.-a; Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, 2023; Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, 2025; Grebennikova, 2024; Pertsev, 2025d; Castillo, 2025; Kopalyan, 2025

[649] Photo accessed from: Blank, 2016

[650] Mukhametshina & Ivanov, 2025; Panyi, 2026b; Kanev, 2026a; Intelligence Online, 2025

Vadim Titov is a long-term Rosatom ally of Kiriyenko's who was picked to manage Rosatom's international operations as General Director of Rosatom's International Networks (from 2019 to 2025), which focused on Russia's nuclear interests in the post-Soviet region and especially Central Europe. Kiriyenko appointed Titov to lead the Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, established by Putin in 2025.[651]

Titov started his career in journalism and public relations in Irkutsk before joining Rosatom in 2009. Titov hosted the prime time talk show "Vremechko" on the Irkutsk channel "Gorod," where he was highly critical of local officials and is reported to have gained considerable popularity as a result.

In his role at Head of the Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, Titov has expanded his work into on-the-ground political interference operations. For example, investigative reports allege Titov was involved in running influence operations in Hungary ahead of **Hungary's April 2026 parliamentary elections**. Kiriyenko reportedly manages the operation from Moscow, while Titov coordinates technical teams based at embassies and a network of political strategists.

Like Kiriyenko, Titov is believed to lack a diplomatic or formal intelligence background. Titov's appointment is seen as a tactical victory for Kiriyenko, as it replaces security-focused officials with a civilian political strategist from Kiriyenko's circle. [652]



Vadim Titov.[653]

651 The Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, merged the abolished Directorate for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Directorate for Border Cooperation and placed the new entity under Kiriyenko's control. The aim was evidently to clear out a generation of corrupt and ineffective intelligence officers and replace them with younger intelligence officers and political technologists from Kiriyenko's circle.

652 Kanev, 2026a; Pertsev, 2025e; Panyi, 2026b; Pertsev, 2025g

653 Photo accessed from: Kanev, 2026b

The recently abolished **Directorate for Interregional and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries** was established in 2005 and run by the Presidential Administration under Kozak. Kozak was Deputy Chief of Staff with responsibility for the "near abroad" from 2020–2025, and most recently became widely known in the media as the man in Putin's orbit who opposed the war in Ukraine. Kozak assumed a diplomatic approach to managing relationships, and the Directorate was one of a small number of vehicles that worked parallel to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct sensitive negotiations in the CIS region. He was known for attempting to be discreet about Russia's foreign interference, arguably placing him in a different tradition to that which has dominated in Russia's political circles since 2022.[654]

While the old Directorate appeared as a cultural and soft power institution, its most important role was to provide a front for intelligence agencies to pursue pro-Russian interests and counter potential colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space. The Directorate was traditionally closely associated with security and intelligence services, as its main interests were "influence and infiltration" in countries like Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, the Baltic states, and the self-proclaimed "republics" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Directorate was able to draw upon a mix of high-level diplomatic engagements, cultural events, lists of foreign journalists and influencers targeted as potential influence agents, and payments. An example assessment from a classified report leaked to the Insider gives a flavour of how €80 million of interference activities one country alone were framed:

"It is advisable to strengthen the presence of Russian NGOs in Azerbaijan due to a clear lack of genuine public organizations promoting the Russian position. Reviving existing NGOs or creating new ones in Azerbaijan would, in the long term, help establish a 'soft power' tool for exerting Russian influence. In their activities, the NGOs could focus on border regions, youth, student organizations, education, the Russian language, cultural projects, and journalistic forums. NGO initiatives should not be limited to large events but should constantly 'permeate' Azerbaijani society from within and maintain a presence in the mass media." [655]

The other abolished department under Kozak was the **Directorate for Border Cooperation**, which was created in 2018 and performed a similar role as The Directorate for Interregional and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in developing "soft power" policies toward former-Soviet states through economic and cultural integration.

According to official Kremlin descriptions, The new directorate's primary tasks include drafting and executing international programmes to develop Russia's strategic partnerships with foreign nations, assisting in the preparation of the President's talks and meetings with foreign officials, politicians, and international organizations, formulating proposals regarding Russia's participation in international development and cross-border cooperation, and providing analytical support for the President and the Chiefs of Staff on matters within its remit. Most of the Directorate for Interregional and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries departments remained intact in USPS. However, USPS has an expanded focus on Moldova, the Baltics, and Africa.[656]

654 Pertsev, 2025d

655 Kanev, 2025

656 Kremlin.ru, n.d. -b

The controversy surrounding USPS stems from its reputation as a hub for clandestine influence operations and the strategic power shift it represents within the Kremlin.[657] Indeed, **shadow diplomacy has intensified** as Russia uses intermediaries to communicate with diplomats in strategic countries, sending misleading signals about Putin's openness to concessions in Ukraine or potential concessions or nuclear escalation. The Kremlin and Russian security and intelligence services use intermediaries to gather intelligence on Western sentiments, including "red lines" and conditions for dialogue, to inform active measures. It is important to note that agents conducting election interference and other forms of elite capture have also been sourced from the Russia's security services (SVR, GRU, and FSB).

When the old directorates were abolished on Putin's orders in 2025, the leadership layer, consisting of an older generation of intelligence officers, was removed. Some analysts believe the goal in forming the new directorate was to replace corrupt and ineffective intelligence officers with younger, more politically savvy individuals. **Analysts suggest that the new structure continues to be used under Kiriyenko as a cover for espionage, election interference, and the recruitment of foreign assets under the guise of cultural ties.** Refining tactics used by its predecessors, the directorate focuses on cognitive warfare, which aims to destabilize foreign governments and promote authoritarian values through disinformation and strategic corruption.[658]

In its short history under Kiriyenko, USPS has been linked to direct efforts to engineer election outcomes in Europe. A prominent example is the so-called "Budapest Blueprint," an operation which utilized a wide network of digital platforms and influence operations to support former Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and his Fidesz Party. It was coordinated by Vadim Titov and Andrey Yarin (Head of the Domestic Policy Directorate). Titov personally visited Budapest in late March 2026 to test new methods for direct foreign electoral interference. Despite the directorate's task of overseeing Russian operations in Hungary, methods similar to those used in Moldova did not produce the desired outcomes, suggesting a setback for Kiriyenko and waning impact of the Kremlin's influence operations within the EU. Following the failure in Hungary, the Kremlin has reportedly shifted its focus toward other targets like Bulgaria where Moscow-friendly Rumen Radev won the absolute majority in Bulgarian elections.[659]

657 Simmons & Grove, 2024; Panyi, 2026a

658 Kanev, 2025; Torres et al., 2026;

659 Buzarov, 2026; Hmelnicka, 2026; The Baltic Times, 2026; Kaleta, 2026a

Overseeing the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in the presidential administration, Kiriyenko is a strategist and tactician within the domain of grey zone operations. **Andrey Yarin,** in Kiriyenko's Internal Politics Department, is responsible for developing strategic plans to influence electoral processes and ensuring the implementation of the State Council's agenda, often utilizing intelligence methods to manage domestic dissent. Yarin reportedly has close ties to Russia's security apparatus, especially Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). Despite serving under Kiriyenko, Yarin is viewed as a representative of the siloviki within the Presidential Administration, acting as a loyal official who bridges the gap between political management and security enforcement. To bypass Yarin's influence, Kiriyenko reportedly shifted many key domestic functions to other departments headed by his own loyalists, such as Alexander Kharichev. This created a dual-track system where Yarin manages the repressive tools like discrediting opposition (e.g., Alexei Navalny) while Kiriyenko's team focuses on political technology and elections. Their relationship is described in media reports as a calculated power-sharing arrangement and forced collaboration, particularly on high-stakes missions, rather than a close alliance.[660]

6.4 CENTRE S

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was supported by a set of informational and hybrid influence operations targeting Ukraine and its allies. One of the first operations uncovered by the intelligence community, tech platforms, and journalists was a 'mirror-website' stunt, referred to in media as Operation Doppelgänger.[661] In order to mislead Western audiences and compel them to drop support of Ukraine, the Kremlin tried to spread fear-mongering narratives through websites that mimicked Western legacy media. The execution of the operation was quite sophisticated, making it difficult for social media users to discern between false and authentic news sources.

Upon analysing additional evidence, it was argued that the mirror websites were only one small component of the comprehensive counter-campaigns against Ukraine and its allies.[662] Internally, the operators referred to their activities as the International Comprehensive Counter Campaign (CCI), which later evolved into the Comprehensive Counter Campaign against Europe (CCE) targeting among other things the EU parliamentary elections, and the Comprehensive Counter Campaign against Ukraine (CCU). They also ran a campaign supporting pro-Kremlin candidate and Putin's goddaughter's father, Viktor Medvedchuk, dubbed "Real Ukraine" (RU, Настоящая Украина) and "Other Ukraine" (OU, Другая Украина).[663]

The campaigns were attributed to two Moscow-based private companies: **Social Design Agency** (SDA, Агентство Социального Проектирования) and **Structura National Technologies** (Группа Компаний Структура), as well ANO Dialog. The operations were further linked to the Presidential Administration, notably to Kiriyenko, and his subordinate Sofia Avraamovna Zakharova, who is head of a department within the **Directorate for Development of Information and Communication Technologies.**[664]

660 Yarin was identified by the EU as the leader of a Kremlin task force designed to counter the influence of opposition leader Alexei Navalny. This role involved close coordination with FSB leadership, specifically Director Alexander Bortnikov, leading to both men being sanctioned simultaneously by the EU and the UK in 2020. See Kopalyan, 2025; Hardie, 2020; Pertsev, 2019b; Pertsev, 2023b; Pertsev, 2022a

661 Qurium, 2022.

662 Pamment and Tsurtsumia, 2025.

663 Savchuk, 2023.

664 'Affidavit in Support of Seizure Warrant', 2024.

Sergey Kiryenko, Sofia Zakharova, Alexander Kharichev, SDA, Structura, Dialog, IRI and a host of other actors collaborate on information manipulation and foreign interference operations within the scope of Russia's war in Ukraine. This section presents this structure and the roles of the actors within it. It begins with a description of **Centre S** (most likely standing for **Centre Sofia**), which we believe to be the control and command centre of all influence operations under Kiriyenko. Following that, subsequent sections present Centre S's most well-documented team – **Team I** (or **Team Ilya**), and **the team responsible for sabotage operations, linked to GRU.**

How we know about Centre S

Operation Doppelgänger was publicly exposed from summer 2022 by investigative journalists,[665] through technical assessments conducted by Meta[666] and organisations within the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) community.[667] However, most of what is known about SDA and Structura comes from at least four separate leaks of internal files.

First are documents dated between May 2022 and August 2023, obtained by an unnamed European intelligence service and reviewed by Washington Post journalists in four stories from April 2023 to April 2024.[668] The Washington Post Leak contains between 100 to 300 files, and covers stories of Russian direct interference with German, French, American, and Ukrainian politics. The stories investigate the relationship between Russia's and Germany's high-level officials, claiming that the Kremlin was seeking to forge a new left extremist coalition in Bundestag, explore the disinformation campaign targeting Ukraine's political leadership, and SDA's efforts to undermine USA's and France's support for Ukraine.

The second set of documents were published by the FBI and Department of Justice (DoJ) which were "legally obtained… prior to June 1, 2024" as part of an investigation into 32 counterfeit web domains connected to Operation Doppelgänger.[669] The DoJ investigation links SDA and ANO Dialog to the Kremlin, details the production pipeline of the mirror websites, and reproduces planning documents about SDA's influence campaigns targeting USA elections and Mexico.

For the third set of documents, Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) reported in August 2024 that Bavarian intelligence officers had gained access to two servers used to disseminate SDA's campaigns.[670] Shortly afterward, on September 16, a group of German journalists from Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) and Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) published an investigation for Tagesschau,[671] while journalists from Delfi Estonia and VSquare also released reporting for VSquare,[672] all based on files obtained from SDA servers. These internal files total over 3,000 are provided significant insight into SDA's working practices.

665 Brühl et al., 2022; Von Wienand et al., 2022.

666 Nimmo and Agranovich, 2022.

667 Qurium, 2022.; Alaphilippe et al., 2022; Viginum, 2023.

668 Belton, C., 2023, December 30; Belton, C., 2024, February 16; Belton, C., Mekhennet, S., & Harris, S., 2023, April 21; Belton, C., & Menn, J., 2024, April 8.

669 'Affidavit in Support of Seizure Warrant', 2024.

670 Schmitt, 2024.

671 Blum et al., 2024.

672 Laine and Morozova, 2024.

Lastly, in May 2026, new leaks were obtained that appear to be from the personal devices of Sofia Zakharova, who is tasked with overseeing SDA, Structura and other similar actors involved in foreign interference. The files reveal personal chat histories between Zakharova and her team members, many of whom are unidentified due to their use of codenames. More importantly, the documents shed light on the ongoing influence efforts coordinated by Centre S and reveal more about the organisational structure of Kiriyenko's foreign interference system.

Centre S and its teams

The 2026 leaks shed light on additional organisational dynamics between the members of the Presidential Administration and their contractors for foreign interference operations. This compelled a reconsideration of the previous materials, and reassessment of the organisational structure responsible for foreign interference under Kiryenko. Building on previous research, we argue that there is a coordination headquarters for all influence operations under Kiriyenko related to the so-called Special Military Operation. This control and command centre is referred to by its members as Centre S and is managed by Sofia Zakharova. Below is the simplified organogram showing the hierarchy of the organization.

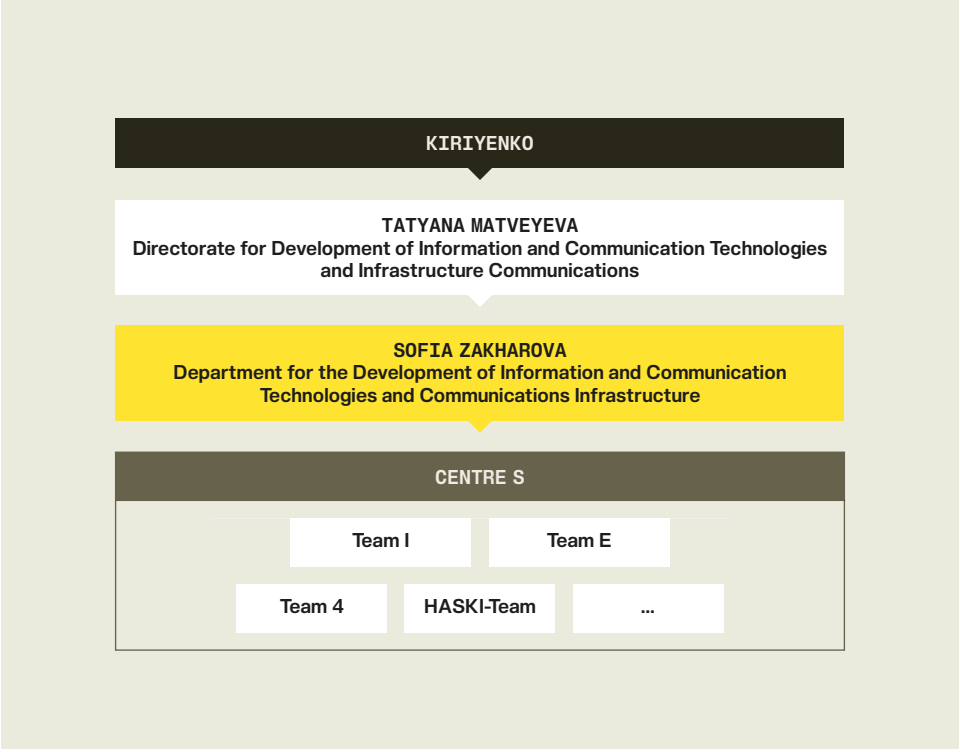


Figure: Centre S organogram. There may be more teams.

Centre S with Zakharova at the organisational helm coordinates the teams and individuals who have their respective roles in foreign interference operations against Ukraine and its Western allies. Among the most notable actors known to contribute to Centre S' activities are ANO IRI, ANO Dialog, SDA and Structura, as well as likely input from actors connected to the GRU. It is also likely that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) and by consequence SVR are represented. Among the individuals involved in Centre S are Alexander Kharichev, Aleksey Asafov, Oleg Gaba, Sergey Chernakov, and other political technologists and ideologues.

Centre S likely coordinates teams with following names: Team I, Team 4, Team E and HASKI-Team. These teams have their respective roles and comprise actors from various government, non-government and private organizations. The teams collaborate on different parts of campaigns, where for example Team I might produce the content that another team will disseminate and amplify. Note also that SDA often seems to produce the internal promotional and analytical materials for Centre S (as their main creative team), which can add to uncertainty about the ownership of documents within the leaks.

It is certain that Team I, or Team Ilya, is a codename for the team comprised of SDA and Structura. Their official responsibility within Centre S has been to provide monitoring services, narrative analytics, creative content, and content support by amplification. Recent evidence strongly suggests that there is another significant actor coordinating with Centre S through the persona codenamed "Edward Bernays," who appears to control intelligence sources and is tasked with planning and executing both information influence and hybrid operations. More on both teams will be covered in following sections.

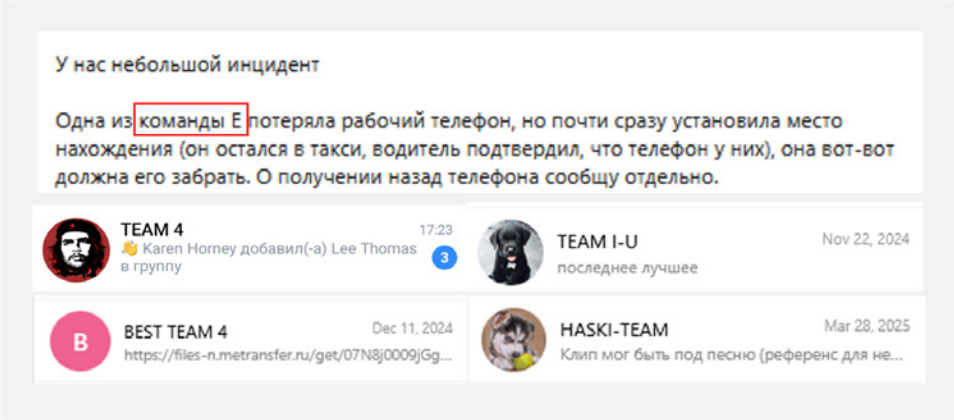


Figure: Screenshots of the mentions of team names.

The identities of Teams 4, E, and HASKI are currently unknown. It may be that they represent organisations we already know are part of Centre S' work, such as Dialog, IRI, and/or Zakharova's administrative staff, or they may refer to entities and organisations that have not yet been connected to Centre S and Kiriyenko.

According to the leaks, Centre S would meet on Wednesdays to discuss the progress on the CCI, and Fridays for CCU. There is no evidence of whether these meetings were held in person, digitally or in a hybrid format. Team I was present at both types of meetings in different configurations, having more members present at CCI than CCU. There is no evidence of the GRU or other intelligence services officials frequenting these Wednesday and Friday meetings. Below is the graphic presenting the participants around the table of Centre S.

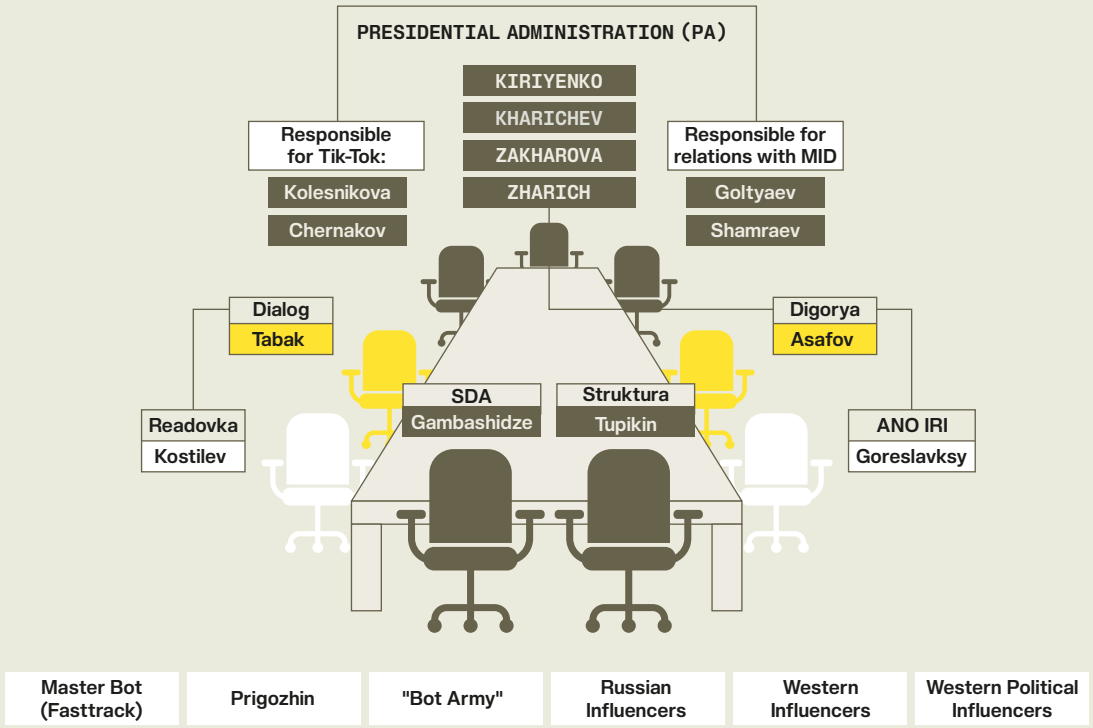


Figure: Centre S meetings.[673]



Photo: Sofia Avraamovna Zakharova.[674]

Sofia Avraamovna Zakharova manages Centre S together with financial professionals and administrators who deal with organisational communication, logistics, and progress reports which inform her superiors. She functions as an operational manager and strategic decision-maker, coordinating activities across multiple teams and organisations to ensure favourable performance metrics of the influence operations. Her focus lies primarily on execution efficiency and audience engagement. While she remains mostly detached from ideological work, she nevertheless contributes with creative ideas during meetings. She determines which narratives to advance or abandon, recommends which channels to utilise or discontinue, and grounds her decisions in performance metrics.

Alexander Kharichev is also a key member of Centre S. He is mainly involved in shaping strategic narratives and serves as the chief ideologist behind the campaign targeting Ukraine, issuing directives on strategy and narratives. In addition to his role as an ideologue of the information war against Ukraine, Kharichev is actively engaged in cultivating a new generation of political technologists and public servants through the educational platform Digorya as well as other Kiriyenko-linked initiatives.[675] For more information about Kharichev, see chapter 3.4 of this book.

673 Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2024.

674 Photo acessed from: Premia Runeta, n.d.

675 Groza Media, 2024.

Centre S is responsible for providing its teams with strategic narratives, by defining the "thematic lines", or overarching campaign aims. These goals can be seen as support of the Kremlin's military goals, such as sowing conflict among Ukraine's political-military elites or disorienting Ukrainian population. Centre S together with Team I then translates these 'war goals' into communication goals with technically measurable KPIs. All content is produced in accordance with the KPIs within their respective thematic lines. This way Centre S measures the efficacy of each content unit as well as a strategic objective in general. Below are the slides from Centre S's internal presentation, where they explain their "system of work".

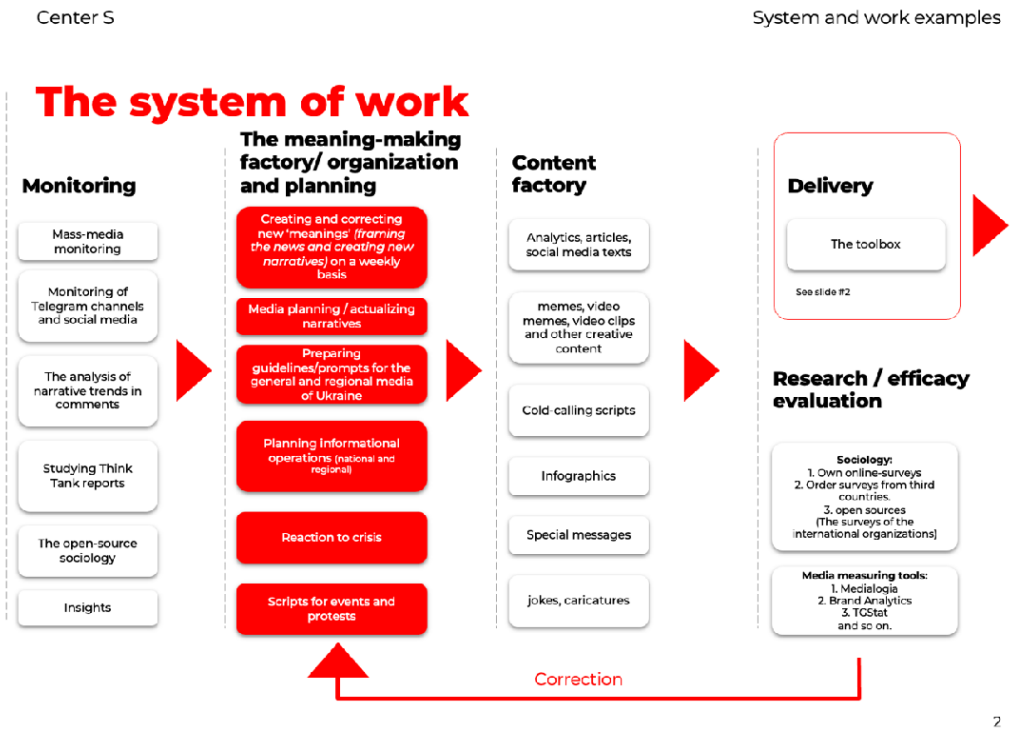


Figure: Slide from Centre S's presentation. Translated manually.

The Centre appears to be working as a full-service strategic communication agency. They start with the monitoring phase, which encapsulates inspection of mass media in targeted countries, narrative trends on social media, think-tank reports, influencers and others. It then moves into its most collaborative stage, where ideas are pitched and strategic decisions are made. The third stage appears to be content production, and the final stage is delivery. The delivery phase, which is described in detail on the next slide, seems to push the narratives through social media, mass media and personal targeting and secures its support from the fake comments. Lastly, Centre S claims to conduct regular surveys to measure the influence of their campaigns on the public opinion.

According to their presentation, Centre S is also responsible for guerilla campaigns. This includes everything from harassing journalists, to inciting riots to advertising on buses. Even though Team I is not entrusted with the execution of guerilla campaigns, it is routinely asked to support them by generating new ideas and amplifying related content online. The execution of foreign interference campaigns is likely delivered by GRU associates who have capabilities to implement sabotage operations on adversary territories. More on this will be covered further below in the section about sabotage operations.

Below is another slide from the same presentation, where Centre S demonstrates how their work contributed to the Kremlin's strategic goals and what real-life consequences it caused. For example, by spreading a disinformation campaign about corruption in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, they addressed the goal of discrediting Ukraine's leadership and claim that this led to real-life organizational changes in the leadership.



Figure translated manually.

The slide does not identify the specific actors responsible for the campaigns. Rather, it portrays the activities as a collective effort undertaken and coordinated by Centre S. The examples presented appear to be cherry-picked and subsequently attributed to Centre S's role, which leaves room for reasonable doubt regarding whether the slide overstates the extent of Centre S's achievements.

Team I: Social Design Agency and Structura National Technologies

Team I or Team Ilya is almost certainly comprised of SDA and Structura. They are likely responsible for providing monitoring services, narrative analytics, and creative content, as well as supporting the content of their and other teams by amplification.

Figure. From left to right: logotypes of the Social Design Agency and Structura.

SDA and Structura rose to notoriety with the exposure of Operation Doppelgänger. Rather than being discredited by the exposure, SDA/Structura managed to frame the episode as a success. Success, in this context, was measured by the extent to which the operation provoked public debate in the targeted countries and the investigative resources it attracted. Internal documents show that the publicity surrounding their 'mirror-website' tactic that was branded Operation Doppelgänger served as a form of validation, enhancing the agency's reputation within the

pro-Kremlin circles and securing new contracts, including a high-budget operation directed at Ukraine in 2023.[676]

Both SDA and Structura were founded by Ilya Gambashidze in December 2017, within the span of a single week. As of April 2021, Structura has been fully owned by SDA's deputy head, Nikolay Tupikin. SDA, meanwhile, is currently registered under the name of a woman identified in leaked documents as the organisation's bookkeeper – Anna Vladimirovna Antipova. Tupikin and Gambashidze are the key figures behind SDA and Structura. Gambashidze is a serial entrepreneur who took various consultancy jobs and launched numerous business ventures of varying success.[677] His work in domestic politics eventually brought him into Kiriyenko's circles. Less is known about Tupikin's background; in any case he does not appear to have a past as a political technologist or a close association to Kiriyenko. For more information about Ilya Gambashidze and Nikolay Tupikin and their entrepreneurial past, see chapter 5.7 of this report.

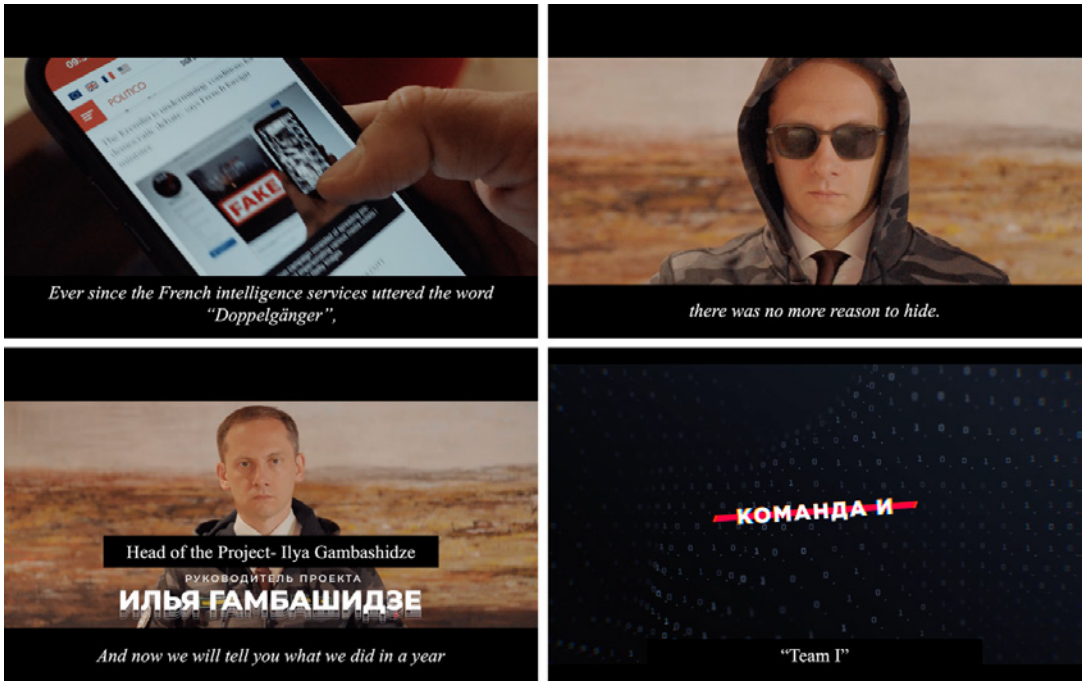


Photo: Ilya Gambashidze in the video presentation of his team (Team I) after the exposure of Doppelgänger. Manual translation.

Another notable individual employed by SDA is its chief political ideologist Andrey Naumovich Perla. Perla began his career in 2003 as a journalist and public relations adviser to a member of parliament, prior to holding several junior positions in the government of his native Samara oblast. He went on to serve as director of the Department for Civil Society Relations in the Sevastopol municipality (Crimea) but was dismissed in 2017 following alleged financial mismanagement and allegations of embezzlement. Perla subsequently relocated to Yekaterinburg, where he worked as a political consultant, actively cultivating his image as a political technologist through his Telegram channel, «Умный еврей при губернаторе» ("The Governor's Clever Jew"), earning 16,000 followers.[678]

676 Belton, Mekhennet & Harris, 2023

677 Kupfer, 2024.

678 Limonier, 2025.



Photo: Andrey Naumovich Perla.[679]

SDA can most plausibly be categorized as an advertising or strategic communication agency with industry-standard capabilities. Structura seems to work mainly with IT infrastructure and information security. Both agencies are contracted to promote the Kremlin's influence operations in Russia and abroad, providing services such as media monitoring and analysis, content creation, content delivery and amplification. SDA and Structura share human and technical resources, addresses, work projects, provide financial support to one another, and coordinate applications for governmental funding. One leaked document titled "The Employees of SDA" (Сотрудники АСП) identifies Gambashidze and Tupikin as SDA's director and deputy director, respectively. In a similar document circulated by the Telegram channel VCHK-OGPU, Gambashidze is described as the "head technologist of the project," while Tupikin is listed as "head of the IT department."[680] As noted in chapter 5.7, they act for the most part as a single entity.

According to the latest leak, Structura and SDA share an office. There are around 10 to 14 people present daily, with Tupikin managing daily operations, while Gambashidze seems to be mainly engaging in his usual hustle. After strategic goals are set, Team I's work begins. According to their internal presentation, Team I's work is divided into three overlapping steps: monitoring, analytics and content creation. Comment support, even though not explicitly mentioned, is also an important part of Team I's mandate within Centre S.

Below is the slide from the presentation of Team I, describing their work process. Notably, the slide mentions that their analytics serve as basis for "other teams" to continue their work. Additionally, the delivery part seems to be outsourced to other teams as well.

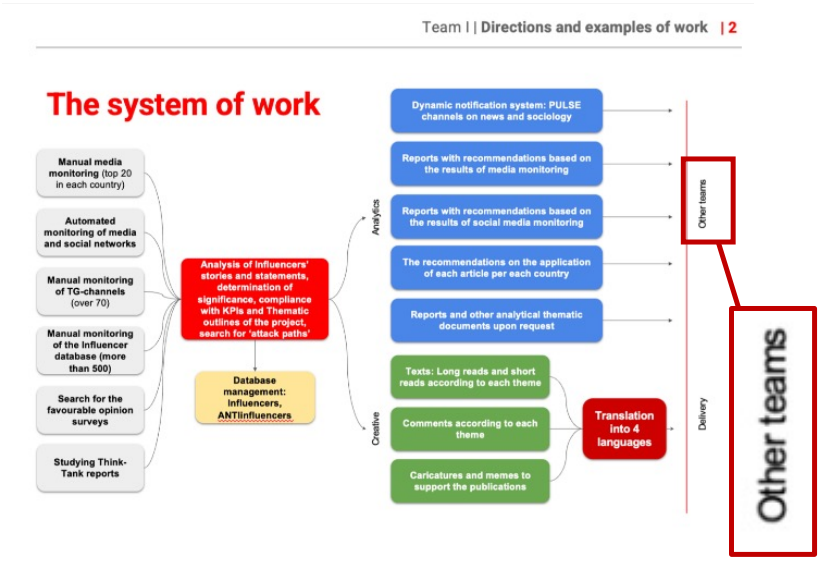


Figure: Slide from Team I's presentation. Manual translation.

679 Photo accessed from: Pikabu.ru, 2025

680 Vchkogpu, 2023

Monitoring and Analytics

The first step of Team I's work is the meticulous monitoring of the information environment of the target country, its media outlets, influencers and populations. Depending on the campaign, monitoring covers mass media outlets, selected social media channels, influencers, think tanks and comments' sections. Much of this process is automated and conducted through specialised social media listening software that generates standardised outputs.

Team I uses Russian-made software from Medialogia and Brand Analytics, which closely resemble Western alternatives such as Meltwater and Brand Watch. It is unclear whether all monitoring for Centre S is done solely by Team I, or if there are other teams doing additional monitoring.

Even through the process is automated, human resources are involved in management and oversight of the software. Additionally, the analysis and interpretation of the monitored materials is done manually by the 'analytics team'. These 'insights' are then passed on to the Centre S and circulated.

The purpose of all monitoring products, whether they measure public sentiment or monitor a narrative, is to extract insights about vulnerabilities of the target audiences. The analytics division of Team I routinely offers their ideas of how these narratives, grievances, and conflicts can be exploited or amplified for strategic goals.

The value of the monitoring and analytical outputs, however, extend beyond their normative purpose and provide Team I with a tangible way to demonstrate the dynamic of their work. Monitoring and analytical outputs are, therefore, regularly distributed as reports via chat groups. In conclusion, monitoring and analytics allows Team I to claim analytical competence about public discourse.

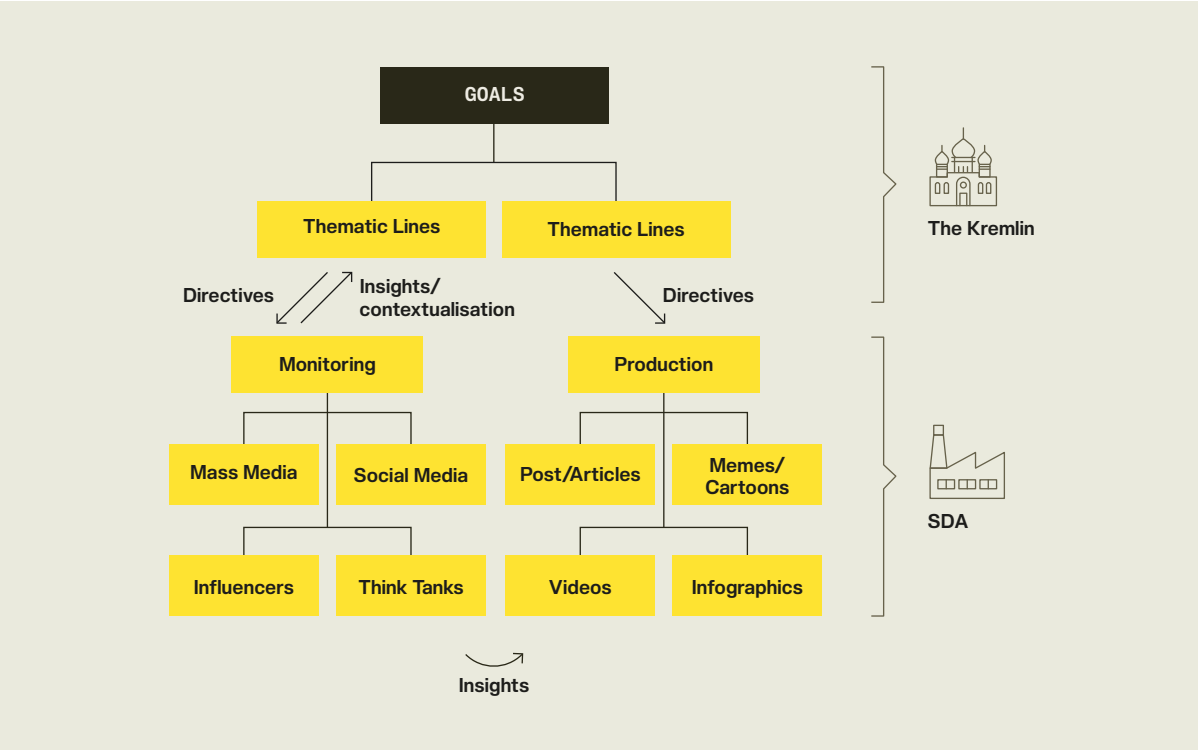


Figure: The first part of Team I's work process.[681]

[681] Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2025.

Creative Production

The next stage after monitoring and analytics is content production, which involves creating both textual and visual materials. This process is not as streamlined as described by Team I and is rather a back-and-forth with the Centre S, where final ideas for content are debated, negotiated and often decided based on the personal preferences of senior executives. Additionally, just like with the monitoring and analytics, it is unclear whether Team I is the only team within Centre S who is given this mandate, or if there are other teams contributing with their own content.

Textual content units include fake articles ("long-reads"), social media posts ("short-reads"), and comments, while visual outputs encompass memes, political cartoons, videos, fabricated documents, screenshots, and infographics.

Textual content is produced by SDA's team of copywriters and each article or post is accompanied by a set of pre-prepared comments and teasers. According to the leaked files, these comments are generated with the help of AI prompts. Given SDA/Structura's reliance on mass production, it is almost certain that they will continue training AI models to automate an even greater share of content. Visual materials revealed in the leaks, such as memes, cartoons, videos, and infographics, appear to be produced manually by human creators. However, these visuals are frequently translated into multiple languages and recycled across campaigns using AI tools.

Every content unit serves as a basis for measurable KPIs, particularly engagement metrics, which are used to evaluate both the performance of specific outputs and the effectiveness of broader campaign objectives. Below is a registry of content units from the Ukraine-targeted operation likely produced solely by Team I.

#	Service	Description	Production Frequency	Amount per month	Total Price (₽)	Total Price (€)	Price per Unit	Staff/ Resources	Price Breakdown (₽)	Price Breakdown (€)
1	Long-read	• Text 2 000–5 000 characters including spaces • 10 comments to the text • 3 teasers to the text • Finding a corresponding image in the internet • Translation	Daily	70	190 000 RUB	1 824 EUR	26 EUR	Editor-in-Chief V. Ostroshko	N/A	N/A
								7 writers	85 000 RUB	816 EUR
								Designer/ Delivery	25 000 RUB	240 EUR
								Translator	N/A	N/A
								Bonuses	N/A	N/A
2	Short-read	• Text 1000 characters including spaces • Video illustrations corresponding to the text (selection and preparation of subtitles) • Translation	Daily	190	215 000 RUB	2 064 EUR	11 EUR	Editor / 6 writers	19 000 RUB	182 EUR
								Freelance writers	N/A	N/A
								Designer/Delivery	25 000 RUB	240 EUR
								Translator	N/A	N/A
								Bonuses	N/A	N/A
3	Meme	• An image with text • Explanation • Translation	Daily	200	0 RUB	0 EUR	0 EUR	2 meme-makers on payroll. K. Bezborodova on full payroll and S. Minaeva on half payroll.	N/A	N/A
								Translator	N/A	N/A
4	Video Meme	• A vertical or horizontal video clip with text • Explanation • Translation	Daily	50	0 RUB	0 EUR	0 EUR	2 meme-makers on payroll. K. Bezborodova on full payroll and S. Minaeva on half payroll.	N/A	N/A
								Translator	N/A	N/A
5	Video Clip	• A video-clip (possibly with subtitles, voice-over, game elements, professional editing) • Voice-over or subtitles • Translation	Weekly	4	0 RUB	0 EUR	0 EUR	Director	N/A	N/A
								Editor	N/A	N/A
								2 writers	N/A	N/A
								Translator	N/A	N/A
								Designer	N/A	N/A
6	Caricature	• Original illustration with text • Accompanying explanation • Translation	Daily	90	0 RUB	0 EUR	0 EUR	2 artists	N/A	N/A
								Translator	N/A	N/A
								Designer	N/A	N/A
7	Augmented Reality (special messages)	• Multi-format content – long-reads, short-reads, illustrations, short videos and so on • Translation	Twice a week	8	0 RUB	0 EUR	0 EUR	Manager	N/A	N/A
								2 writers	N/A	N/A
								Graphic designer	N/A	N/A
								Video-maker (per case)	N/A	N/A
								Translator	N/A	N/A
								Designer	N/A	N/A
8	Plays, pamphlets, jokes	Reference: the poems of the project "Citizen Poet". Goal: to laugh at the decisions of the military -political leadership of Ukraine, forming an agenda on social media			0 RUB	0 EUR	0 EUR	2 professional writers – a novelist and a poet		

Product registry for the CCU by Team I.[682]

682 Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2025

Delivery and amplification

The next stage of Centre S's work process is content delivery tactics and procedures. At this point, other actors within Kiriyenko's digital sphere, such as ANO Dialog and its affiliated digital news ecosystem, take the lead. However, Team I has its own role in strengthening the delivery component of the propaganda machine, as evidenced by the Doppelgänger campaign.

Within Centre S's network, it is most plausibly ANO Dialog that is tasked with the delivery of content units within Ukraine. The delivery team establishes a wide-ranging infrastructure of digital touchpoints: Telegram and WhatsApp channels posing as news aggregators, YouTube accounts posing as "influencers" or "independent media", fake social media profiles used to disseminate posts and comments, fabricated news sites, and mirror websites circulated through comment sections. This latter practice later became known as "Operation Doppelgänger" but should not be considered separate from the broader campaigns. The infrastructure also includes various pre-existing media outside of their own making, such as fringe news sites and communities, radical influencers and local influencers and media in the Western countries.

The network of touchpoints is both extensive and interconnected, with accounts amplifying one another to simulate organic communication flows, syndicating each other's' content and creating user journeys. Some accounts remain dormant until strategically activated, functioning as so-called "sleeping groups" that initially post popular, non-political content to build a following before pivoting to campaign messaging once the audience reaches a plausible size.

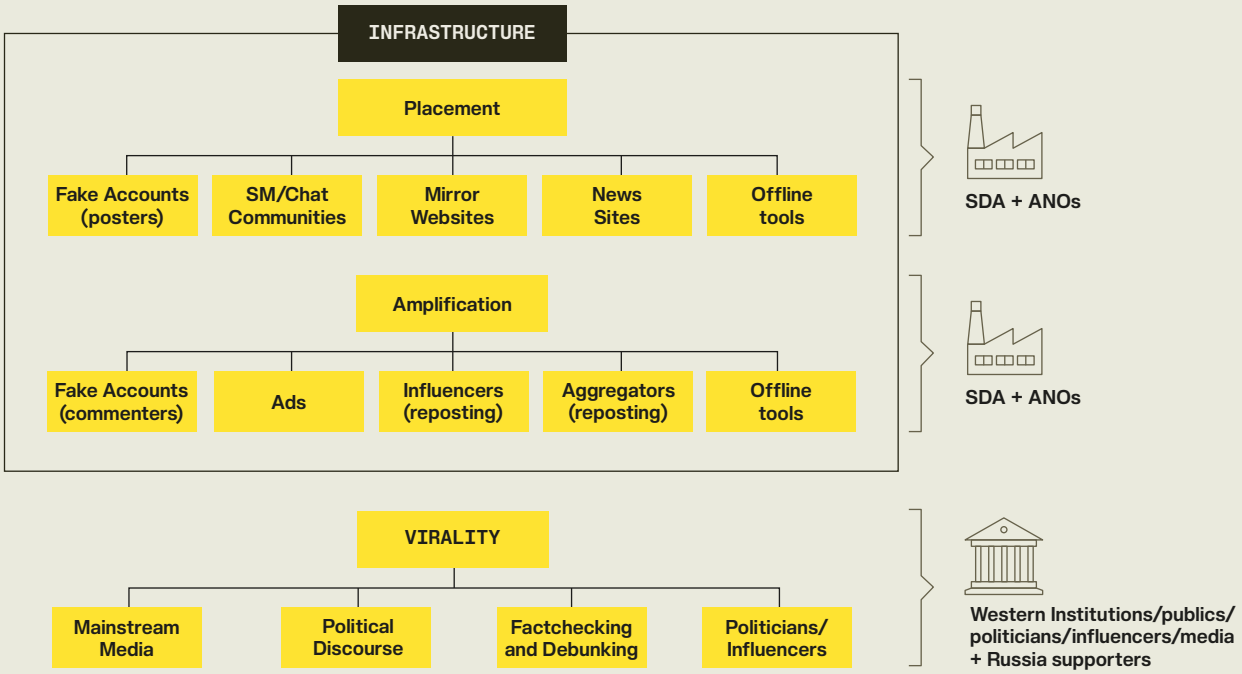


Figure: The second part of Team I's work process, joined by other actors from Centre S.[683]

683 Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2025

Once the infrastructure of digital touchpoints is established, the delivery team proceeds to flooding the network with content. Long-reads are published on news channels, aggregators or mirror websites, while short-reads and comments are disseminated through social media accounts. Articles placed on these news sites or 'mirrors' are further amplified by being shared within WhatsApp and Telegram news aggregator chats, as well as by affiliated influencers and media outlets within the network. To avoid detection by search engine crawlers for unethical activity, Team I and ANO Dialog deliberately refrained from registering their mirror websites on search engines. Instead, Doppelgänger sites were distributed directly via links placed in the comments section of social media posts, making them accessible only through these targeted pathways.

After content placement, comes content amplification. This occurs through two main mechanisms: vigorous reposting and commenting within the ecosystem of touchpoints (around 60%), which manipulates search engine algorithms, and paid advertising (around 40%).

Documents show that Team I is primarily tasked with the amplification part. More specifically, they are tasked with providing support to content units through an automated AI comment-system and bot-operators. Procurement documents reveal that SDA and Structura regularly won bids for Dialog's calls that require the same sort of engagement services. It is reasonable to assume that these documents reflect how Dialog officially paid SDA and Structura for their "comments machine," which in reality was delivered to Centre S.

According to other internal documents, approximately five teams of operators manage hundreds of bots, Facebook accounts, groups, and pages. From mid-2022, these activities are estimated to have generated between 1,000 and 2,000 posts per month, achieving more than 2 million views across major social media platforms, primarily targeting audiences in Germany and Italy.

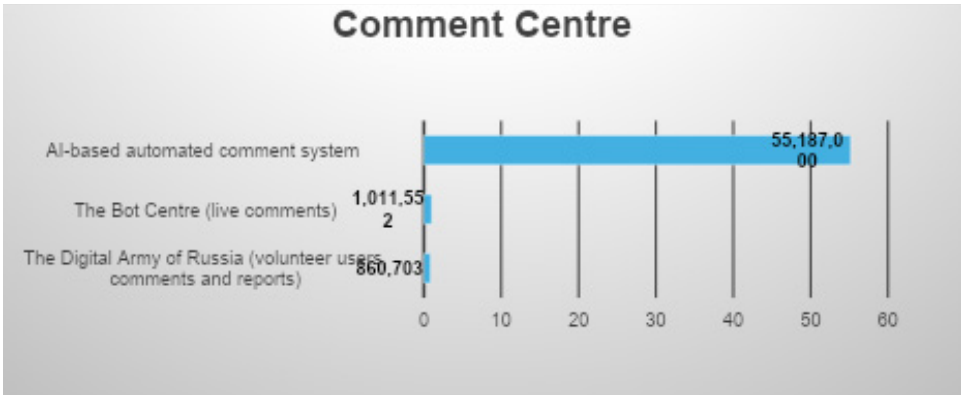


Figure: Report on Comment Centre on CCU for 16 months of work. Manually translated.

Even though the AI-based bot system delivers significantly more comments than manual labourers, its accounts are low in quality. Consequently, they are routinely taken down by platforms as part of their policy against Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour (CIB). A Meta report in 2022 described the Doppelgänger network as relentless, as they kept reviving their bot accounts.[684] However, the 2026 leaks revealed that efforts by Meta and other platforms to take down bots was in fact damaging to SDA. Additionally, it seems that the work of police and intelligence agencies in other countries as well as state sanctions on certain service providers has slowed the operations of Centre S by sabotaging their technical capabilities.

Internal chats from after the 2024 leaks reveals the concerns of the Centre S's administration that third-party service providers have paused their collaborations with the Kremlin or shut them down completely. In some cases, providers ceased cooperation because they lost their assets. Below is a manual translation of a conversation listing the technical losses:

From our work avenues:

- The shutdown of the account providers (accounts are either destroyed or stop working). Providers claim that over 50,000 accounts were destroyed in 24 hours. Six of the providers stopped collaborating, because their "goods" were wiped out.
- Proxy providers are banned (destroyed by pools).
- Servers/tech being seized from hosting providers; shutting down of bullet-proof hostings (services no longer work). There have been over five such incidents. Two bulletproof hostings are shut down.
- Paused registration of the active domains with registrars (with orders from internal affairs, intelligence and so on, they took over 20 domains).
- Shutting off of the biggest mass registrar of domains from advertising on Facebook (we're talking about sanctions on the biggest player).
- About banking – they are banning pins in bulk. Also, providers of the payment solutions (some of them shut down. The profile ones are 12, 3 were shut down).
- Shut down (completely turned off) all the solutions that we use for codes (captcha). Only two left on the market. Before there had been tens of active solutions, no less than 30, now there are only two.

684 Nimmo and Agranovich, 2022.

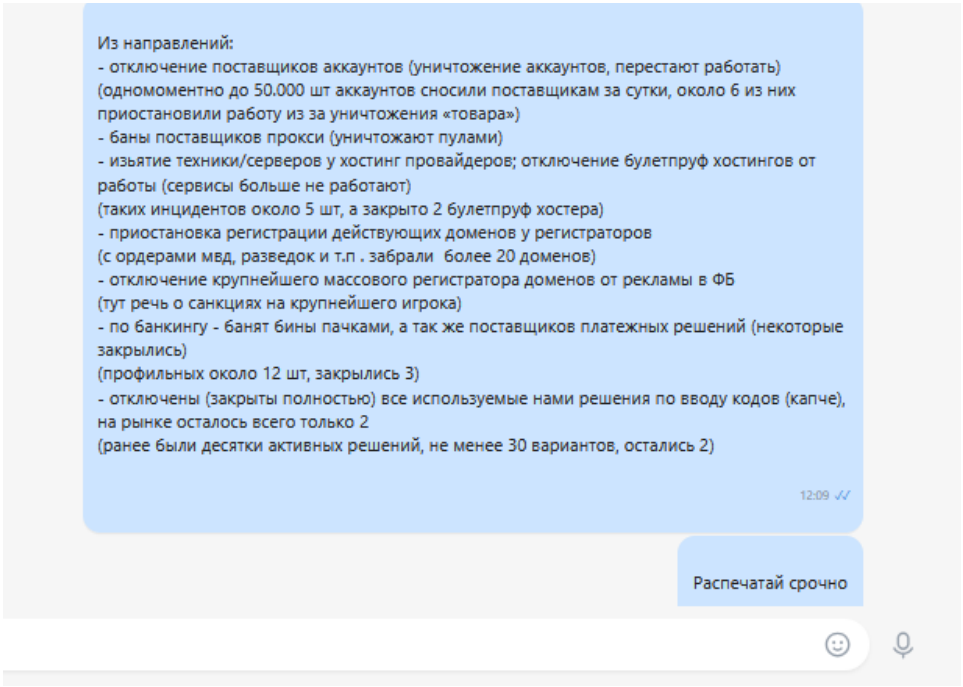


Figure: Screenshot of Sofia Zakharova's personal chat.

Content delivery and amplification is one of the most important parts of the foreign interference in digital spaces. Known for its 'firehose' method, Russian propaganda historically capitalises on quantity over quality, which wears down target audiences by bombarding them with a sludge of contradicting and emotionally draining opinions, thus instilling a sense of hopelessness. In the worst-case scenario, it manages to incite and enhance existing conflicts and grievances. All the digital touchpoints created by Centre S's various contractors and collaborators have contributed greatly to the volume of disinformation production which is why the shutting down of the crucial services needed for sustainability of this infrastructure is an important achievement, as long as these efforts remain ongoing.

This development is important in two ways. On top of having disruptions with delivery infrastructure and trouble with business relationships, Centre S would be forced to present less favourable performance metrics to its higher-ups. The following section explains why performance metrics are so important in Kiriyenko's digital vertical governance system.

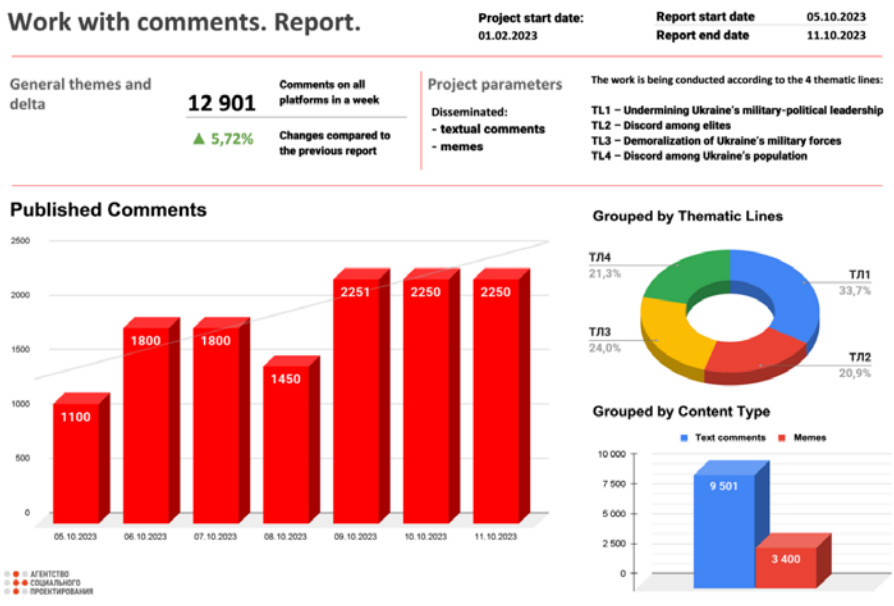
Performance tracking and evaluation

Centre S evaluates its performance using both qualitative and quantitative indicators. On the qualitative side, the primary marker of success is the virality of a given narrative, often measured through its spread in the form of excerpts or soundbites. At times, Centre S's narratives are repeated by prominent public figures or media channels, which almost instantly guarantees their virality. For example, in September 2023, a fabricated video alleging that the Ukrainian military was recruiting the children of service members was picked up by Western media. The video's circulation was subsequently analysed to identify the factors behind its success, with the intention of replicating the strategy in other regions.

A similar effect occurs when their campaigns are exposed and widely covered in the media, such as in the case of 'Operation Doppelgänger'. This represents a precedent where SDA, Structura and ANO Dialog created a double bind for investigative journalists and think tanks, who, by reporting on and exposing the campaigns, inadvertently contributed to their notoriety and SDA/Structura's success in Kremlin circles.

However, most of Team I's performance is measured in numbers, which although appearing to be highly impactful, are also carefully selected. Content units, such as comments, posts, articles, cartoons, memes, videos and others, are coded to determine their type and date of production. All content units correspond to the specific thematic line of the campaign. Social media management software determines the performance of each unit by country and social media channel, determining the performance of each content unit and its overarching thematic line. Performance is measured by common indicators such as Click-through-rates[685] (CTR), Engagement Rates (ER)[686] and so on. The metrics are astounding. In just over a year, the Centre S pipeline directed over 28 million fake comments into the Ukrainian information environment, which when combined with advertising and automated posts, could generate up to 250 million audience touchpoints (opportunities to encounter the content) per week.[687]

Team I invests heavily in its reporting. Similar to its self-branding, the self-promoting also contributes to its future security within the Kremlin's outsourced communications environment.



A page from the Power Point report evaluating the efficacy of comments targeting Ukraine, in February 2023. Likely an output of an automated software.

685 Click Through Rate is the number of clicks that your ad receives divided by the number of times your ad is shown: clicks ÷ impressions = CTR. A good click-through rate should be between 2-5%.

686 Engagement Rate (ER) = (Total of all reactions (likes, shares, comments, reactions for Facebook, + dislikes for YouTube))/(Count of followers).

687 Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2025.

Enhancing media monitoring and content dissemination capabilities

Recent leaks shed light on Team I's ambitions and future direction. The materials suggest that SDA continues to expand its capabilities in an apparent effort to increase its value to the Kremlin. A presentation titled "SDA Media Holding" indicates that the company is broadening its scope beyond advertising and political consulting, exploring new areas such as media placement and media procurement. In doing so, SDA appears to be repositioning itself as a media holding company and enhancing its content dissemination capabilities.

The presentation's cover page features imagery that bears a resemblance to Ilya Gambashidze. Whether done on purpose or not, coupled with his leading role in the video presentation of Team I, this serves as further evidence of his vanity and strong desire for influence, recognition, and personal prominence.



Figure: Slides from the presentation "SDA – Media Holding Company".

SDA appears to have acquired new media assets targeting audiences across the CIS region, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Russia, among others. One of its more notable projects was Erevan One, which reportedly formed part of a broader influence operation directed against Prime Minister Pashinyan during Armenia's 2026 parliamentary elections. Other documents suggest that Team I is pivoting to the CIS region.

Another document details the campaign idea around the Erevan One media outlet, which was specifically aimed at members of the Armenian diaspora residing in Russia. According to the document, more than one million Armenians live in Russia, making them a significant constituency with the potential to influence electoral outcomes. [688] The document does not provide operational details, however there is another document detailing the project **"Diaspora Speaking"** (Խոսում է սփյուռքը) targeting Armenian diasporas elsewhere.

It is unclear whether "Diaspora Speaking" is also envisaged by SDA, but it demonstrates a similar strategy: developing a multi-media news platform that supports Russia's narratives and targets Armenian diasporas. While the documents lack operational details, they exhibit a historical consistency of the Kremlin's influence efforts towards Armenia, by targeting Armenian diaspora communities abroad.

688 There are approximately three million people living in Armenia as of 2026 according to Worldometer https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/armenia-population/.

In addition to building its content dissemination and amplification infrastructure, SDA is investing in its monitoring capabilities as well. Check First's investigation suggests that SDA has created a website – "SDA World" that claims to present analyses of all strategically important intelligence investigations and news articles.

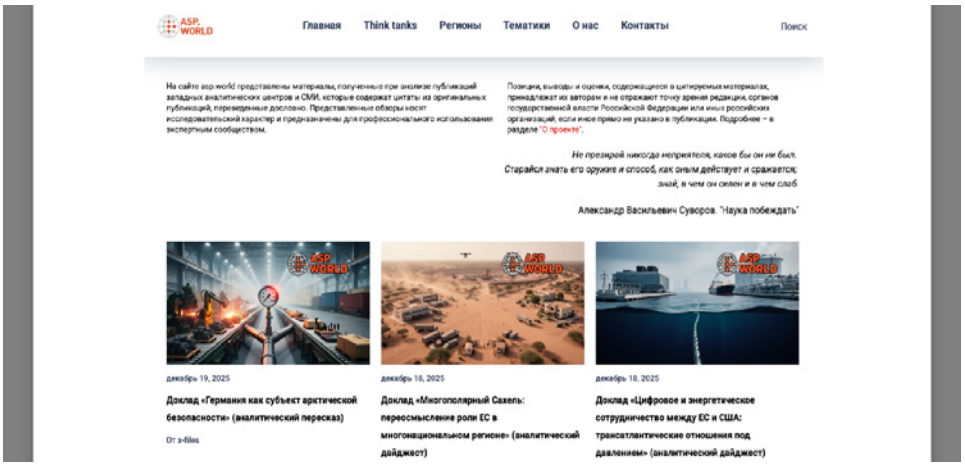


Figure: "November 2025 archived webpage of asp[.]world". Source: Check First, 2026.

The website cites the quote of Alexander Suvorov, a famous general of the 18th century Russian empire: "Never scorn your enemy, but study his troops, his methods of action, study his strong and weak sides".

A "Self-reinforcing source of knowledge"

The 2026 leak lists several files created by the persona Nicola Tesla. One of the documents details an idea for a self-reinforcing fake Wikipedia page targeting Russian and Armenian-speaking Armenians and lists a domain https://hy[.]wikipedia[.]org/ which is still active at the time of writing.

Fake Wikipedia is designed with an enhanced search engine optimization (SEO) structure and automatically enriches its pages with content through the parsing of original source materials. As users navigate the website, the system serves pages from its own content library. When information on a requested topic is unavailable, the platform retrieves relevant source materials, processes and optimizes them, and then adds the resulting content to its library.

This creates a self-reinforcing system in which new content is continuously generated based on audience interests and browsing behaviour. Over time, the library expands, allowing the website to cover a broader range of topics and become increasingly competitive in search engine rankings. The document claims that within a few months, the accumulated content would significantly improve the site's visibility, helping it achieve higher positions in search results.

The document states that the authors have previously implemented a similar project. Based on that experience, they estimate that the website could attract approximately 5,000 daily views within its first few months of operation, followed by a monthly growth rate of around 30%.

The authors further claim that more than 50% of the users attracted to the website would be genuinely interested readers rather than empty clicks. They also emphasize that the system is largely automated and requires only an initial setup, with ongoing maintenance limited to occasional minor updates. However, further down the document they present an editorial team for the project, which is tasked with daily maintenance, creating content, monitoring media, and editing the pages. The hosting of the project is proposed in Türkiye, noting that the country does not restrict the operation of similar projects.

Authors note that the project cannot be expanded to Russia due to the legal restrictions, which make it impossible to for them to fully control which content is displayed. Therefore, they choose to block Russian IP addresses at the hosting level.

To make the project available in Russia they required a Russian data centre which would guarantee that the parser picks up and packages only desirable content. However, both a data center and a mirror domain name registered in Russia would require some kind of immunity from inspections by Roskomnadzor and other regulators.

The document then presents a sample case of Samvel Karapetyan, a Russia-based businessman who was under arrest in Armenia on charges of inciting a coup d'etat.[689] He is mistakenly referred to as "Samvelyan" in the document. Here is the machine-translated version of the sample case:

The goal is to protect the politician Samvelyan, who is being unlawfully held in prison:

- Creation of a page "Samvelyan - Prisoner of Conscience," detailing the circumstances of his unlawful imprisonment and rights violations;
- Creation of accompanying materials: "Campaign for Samvelyan's Freedom,"
- "Political Repression in Armenia," "Human Rights Violations in the Samvelyan Case";
- Native placement of links to these pages within the most-read pages of the project. For example, on the "Yerevan" page - a block "Support for Samvelyan by Yerevan residents" or on the "Armenia's Judicial System" page - a block "Samvelyan's fate is an example of political revenge";
- Placement of a "Most Read" block on all pages with a link to the article "Samvelyan - a Symbol of the Struggle for Freedom";
- Placement of a "Free Samvelyan!" banner in the website header. as a central element of the campaign.

689 JAMnews, 2025

The document then describes the technical details of the project, which are presented here in full:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

1. PROJECT GOAL

Creation of an online project that includes an automatically updated web resource (knowledge base) and its organic search engine promotion by intercepting organic search traffic from a less optimized original resource through:

- SEO-optimized structure;
- Automated content filling via parsing;
- Improved user logic.

2. OPERATION MECHANICS

- Database: The project stores a set of pages optimized for search queries.
- Parser: When an internal link leading to a page not in the database is clicked, the system automatically:
  - Accesses the original;
  - Downloads the required material;
  - Cleans/structures it;
  - Adds it to its own database.
- Search results: an optimized version of the original project (with improved semantics, metadata, and structured HTML) is shown to users and search engines.

3. SEO OPTIMIZATION

- Improved headings (title, h1–h3).
- Semantic core, divided into sections.
- Friendly URLs (readable URLs).
- Schema.org/JSON-LD markup.
- Microcontent (lists, FAQ blocks) for feature snippets.
- Internal linking.
- Automatic sitemap generation.

4. RESULTS AFTER 3 MONTHS

- The website becomes self-contained: it generates exactly the knowledge base that interests real users.
- Search engines recognize the improved structure, which improves the project's ranking compared to the original.
- Increased organic traffic.

5. RISKS AND LEGAL RESTRICTIONS

- Technical risks: parser blocking at the source.
- SEO risks: possible search engine penalties for complete copying without uniqueness

6. RISK MITIGATION MEASURES

- Use partial rewriting/generation of unique descriptions while preserving the original database.
- Adding your own value elements: analytics, graphs, links to external sources.
- Text uniqueness control (anti-plagiarism 50-70%).
- Technical masking of parser queries (user-agent rotation, proxy).

7. IMPLEMENTATION STAGES

1. Analysis of the original website: content, structure, weaknesses.
2. Developing specifications for a knowledge base engine with a parser.
3. Preparing a SEO structure (semantic core, metadata, schemas).
4. Launching a minimum viable product (MVP).
5. Debugging the parser and automatic content.
6. Scaling and ongoing SEO optimization.

In a separate document titled "Projects of 2026," the project "Self-Reinforcing Source of Knowledge" is listed alongside a similar initiative targeting Germany. This suggests that, at the time the document was written, the authors had already launched both fake Wikipedia-style websites aimed at audiences in Armenia and Germany.

According to the document, the German platform's content library contains more than 200,000 pages, while the Armenian platform hosts over 50,000 pages. Both projects reportedly update approximately 100 articles per month and generate accompanying visual content for those articles.

The most notable claim in the document is that the authors use their edited content to train six AI platforms, using 500 articles per month.

The "Projects 2026" document lists this initiative alongside several other projects, including "AI-News," which is described as producing short AI-generated satirical news videos targeting audiences in France. Another project referenced in the document is the Erevan One news website, attributed to SDA. The inclusion of these projects in the same document suggests that they may all be associated with SDA. However, it is also possible that the document belongs to Centre S rather than SDA. As a result, the available evidence does not allow for a high-confidence attribution of the fake Wikipedia-style page project to a specific team.

Storm 1516 and GRU

According to the most recent leaks, there are at least three other teams shown to work under Centre S. There is Team 4, HASKI-Team and Team E, who are mentioned by name in screenshots of Zakharova's chat windows. However, there is also a mysterious group, which communicates with Zakharova through the person codenamed "Edward Bernays". Edward Bernays shares with Zakharova "Media cases" on behalf of his team. These cases are exemplified by fake stories about Pashinyan's and Zelenskyy's alleged corruption, as well as an information attack on an Internet Governance Forum in Norway.[690]

Bernays also shares with her proposals and reports on sabotage operations that appear to have been conducted on behalf of his team. These are exemplified by hate crimes against Muslims, Jews and migrants in France.[691] Consequently, it can be concluded that Bernays' team is engaged in two types of work: the production of so-called "media-cases", which are classic information manipulation operations, and hybrid interference operations, where foreign nationals infiltrate target countries to cause some sort of social disruption. Some of these operations came to fruition and have been extensively covered by local and international media outlets.[692]

Below is a table listing all known influence campaigns and interference operations that were planned and/or implemented by Bernays' team, by date. Naturally, this is not an exhaustive list of all operations, only the ones that were mentioned in the documented written exchange between Sofia Zakharova and Edward Bernays.

The operations that were implemented are marked with **blue**. Ones that were not implemented or did not cause any media attention (and hence the operation cannot be determined) are marked in **sand**.

690 Gnida Project, 2026.

691 Laine et al., 2026.

692 Le Monde, 31 May 2025.

"Media cases" aka Information Influence Ops STORM 1516	Date	Sabotage operations foreign interference GRU
	September 16, 2024	Sabotage operation in Paris, targeting migrants. Inflatable sex dolls would be thrown in Seine River with balloons tied to them that read: "Fuck migrants!" – not implemented.
	September 27, 2024	Vandalizing a monument to General Charles de Gaulle in Paris in the name of "Ukrainian nationalists". – not implemented
	February 2025	Germany. Sabotage operation against Federal Minister of Economics and Green Chancellor candidate Robert Habeck. More than 270 cars in Germany were the target of attacks: exhaust pipes were deliberately clogged. Stickers with the slogan "Be greener!" and a photo of Habeck were left.
	February 12–22, 2025	Paris. High-end automobiles, such as Ferrari and Rolls-Royce would carry a message and Ukrainian plate numbers. The details of the operation are unclear. Unclear if implemented.
	April 2025	Disseminating hundreds of pro-Armenian stickers in Paris on Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in 2025. The stickers were printed in Serbia. – unclear if implemented.
	April 2025	Working with Sebastian Ghitse, who lives in Serbia under Russia's protection. He is a businessman and supports "Romania TV" which is banned in Moldova. This TV channel influences the older category of people and spreads radical Russian narratives. [693]
Fake story about Pashinyan purchasing a luxury villa in Marseille.[694]	May 2025	Paris Holocaust museum was covered in green paint, to incite antisemitic tensions.[695]
Storm-1516 conducted a disinformation campaign targeting IGF 2025 in Lillestrøm, Norway, claiming an "environmental disaster" in a river near the forum site (Dossier, 2026).	June 2025	Norway. Offer for the operation was sent on March 31, 2025, about sabotaging IGF 2025 in Lillestrøm, Norway – on June 23-27, 2025. Idea: incite conflict over the absence of representatives from the developing countries – was not implemented.
Fake story about Zelenskyy purchasing a luxury apartment for his mother in Dubai's Burj Khalifa.[696]	June 2025	
	September 2025	Paris. Nine mosques and cultural centres were targeted: bloody severed pig heads, marked with the writing "Macron" in blue ink, were left outside their doors.

693 Solovian, 2023.

694 Laine et al., 2026.

695 Le Monde, 2025a

696 Laine et al., 2026.

Police investigations in Germany and France uncovered traces of Russian interference prior to the release of the leaked documents.[697] Furthermore, press releases followed from Zelenskyy and Pashinyan debunking the spurious claims.[698] Following the 2026 release of leaked documents, further investigations have been published by Check First, [699] Gnida Project,[700] Support for Partnership,[701] OCCPR, Delfi Estonia,[702] and others.

Gnida Project concluded that the documents reporting on the performance of "media cases" involving Zelenskyy and Pashinyan can be attributed to Storm-1516.[703] This strongly implies that **Storm 1516 is a product of the team which coordinates its activities with Centre S through the persona Edward Bernays**.

Furthermore, in May 2025, Viginum published a comprehensive report on Storm-1516 that provided detailed insights into the operation's influence capabilities and its connections to other influence actors.[704] According to the report, Storm-1516 maintains an extensive network of domains that are used to disseminate content and manipulate search engine algorithms through the deployment of automated artificial intelligence tools. The group is capable of producing a wide range of original content, including fabricated evidence, video and audio deepfakes, and, on occasion, content featuring hired actors.[705]

A notable characteristic of Storm-1516 is its emphasis on content laundering – the strategic dissemination of its narratives through third parties perceived as credible by target audiences. Media outlets involved in this process are predominantly based in Africa and the Middle East. The amplification of Storm-1516 content is facilitated by a range of third-party actors including the John Mark Dougan-linked CopyCop network, the Prigozhin-associated Project Lakhta, ANO Dialog-affiliated Reliable Recent News (RRN), and Team I-related Operation Doppelgänger, as well as the operations Portal Kombat, and Mriya.[706]

Viginum further suggests that Storm-1516 is likely financed by the Russian military intelligence service (GRU). It identifies Yury Khoroshenky (sometimes Khoroshyovsky), a suspected officer of GRU Unit 29155, who is accused of financing and coordinating Storm-1516 activities. Unit 29155, often described as a "direct action" unit, has previously been linked to a range of covert operations, including sabotage activities, assassination attempts, espionage campaigns, cyber activities, alleged bounty programmes targeting NATO soldiers in Afghanistan, attempted coups in Europe, and investigations related to the so-called Havana Syndrome.[707]

A report published by Dossier in July 2024 describes significant changes within GRU Unit 29155. According to the report, a series of failed operations and the subsequent exposure of numerous agents following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine forced the GRU to adapt its interference strategies.[708] The expulsion of Russian diplomats from multiple countries further weakened the agency's ability

697 Schofield, 2025.
698 JAMnews, 2025a; Dyachenko, 2025.
699 Check First, 2026.
700 Gnida Project, 2026.
701 Support 4 Partnership, 2026.
702 Laine et al., 2026.
703 Gnida Project, 2026.
704 Viginum, 2025.
705 Viginum, 2025.
706 Viginum, 2025.
707 Viginum, 2025.
708 Dossier, 2024.

to operate abroad, as many intelligence officers lost their diplomatic cover.[709] In response, the GRU has increasingly shifted the management of its operations to Russia, relying on so-called "agent-managers" – recruited intermediaries who coordinate and oversee activities on the ground. Dossier claimed that this new structure has effectively absorbed Unit 29155 and is headed by Denis Smolyaninov.[710]

The report further alleges that an interference operation "Stars of David in Muslim quarters" which was originally conceived by Team I was implemented by GRU affiliates through the recruitment of Moldovan nationals, who were reportedly paid €250 each.[711] According to Dossier, the GRU identifies potential agent-managers through online communities frequented by radical activists, pro-Russian groups, and criminal networks. Ideological preference appears to be of secondary importance; individuals from both the far left and the far right may be recruited if they are willing to participate. To facilitate such operations, the GRU is said to establish front organisations that mimic genuine activist groups, concealing its objectives behind fabricated political causes and radical ideological narratives.[712] This evidence strongly suggests that while Team I, may be tasked with creative ideas and amplification of content, the organisation and implementation of the sabotage operations fall under the purview of a different team with better foreign interference capabilities. Note that similar recruitment methods are used by the ANO CISM-linked Youth of the Saboteur channels (see chapter 6.6).

Taken together, the evidence strongly suggests a connection between Centre S, team represented by Bernays, the GRU's Special Activities Service (formerly Unit 29155), and Storm 1516. It is likely that Bernays' team consists at least in part of GRU affiliates, who on one hand coordinate information manipulation operations through Storm 1516 resources, and on the other plan and implement sabotage operations abroad. The organogram presented below demonstrates this structure.

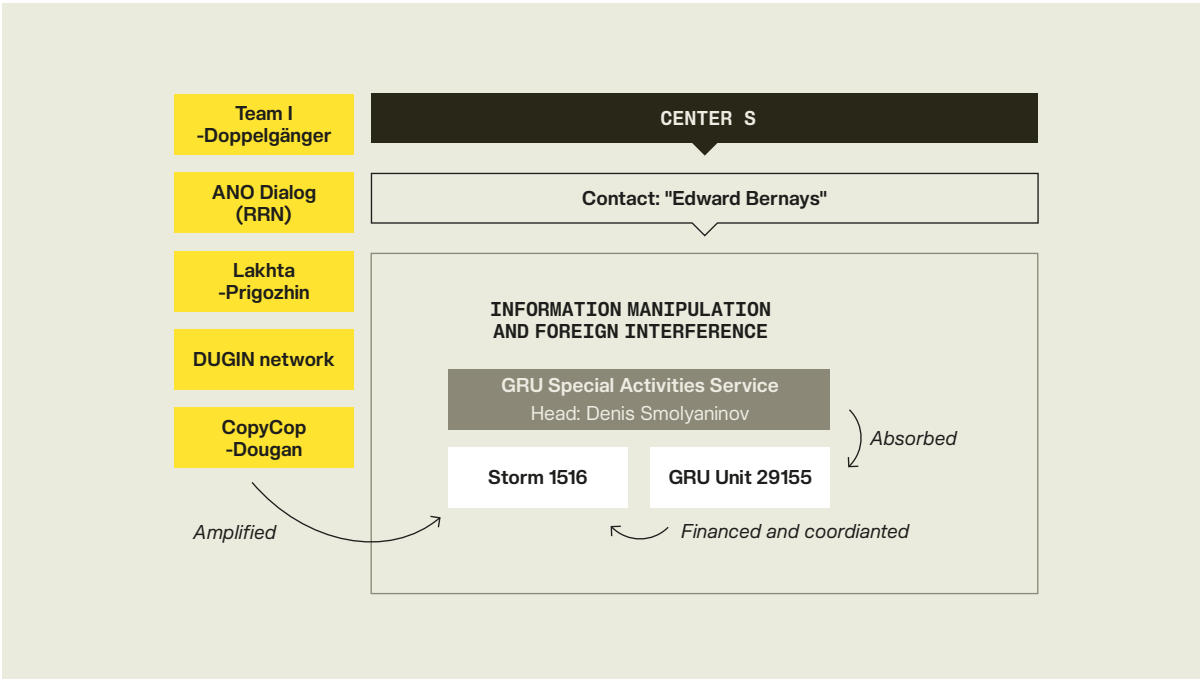


Figure: Bernays' information and hybrid influence team.

709 Dossier, 2024.
710 Dossier, 2025.
711 Dossier, 2024.
712 Dossier, 2024.

The leaked materials also contain an unusual, unmarked document titled simply **Information (Справка)**. Dated 25 May 2023, the document appears to present a proposal, likely addressed to the Presidential Administration or Centre S, from a team claiming to possess cyber-influence and foreign interference capabilities. The proposal outlines a strategic framework for hybrid influence operations. The document is written in deliberately vague and bureaucratic language. It contains no names, organisational identifiers, visual markers, or revealing metadata. As a result, it is impossible to determine with certainty who authored the text or on whose behalf it was produced. Nevertheless, it can be assessed with a high degree of confidence that the authors are individuals experienced in information influence and foreign interference operations. The document suggests access to tools and resources for conducting information manipulation campaigns within the digital spaces of perceived adversaries, as well as for carrying out foreign interference activities on the territory of NATO member states.

The proposed strategy consists of two stages. The first involves targeting Western audiences with covert Russian narratives designed to exacerbate divisions among political elites, deepen polarization between competing political camps, and radicalize moderate segments of the population. The second stage consists of physical interference operations intended to support and reinforce these influence efforts. At its core, the strategy follows a familiar objective: exploiting and amplifying existing political tensions and social grievances, while obscuring sources.

At the same time, the document provides few details regarding the specific "cyber capabilities" available to the team, making it difficult to assess the practical scope of the proposed activities. It is implied that the team possesses the capability to compromise user devices (or a specific digital platform) on a mass scale, and that this ability will revolutionise influence work. For this reason, the full text has been translated and included for further interpretation by readers. The translation was completed manually. To improve readability, some of the original rhetorical flourish, bureaucratic language, and formal tone have been reduced. Section headings and emphasis have also been added for clarity and ease of reference.

The aim:

To improve the effectiveness of Russia's foreign security policy, we believe it is appropriate to implement work on the crossroads of **operational responsibility of the ministries with the capabilities of the controlled non-governmental organization.** *We plan to reach this goal by deepening inner contradictions between the ruling elites, by stimulating protests of the oppositional forces, escalation of anti-governmental narratives, and agitating the undecided electorate in NATO countries and its satellites.*

Methods:

Non-standard methods of information influence will be applied. These tools are missing from the arsenal of federal governments. **The shift from rational to cognitive paradigm, denouncing the openly pro-Russian transmission, application of all available cyber-instruments** *in order to game the contradictions of conflicting forces, has a far bigger potential than the tried methods of Russian propaganda.*

We are ready to counteract the collective West, on their own turf, using effective methods, on their own internet-domains. Striking the target audience with consecutive cognitive attacks, tied around one goal, will form and strengthen disapproval of the political course of the governments and international institutions, and will lead to the escalation of protest activities and other negative consequences.

The most effective method of influencing is **targeting work and personal communication platforms of the target audiences**. *Methods are developed in such a technical-operational way that allows* **for access to personal devices of the recipient and their closest circle despite their will or engaging in any paid subscriptions. Cyber-tools allow to fully track the reaction of the subjects on the content that they are offered, which allows to correct the campaigns in the process of its realization**.

Promise:

This method guarantees the complete anonymity of our actions, the channel of communication and the attention from the foreign intelligence forces. Tools consider the multi-sided counteraction from the adversary, the measures that they have taken before, preventive and counter measures, at the same time **we are employing a completely different scheme of transmission, that does not depend on the politics of the media source and even on the will of the users. We do not rely on enhancing accounts and growing audiences** *(this low-effective and expensive scheme is still used by the 99% of governmental and private propaganda actors). The aims are reached by using unique methods and special programmatic support, that implement conspiratorial and safe inception of content in electronic devices/means of communication of the target audiences.*

The influence mechanism is tried and true and can be used on all main global cyber-fields, universal and scalable, applicable to different countries and thematics. With a high level of confidence, we can target mass audiences or more targeted formats. In other words, despite the will of the user we can give them the right content in the stream of the pages they are viewing. **With the help of special tools of social engineering**, *we will make the majority of the target audience switch to our main resources, learn additional materials, evoke their interest, and make them spread them in their closest surroundings, nudging them towards quantitative and qualitative enhancement of their, or our audience.*

An important assisting direction on the way to solving this main task is the organization of mass protests in NATO countries with the subsequent transmission of content in media domain of the adversary. We have the required resources to attract needed people to these kinds of events, who are permanently living abroad.

The security issues of offered events are worked out in detail, which practically fully guarantees their non-exposure, and excludes the possibility of attributing Russia. We also work on the financing issue of these events abroad. We have a new generation of tools that allow us to make international clandestine transactions under the radar of foreign intelligence services.

Budget:

The expenses are a little more that 1% of the budget resources that are for the annual support of the mass media. *Now we have a minimally enough technical resources and human resources to start the work with short deadlines.*

The confident tone of the proposal suggests an actor who is well-versed in Russian propaganda methods and knows the system from the inside. This is also evidenced by their knowledge of the budget of mass media channels,[713] implying that traditional propaganda methods are expensive and inefficient. Notably, the actor seems to exercise a powerful or influential position, which lets them be openly critical of the methods currently exercised by government entities and even the Presidential Administration itself. The actor claims that the method of creating accounts and gradually building up their audiences, which is exercised by most government entities, is not efficient. Notably, SDA/Structura and Dialog often describe employing this method. It may therefore be interpreted as a criticism of Team I and other aspects of Centre S' work.

Instead, the actor proposes their own cyber-empowered information influence method that allows them to deliver content to target audiences regardless their political preferences and dispositions of their social media algorithms. It suggests compromising millions of devices. Additionally, the actor claims to be able to obscure the source and adapt the content in real time, by observing the behaviour of the target audience. It is unclear how exactly the actor is planning to achieve this goal, or what they mean by "access to personal devices". It suggests advanced cyber capabilities and resources, as well as advanced infiltration of digital platforms.

The actor refers to themselves as possessing "operational responsibility" for a government entity and the capabilities of an outsourced contractor under their direct control – a "controlled non-governmental organization," which could be a company or ANO. This sentence strongly suggests that the actor is formally within government but controls the resources of hired contractors.

The actor delivers a familiar strategy of incepting false stories with obscure sources, amplifying them, attracting audiences, and supporting the campaigns with interference operations, thus radicalizing the population and enhancing existing conflicts. They refer to this package as a **cognitive strike**, presumably meaning that the obscurity of the campaign will mess with the minds of the recipients.

The actor overpromises. While placing so much emphasis on the secrecy of the campaigns, they do not provide any tangible guarantees of how these sources will stay obscured. Instead of providing knowledge about the work of the Western intelligence operators and ways to counteract it, they simply promise, albeit in a very serious tone, that Russia's trace will not be exposed under any circumstances. The actor overpromises on audience engagement as well. They mention mystical "tools of social engineering" which would allegedly allow them to funnel mass audiences into radicalization pipelines and turn them into Kremlin influencers. Similar leaps of logic are made on several other occasions.

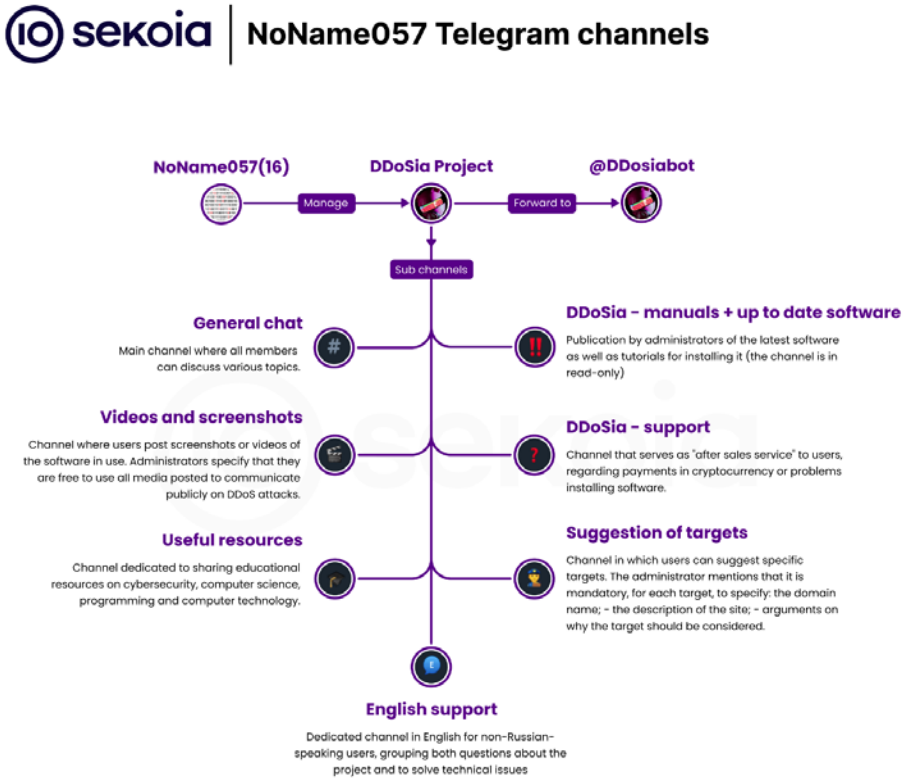
It is unlikely that this actor represents ANO Dialog, ANO IRI, SDA, or Structura. The actor is likely an intelligence-affiliated source with information, cyber, and hybrid capabilities. This suggests the FSB, SVR, GRU, and/or former Prigozhin assets.

[713] The total budget for traditional state media and propaganda channels is around ₽140 billion (€1.4 billion). 1 percent of this budget is €14m.

6.5 NONAME057(16)

CISM's general director, Maxim Lupin, under the pseudonym "s3rmax", is suspected of leading the hacker group NoName057(16) and of having a key role in development of the tools and identification of targets.[714] Europol suspects Lupin of "having operated a criminal online trading platform".[715] Lupin's deputy, Mikhail Burlakov, was suspected of being part of the leadership team of the hacker group under the pseudonym "darkklogo", with responsibility for payments and software development. In other words, within a fortnight of taking the helm at CISM, the new leadership team had created a hacker recruitment system designed to support the objectives of the "Special Military Operation". Another of the hacker leadership team was a MIREA graduate. Previous to this enforcement action, the only thing to suggest a connection between CISM and hackers was a 2021 hackathon in the form of a youth competition.[716]

NoName057(16) is volunteer based, driven by a combination of nationalistic motivations and gamified awards. Top contributors could earn up to ₽80,000, with prizes going to the top 10 performers.[717] Members are recruited on Telegram and given a zip file of tools called DDoSia, which are designed to be easy to use without technical knowledge. The combination of a non-profit specialising in analysing youth behavioural science, with a specialised patriotic hacker wing, suggests that it is well-placed for recruitment of disaffected, technically proficient, and/or highly patriotic teenagers. The NoName057(16) main group main Telegram channel reached more than 45,000 subscribers as of June 2023, while the DDoSia project channels reached over 13,000 users.[718]



NoName Telegram infrastructure.[719]

714 Privin, 2026; Møller, 2025; Bundeskriminalamt, 2025

715 The New Voice of Ukraine, 2025

716 CISM, 2021

717 Toulas, 2022

718 Toulas, 2023; Amaury et al., 2023

719 Photo accessed from: Amaury, 2023 (Figure 3.)

Modus fits within a model that can be associated with Kiriyenko's other interference campaigns, such as those conducted by Centre S. However, it is unclear if Kiriyenko placed a political technologist within the team to direct actions, or whether Zavarzin assumed that position from his oversight role. One analysis describes their approach as a "retaliatory model" that regularly escalates against EU and NATO countries supporting Ukraine in conjunction with geopolitical events.[720] Targets included the 2024 European Parliamentary Elections, NATO summits, national elections, and several international events related to Ukraine.[721] On 24 June 2023, during the Prigozhin rebellion, targets included Wagner-related assets. Although full metrics are patchy, NoName057(16) seems to have targeted over 3,700 Ukrainian and European web hosts between July 2024 and 2025, primarily in the government and public sector.[722] An alternative source credited 74,000 attacks against 4,900 victims between 2023 and July 2025.[723] In combination with possible blackmail efforts, this could indicate an alternative source of funding for CISM's activities.

In May 2025, UK Prime Minister Kier Starmer was the target of two arson attempts, the first targeting a vehicle formerly owned by Starmer, and the second targeting his residence. According to details revealed during the trial, and in subsequent media investigations, the arsonist was recruited by a Russian handler who recruited and directed the actions. Trial details reveal a seven-month long recruitment process centred on a series of social media and Telegram groups that were used to organise acts of vandalism.[724] Payments through cryptocurrency were offered for small acts of sabotage, building loyalty and leading toward more advanced attacks. According to the FT, the handler was based in Russia and "was closely aligned with NoName057(16)".[725] This positions an ecosystem of Telegram channels centred on the Russian-language **Youth of the Saboteur** channel, which provided "detailed operational guides for its Russian followers to recruit Ukrainians living in western Europe to unwittingly carry out acts of sabotage." FT further alleges that Youth of the Saboteur collaborated directly with the administrators of the NoName Telegram channel.[726]

While the extent of Russian recruitment of youth for hybrid and sabotage attacks in the West was already well-known, the ties to NoName are suggestive of a broader ecosystem of governmental and nongovernmental patriotic entities collaborating to crowd-source both operators in Russia and saboteurs in Europe. Given ANO CISM's (and ANO CSSN for the occupied territories) central role in monitoring youth behaviour, it can be argued that it is well-positioned to identify, track, recruit, train, and activate candidates to act as handlers and operatives. Rather than simply providing hacker tools for patriots and gamifying their activities, the evidence points to influence efforts centred on recruitment and management of both cyber and hybrid actions through a loose web of entities connected to Kiriyenko's stovepipe within the Presidential Administration.

720 Insikt Group, 2025

721 The New Voice of Ukraine, 2025

722 nsikt Group, 2025

723 Le Monde, 2025b.

724 De Simone, Bealand and Malchevska, 2026.

725 Johnson, Warrell and Bratton, 2026.

726 Johnson, Warrell and Bratton, 2026.

6.6 RUSSIAN RED CROSS

The Russian Red Cross (RRC) (Российский Красный Крест) is deeply integrated into the Kremlin's military and propaganda machine, and functions under Kiriyenko's strategic oversight.[727] It was founded in 1867 with an original mission of providing emergency assistance, disaster relief, and health services in Russia, including HIV/tuberculosis response, first aid training, and support for vulnerable groups.[728] However, RRC has moved far beyond traditional humanitarian work and violates the core principle of neutrality, according to investigations by several European media outlets. Those **investigations have revealed that the RRC is closely tied to the Kremlin**, with key leadership connections to Kiriyenko. These investigations demonstrate how the RRC acts as a tool for the Russian war machine rather than a neutral humanitarian organization, which eventually led to international sanctions against RRC.[729]

RRC actively helps organize "**Zarnitsa 2.0**," which is a nationwide military competition where children starting from the age of 8 are taught to assemble firearms, operate combat drones and crawl through trenches. RRC employees also work alongside armed special units, provide first aid training that includes military veteran instructors and Kalashnikov rifles.[730] RRC staff are documented to have mocked and humiliated Ukrainian prisoners of war in occupied Donetsk.[731]



Zarnitsa 2.0 publicity image.[732]

727 Meduza, 2025b

728 The Russian Red Cross, n.d.

729 Roonemaa, Morozova, Antonova et al., 2024; Kaleta, 2025

730 Barabaltchouk, 2025

731 Ukrainian World Congress, 2025

732 Photo: Gettyimages/Contributor, accessed from: Kaleta, 2025

Despite international rules stating that only the Ukrainian Red Cross and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) may operate in Ukraine, **RRC has aggressively expanded its range of operations in occupied regions.** According to media reports, RBC branches in the occupied territories received funding to replace the humanitarian activities of the ICRC, under Kiriyenko's directive; billions of rubles have been allocated to expand Russia's influence through the organization.[733] New entities such as **"Donetsk Red Cross"** and **"Luhansk Red Cross"** have appeared, which claim to be independent but use RRC insignia and openly admit to receiving full support from the Moscow headquarters.734 Investigations continue to report on RRC and its collaboration with individuals and organizations sanctioned for their roles in the alleged kidnapping and Russification of Ukrainian children.

RRC's president, **Pavel Savchuk**, is well embedded in Kiriyenko's circles. He is a member of the central staff of the sanctioned "All-Russia People's Front" which holds the trademark of the "Z" war symbol, and he is also a lecturer for "Znanie."[735] Under Savchuk, RRC signed a cooperation with the Artek camp in Crimea, whose head is also under Western sanctions for the alleged deportation of Ukrainian children.[736] RRC in 2024 received nearly double amount of funding compared to 2022 from the ICRC and IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescence) despite the mentioned violations.[737]

6.7 RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Russian Orthodox Church's (ROC) spiritual-political influence is sustained by an interconnected ecosystem of state, church, and media, supported by Kremlin-aligned oligarchs and state enterprises. This coordination allows Moscow to adapt its messaging to local contexts.[738] The ROC operates in tandem with diplomatic missions, NGOs, state-controlled broadcasters, and digital platforms such as VKontakte, Telegram, and YouTube channels linked to the Moscow Patriarchate, under the Kremlin's influence.[739]

In terms of foreign interference, the ROC **establishes outposts and parishes near strategic infrastructure abroad**, which some international observers view as platforms for pro-Kremlin messaging and potential intelligence gathering in countries including Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. One such instance was the Russian Orthodox church built in 2023 in Västerås, Sweden; it is located near Stockholm-Västerås Airport, a former Swedish Air Force base which became a strategic military hub after Sweden joined NATO in 2024, as well as close to the Westinghouse electric factory, which produces nuclear fuel assemblies. Västerås is also located on Lake Mälaren, is strategically important due to its bridges connecting the Swedish heartland to the Baltic Sea. OSINT reports claim the church's construction was financed by Rosatom, and there is no indication of a significantly sized demographic of Russian Orthodox parishioners in the area.[740]

733 Kerpan, 2024a

734 Meduza, 2025b

735 Open Sanctions, n.d.-b; Barabaltchouk, 2025; Roonemaa, Morozova, Antonova et al., 2024

736 Kerpan, 2024b; Walker, 2024

737 Meduza, 2025b

738 Odarchenko, 2025

739 Odarchenko, 2025; Robert Lansing Institute, 2025a

740 Pkhaladze, 2026; Schultz, 2025; Vakulina, 2025.

Kiriyenko has cultivated a close partnership with the ROC to advance Kremlin interests, both in domestic politics and in the occupied regions of Ukraine. Kiriyenko's domestic policy team utilizes the ROC as a key partner in promoting the "Russian world" ideology, blending spiritual legitimacy, nationalism, patriotism, and traditional values to strengthen the state's legitimacy and justify imperial ambitions.

Kiriyenko frequently participates in high-profile religious events alongside Church leaders, such as attending Easter services in South Ossetia to signal strategic unity. Kiriyenko has supported Diveevo Monastery for years, a place associated with the name of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, a particularly popular saint in Russia. Its proximity to Sarov, a former Soviet nuclear weapons development site, adds to its significance.[741] Kiriyenko formed a religious club around Diveevo Monastery, attracting prominent Russian officials (including Putin) and cultural figures, known as the "Diveevo Brotherhood."



Kiriyenko at the Diveevo Monastery.[742]

The ROC became a key partner in the Kremlin's soft-power strategy after the Soviet Union's collapse, aligning with its narratives and legitimizing state power. Patriarch Kirill's sermons and symbolic acts, such as blessing crosses with Putin's initials for distribution to veterans, illustrate this continuity.[743]

Kiriyenko's new Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation (see above) handles international "soft power" project development. Within the same executive office, the **Department for Interaction with Religious Organizations** manages relations with the ROC directly. **The ROC's Department for External Church Relations (DECR),** often acting in conjunction with state entities, works abroad to support Russian compatriots, promote Russian narratives, and build influence, notably in Georgia, Moldova, and in Western Europe. For example, ROC-linked clergy in Georgia and Moldova spread anti-Western messages, portraying NATO and the EU as threats to Christian values. In the US and Western Europe, ROC parishes within the Moscow Patriarchate promote pro-Kremlin messaging, often disguised as religious conservatism.[744] DECR establishes new parishes, offers

741 Zygar, 2024b

742 Photo accessed from: Zygar, 2024b

743 Odarchenko, 2025

744 Odarchenko, 2025; Robert Lansing Institute, 2025b

humanitarian aid, and engages in theological diplomacy to cultivate political contacts in foreign nations, such as the aggressive expansion of the ROC in Africa.[745]

Patriarch Kirill has reframed the war in Ukraine as a sacred mission, portraying Russian aggression as a spiritual crusade against Western decadence and moral relativism.[746] The Patriarch has also likened Russia's invasion of Ukraine to the reunification of the Holy Rus.[747]

Another key church figure involved in promoting Kremlin narratives is **Tikhon Shevkunov** ("Father Tikhon"). He is a regime ideologist, writer, and filmmaker. His 2008 film, "The Fall of an Empire: the Byzantine Lesson," aired on state television and portrayed the West as historically hostile to Orthodox civilization.[748] Tikhon and Kiriyenko's most visible joint project involved creating interactive museum exhibitions called "Russia. My History," portraying Putin as a historical figure akin to Russian tsars and a leader of Orthodox civilization. The multimedia expositions use advanced technology like projection installations, hundreds of projectors, dome spheres, panoramas, touch kiosks with touchscreens. [749]

According to numerous sources, Tikhon Shevkunov was Putin's personal confessor for several years. Now, however, he has been promoted to the Metropolitan of Crimea and is considered the main contender for the position of Patriarch if anything happens to Patriarch Kirill.[750]



Father Tikhon Shevkunov and Putin (Sign above: "Entrance to the church by invitation only").[751]

745 Zhdanova, 2026; Sguazzin, 2026; Schwikowski, 2026
746 Odarchenko, 2025
747 Prevail, 2024
748 Zygar, 2024b
749 Realnoe Vremya, 2017
750 Mironenko, 2023b; Zygar, 2024b
751 Photo accessed from: Zygar, 2024b



Photo:iStock

7 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has detailed Sergey Kiriyenko's rise to power and his crucial role in Russia's repressive political system. Under Putin's supervision, sometimes in cooperation with other power centres and sometimes in competition with them, Kiriyenko has crafted many policies, legal mechanisms, financial flows, organisations, and other structures that form an intricate and extensive ecosystem. We detail 50+ entities and 20+ long term programmes that comprise Kiriyenko's system. While working to bolster and perpetuate Putin's increasingly totalitarian kleptocracy, Kiriyenko has simultaneously amassed considerable personal power. This report contributes to the literature by providing an open-source, comprehensive resource for anybody seeking to understand more about the entities and capabilities used to implement Kiriyenko's repressive architecture.

Kiriyenko operates at the intersection of Russia's apparatus for domestic control and repression and its machinery for securing and expanding Russian influence abroad. The two subsystems are closely interconnected, and they mirror each other with respect to methods and techniques. At the same time, Kiriyenko has earned enemies within the security and intelligence communities of Russia. Shutdowns of the Runet together with the failures of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine are contributing to a more contested domestic political environment. He has experienced failures abroad, including in efforts to manipulate voting in the occupied territories of Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Armenia.

The vast machinery that Kiriyenko directs may appear omnipotent, and Russia undoubtedly wants it to be perceived that way. "Cradle to grave" is a powerful signifier of intent. But while the challenge to European interests and values is very real, EU and member state policy should be informed by a nuanced understanding not only of the architecture's strengths, but also of its limitations and weaknesses. This is why we think it is valuable to show the whole system and break it down into constituent parts in one long report.

In terms of strengths, we conclude that Kiriyenko's managerialist style is his unique selling point to Putin. Through the example of Sofia Zakharova as coordinator of foreign interference operations at Centre S and handler of entities such as the Social Design Agency/Structura National Technologies, we have a good sense of how directorates within the Presidential Administration manage ANOs and commercial entities under their control. Kiriyenko appears to have oversight of his empire to a large degree thanks to these loyal, trusted managers who facilitate information to relevant parts of the network. Data analytics help to fill out gaps in knowledge and add an essential set of tools for data-led governance. Simultaneously, Kiriyenko's system produces and reproduces managers, civil servants, and politicians according to a mould, suggesting longevity and continuity. In sum, the system is agile, holistic, loyal, and self-perpetuating.

The weaknesses are many. Imperial overstretch is perhaps the most important, largely since Kiriyenko increasingly encroaches upon the domain of the siloviki. Compounded by failures in elections in the former Soviet region, it appears that entrusting resources to Kiriyenko has not resulted in a shortcut to success. A managerialist system is heavily dependent on data, but we are far from impressed by the ways in which KPIs and metrics are used to justify resource allocations. At the same time, external pressures such as the declining economy, poor performance in Ukraine, and mounting social tensions provide a challenging context that cannot be fully contained by a repressive system, no matter how efficient it might be. It is clear from internal meeting notes from Centre S that foreign interference is something of a "fair weather" activity: when things are going well for Russia more generally, it is much easier for their operators to produce effective influence operations.

We have presented considerable evidence about this system. In the end, we are left with several difficult questions that readers will have to make up their own minds about. These questions can also offer direction to future studies and analyses:

- Is the ecosystem wholly dependent on Kiriyenko's leadership? Does his loyalty-based approach to management make him indispensable?
- How damaging have the Internet shutdowns and the failures in recent foreign elections been for Kiriyenko? Is he vulnerable? Is his expansive system at risk of a period of intensified competition or contraction?
- What happens to his ecosystem when parts of it are starved of funds? Is there sufficient redundancy and flexibility to avoid system collapse, or do the complex interdependencies imply that failure in one area leads to failure in all?
- Has Kiriyenko become the de facto point of coordination for foreign interference operations? If so, how much do the security and intelligence services actually share with Kiriyenko's technocrats?
- How serious is the conflict between Kiriyenko and the siloviki? Does it affect their ability to collaborate on foreign interference operations? Are security and intelligence agencies actively resisting or sabotaging Kiriyenko's personal ambitions?
- Does Putin genuinely view Kiriyenko – the man of "surprises" – as a possible successor, and is this ecosystem part of Kiriyenko's pitch for the presidency? What might the alternative candidates do with Kiriyenko and the substantial infrastructure he has built?

Even without having clear answers to the above questions, we must consider countermeasures. First, exposing Kiriyenko's ecosystem is an important step forward for developing countermeasures. These trends must be thoroughly understood if we are to understand Russian behaviour and capabilities, and most specifically the underlying causes and methods of their foreign interference operations. This understanding should be shared – admittedly in a more digestible format than this report – more widely across Europe, the Russian diaspora, and around the world in places where Russia intervenes. Most importantly, it should be communicated to the Russian population through any means possible, in attractive formats that help to explain what is happening in their own repressive system.

Second, Kiriyenko's entities are an ecosystem and hence should be treated with a holistic approach. The line between domestic repression of human rights and foreign interference is invisible. This means that all the main players who play a role in building this repressive infrastructure should be excluded from EU and Western privileges, whether it be the benefits of the banking system, maintaining assets or businesses, travel, or sending their children to European schools. We therefore recommend the extension of EU sanctions beyond Kiriyenko and his top henchman to the rest of the system to deter and punish those who are complicit.

Third, we view this mapping of Kiriyenko's ecosystem as a starting point for stronger identification and dismantling of foreign interference operations. Kiriyenko's modus is clear. His targets, methods, and resources are largely predictable. Integration into his ecosystem also exposes parts of the Russian intelligence community. In short, it may now be possible to build counter-FIMI and counter-hybrid systems more tailored to the strategic and operational realities of Kiriyenko's systems and the external entities that are forced to cooperate within the system. Such an approach can be of value to Ukraine, Europe, and international partners.

Kiriyenko plays a pivotal role in Russia's domestic and foreign policies. While often overlooked as scholars, analysts, and journalists focus on Putin or the political and administrative system as such, he is in many ways the architect of the contemporary repressive system. He wields unique power and shapes many of Russia's foreign and domestic policies, many of which are directly relevant to the EU, its security and its values. This report has identified Kiriyenko's position in the Russian system and mapped out the empire he has created. As the EU faces a tremendous challenge from Russia, knowledge and understanding of Kiriyenko and the system he has created are indispensable as a foundation for sound EU policies.

ANNEX A:LIST OF ENTITIES & INDIVIDUALS

This annex contains the following tables with long-name and short-name formats in English and Russian:

- State structures of Russian Federation, USSR, and Russian Empire mentioned in the report
- Organisations under Kiriyenko's direct or indirect control
- Other organisations mentioned in the report
- Individuals mentioned in the report

State structures of the Russian Federation mentioned in the report

Full name	Short name	Full name(Ru)	Short Name(Ru)
All-Russian Extraordinary Commission	Cheka	ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ЧРЕЗВЫЧАЙНАЯ КОМИССИЯ	ЧК
All-Union Leninist Young Communist League	Komsomol	ВСЕСОЮЗНЫЙ ЛЕНИНСКИЙ КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКИЙ СОЮЗ МОЛОДЁЖИ	КОМСОМОЛ
Committee for State Security	KGB	КОМИТЕТ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ	КГБ
Commonwealth of Independent States	CIS	СОДРУЖЕСТВО НЕЗАВИСИМЫХ ГОСУДАРСТВ	СНГ
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	CPRF	КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	КПРФ
Coordination Centre of the Government of the Russian Federation	CCG	КООРДИНАЦИОННЫЙ ЦЕНТР ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	КЦ
Donetsk People's Republic	DPR	ДОНЕЦКАЯ НАРОДНАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА	ДНР
Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs	FADN	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ АГЕНТСТВО ПО ДЕЛАМ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОСТЕЙ	ФАДН
Federal Agency for State Property Management	Rosimuschestvo	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ АГЕНТСТВО ПО УПРАВЛЕНИЮ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫМ ИМУЩЕСТВОМ	РОСИМУЩЕСТВО
Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation	Rossotrudnichestvo	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ АГЕНТСТВО ПО ДЕЛАМ СОДРУЖЕСТВА НЕЗАВИСИМЫХ ГОСУДАРСТВ, СООТЕЧЕСТВЕННИКОВ, ПРОЖИВАЮЩИХ ЗА РУБЕЖОМ, И ПО МЕЖДУНАРОДНОМУ ГУМАНИТАРНОМУ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ	РОССОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО
Federal Agency for Youth Affairs	Rosmolodezh	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ АГЕНТСТВО ПО ДЕЛАМ МОЛОДЁЖИ	РОСМОЛОДЁЖЬ

Full name	Short name	Full name(Ru)	Short Name(Ru)
Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation	FSB	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЛУЖБА БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	ФСБ
Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography	Rosreestr	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЛУЖБА ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ РЕГИСТРАЦИИ, КАДАСТРА И КАРТОГРАФИИ	РОСРЕЕСТР
Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science	Rosobrnadzor	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЛУЖБА ПО НАДЗОРУ В СФЕРЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ	РОСОБРНАДЗОР
Federal Service for Supervision of Communication, Information Technology and Mass Media	Roskomnadzor	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЛУЖБА ПО НАДЗОРУ В СФЕРЕ СВЯЗИ, ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ И МАССОВЫХ КОММУНИКАЦИЙ	РОСКОМНАДЗОР/РКН
Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare	Rospotrebnadzor	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЛУЖБА ПО НАДЗОРУ В СФЕРЕ ЗАЩИТЫ ПРАВ ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЕЙ И БЛАГОПОЛУЧИЯ ЧЕЛОВЕКА	РОСПОТРЕБНАДЗОР
Federal State Budgetary Educational Institutions “Artek International Children Centre”	Artek	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ БЮДЖЕТНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ «МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ДЕТСКИЙ ЦЕНТР «АРТЕК»	АРТЕК
Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation	SVR	СЛУЖБА ВНЕШНЕЙ РАЗВЕДКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	СВР
Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation	ICRF	СЛЕДСТВЕННЫЙ КОМИТЕТ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	СКР
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	LDPR	ЛИБЕРАЛЬНО-ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ РОССИИ	ЛДПР
Luhansk People’s Republic	LPR	ЛУГАНСКАЯ НАРОДНАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА	ЛНР
Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation	GRU (known by the abbreviation of its predecessor)	ГЛАВНОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ГЕНЕРАЛЬНОГО ШТАБА ВООРУЖЁННЫХ СИЛ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	ГРУ
Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Disaster Relief of the Russian Federation	EMERCOM	МИНИСТЕРСТВО РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО ДЕЛАМ ГРАЖДАНСКОЙ ОБОРОНЫ, ЧРЕЗВЫЧАЙНЫМ СИТУАЦИЯМ И ЛИКВИДАЦИИ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЙ СТИХИЙНЫХ БЕДСТВИЙ	МЧС
Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Culture	МИНИСТЕРСТВО КУЛЬТУРЫ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	МИНКУЛЬТУРЫ
Ministry of Digital Development, Communication and Mass Media of the Russian Federation	Digital Development Ministry	МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЦИФРОВОГО РАЗВИТИЯ, СВЯЗИ И МАССОВЫХ КОММУНИКАЦИЙ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	МИНЦИФРЫ

Full name	Short name	Full name(Ru)	Short Name(Ru)
Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Economic Development Ministry	МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО РАЗВИТИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	МИНЭКОНОМРАЗВИТИЯ
Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Education and Science	МНИСТЕРСТВО НАУКИ И ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	МИНОБРНАУКИ
Ministry of Energy	Energy Ministry	МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЭНЕРГЕТИКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	МИНЭНЕРГО
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation	MFA	МИНИСТЕРСТВО ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	МИД
Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation	AP	АДМИНИСТРАЦИЯ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	АП
Presidential Directorate for Border Cooperation		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО ПРИГРАНИЧНОМУ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ	
Presidential Directorate for Interregional and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО МЕЖРЕГИОНАЛЬНЫМ И КУЛЬТУРНЫМ СВЯЗЯМ С ЗАРУБЕЖНЫМИ СТРАНАМИ	
Rospatriotcentre		ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ БЮДЖЕТНОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ МОЛОДЕЖНОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ МОЛОДЕЖНЫЙ ЦЕНТР «РОССИЙСКИЙ ЦЕНТР ГРАЖДАНСКОГО И ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКОГО ВОСПИТАНИЯ ДЕТЕЙ И МОЛОДЕЖИ»	РОСПАТРИОТЦЕНТР
Russian Orthodox Church	ROC	РУССКАЯ ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ	РПЦ
State Bank of the USSR	Gosbank	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ БАНК СССР	ГОСБАНК СССР
State Commission on Chemical Disarmament of Russia		ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ КОМИССИЯ ПО ХИМИЧЕСКОМУ РАЗОРУЖЕНИЮ	
State Council of the Russian Federation	State Council	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ СОВЕТ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	ГОССОВЕТ
The All-Russian Political Party "United Russia"	United Russia	ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ «ЕДИНАЯ РОССИЯ»	ЕДИНАЯ РОССИЯ
The Presidential Fund for Cultural Initatives		ПРЕЗИДЕНТСКИЙ ФОНД КУЛЬТУРНЫХ ИНИЦИАТИВ	ПФКИ
The State Duma	Duma	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ ДУМА	ГОСДУМА

Entities under Kiriyenko's direct or indirect control

Full name	Short name	Full name (Ru)	Short name (Ru)	Role and relation to the censorship machine /relevant individuals
Presidential Directorate for Domestic Policy Affairs		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО ВНУТРЕННЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ	УВП	Directorate managing Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical
Presidential Directorate for Public Projects		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫМ ПРОЕКТАМ	УОП	Directorate managing Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical
Presidential Directorate for Social Processes and Monitoring Analysis		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО ВОПРОСАМ МОНИТОРИНГА И АНАЛИЗА СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ПРОЦЕССОВ		Directorate managing Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and digital governance power vertical
Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКОМУ ПАРТНЕРСТВУ И СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ	УСПС	Directorate managing Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical
Presidential Directorate for the Development of Information and Communication Technology and Communication Infrastructure		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ ИНФОРМАЦИОННО-КОММУНИКАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ И ИНФРАСТРУКТУРЫ СВЯЗИ		Directorate managing Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical and, to a lesser degree, foreign influence power vertical
Presidential Directorate for the Formation and Activities of the State Council of the Russian Federation		УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ И ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО СОВЕТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ		Directorate managing Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical
All-Russian Military Patriotic Social Movement "Young Army"	Yunarmiya	ВСЕРОССИЙСКОЕ ВОЕННО-ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКОЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ «ЮНАРМИЯ»	ЮНАРМИЯ	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Militarised group that trains future Russian soldiers, accused of forcibly deporting Ukrainian children.

Full name	Short name	Full name (Ru)	Short name (Ru)	Role and relation to the censorship machine /relevant individuals
All-Russian Public & State Educational Organisation 'Russian Society "Knowledge"'	RO Knowledge/ Znanie	ОБЩЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННО-ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ ПРОСВЕТИТЕЛЬСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «РОССИЙСКОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ЗНАНИЕ»	ЗНАНИЕ	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Educational organisation which promotes Kremlin ideology. It is best known for its federal educational marathons.
All-Russian Public Movement "Volunteers of Victory" ARPM	Volunteers of Victory	ВСЕРОССИЙСКОЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ «ВОЛОНТЕРЫ ПОБЕДЫ»	ВОЛОНТЕРЫ ПОБЕДЫ	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Youth movement which originally commemorated the 70t anniversary of Russia's victory in WWII. Since 2022, it organises activities to support veterans and is involved in re-education of children in occupied Ukraine.
All-Russian Public Organization "Russian Student Detachments"	RSD	МОЛОДЕЖНАЯ ОБЩЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «РОССИЙСКИЕ СТУДЕНЧЕСКИЕ ОТРЯДЫ»	РСО	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Organisation aiming to preserve historical memory and patriotic education of children and youth. It provides student with work experience across different sectors.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Centre for the Study and Network Monitoring of the Youth Environment"	ANO TsISM/CISM	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ЦЕНТР ИЗУЧЕНИЯ И СЕТЕВОГО МОНИТОРИНГА МОЛОДЕЖНОЙ СРЕДЫ»	АНО «ЦИСМ»	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Monitors online activity of youth environments to flag individuals and behaviours hostile to the state. Allegedly doubles up as a patriotic hacker group.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Directorate of the Exhibition of the Achievements of Russia"	ANO DVD Russia	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ДИРЕКЦИЯ ВЫСТАВКИ ДОСТИЖЕНИЙ «РОССИЯ»	АНО «ДВД «РОССИЯ»	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Administrative organ of the "Rossiya" exhibition, manages ideological exhibitions presenting Russia as a superpower. Committee overseeing the Exhibition is chaired by Kiriyenko.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Directorate of the World Youth Festival"	ANO DVFM	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ДИРЕКЦИЯ ВСЕМИРНОГО ФЕСТИВАЛЯ МОЛОДЕЖИ»	АНО «ДВФМ»	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Serves as a logistical hub for international youth engagement, trains foreign bloggers to promote positive content about Russia.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Internet Development Institute"	ANO IRI	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ИНСТИТУТ РАЗВИТИЯ ИНТЕРНЕТА»	АНО «ИРИ»	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. Funds the creation of TV shows, social media content, and video games in line with Kremlin propaganda. Kiriyenko is the Chairman of the Supervisory Board.

Full name	Short name	Full name (Ru)	Short name (Ru)	Role and relation to the censorship machine /relevant individuals
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation “More Than Travel”	ANO BChP	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «БОЛЬШЕ, ЧЕМ ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ»	АНО «БЧП»	Part of Kiriyenko’s patriotic-ideological power vertical. Provides subsidised trips with an ideological component for youth.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation “Russia - Land of Opportunities”	ANO RSV	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «РОССИЯ - СТРАНА ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ»	АНО «РСВ»	Part of Kiriyenko’s patriotic-ideological power vertical. Functions as a “presidential platform” for social mobility, offering opportunities for prospective leaders; organises the Senezh Management Workshop
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation Bolshaya Peremena (closed)	ANO Big Change/ Big Break	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «БОЛЬШАЯ ПЕРЕМЕНА»	АНО «БОЛЬШАЯ ПЕРЕМЕНА»	Part of Kiriyenko’s patriotic-ideological power vertical. Operates youth competitions in Russia. Supervisory Board is chaired by Kiriyenko.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation Centre for Economic Monitoring, Analysis & Consulting	ANO TsEMAK	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ЦЕНТР ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО МОНИТОРИНГА, АНАЛИЗА И КОНСАЛТИНГА»	АНО «ЦЭМАК»	Part of Kiriyenko’s patriotic-ideological power vertical. Procures services for youth organisations, notably other ANOs within the patriotic-ideological power vertical.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation Centre for the Development of Cultural Initiatives	ANO CRKI/ Tavrida	ЦЕНТР РАЗВИТИЯ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ ИНИЦИАТИВ	АНО «ЦРКИ» /«ТАВРИДА.АРТ»	Part of Kiriyenko’s patriotic-ideological power vertical. Focuses on developing talent in creative industries, organises art residencies in Russia and TOTs.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation Centre of Knowledge “Mashuk” (closed)	ANO TsZ Mashuk	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ЦЕНТР ЗНАНИЙ «МАШУК»	АНО «ЦЗ «МАШУК»	Part of Kiriyenko’s patriotic-ideological power vertical. Educational and training centre in Pyatigorsk in Stavropol Krai. Trains schoolteachers and university professors in state-aligned ideological frameworks.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation for the Development of Digital Projects in the Field of Public Relations & Communications “Dialog”	ANO Dialog	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ ЦИФРОВЫХ ПРОЕКТОВ В СФЕРЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ И КОММУНИКАЦИЙ «ДИАЛОГ»	АНО «ДИАЛОГ»	Part of Kiriyenko’s digital governance power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Manages the operational governance system which monitors social media activity and citizens’ complaints. Active in occupied Ukraine. Reports directly to Kiriyenko.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation for the Development of Digital Projects in the Field of Public Relations & Communications “Dialog Regions”	ANO Dialog Regions	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ ЦИФРОВЫХ ПРОЕКТОВ В СФЕРЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ И КОММУНИКАЦИЙ «ДИАЛОГ РЕГИОНЫ»	АНО «ДИАЛОГ-РЕГИОНЫ»	Part of Kiriyenko’s digital governance power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Branch of ANO Dialog focused on regions. Active in occupied Ukraine.

Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation for the Integrated Development of Urban & Rural Territories	ANO Integration	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО КОМПЛЕКСНОМУ РАЗВИТИЮ ГОРОДСКОЙ И СЕЛЬСКОЙ ТЕРРИТОРИИ «ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ»	АНО «ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ»	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Institutionalises and funds state-led patriotic education and domestic policy projects.
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation Revival of Cultural Heritage in Pskov Region	ANO Pskov Cultural Heritage Revival/ ANO Revival	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ В ГОРОДЕ ПСКОВЕ (ПСКОВСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ)»	АНО «ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ»	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Aims to restore Orthodox monuments in the Pskov region. Associated ANOs are active in occupied Ukraine. Chaired by Sergey Stepashin (Kiriyenko ally).
Centre S		Центр С		Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Command and control centre of all foreign influence operations under Kiriyenko. Led by Sofia Zakharova, includes several teams (Team I, E, 4 and HASKI-Team).
Centre For Special Training, Sports and Military-Patriotic Education "Voin"	VOIN	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ЦЕНТР СПЕЦИАЛЬНОЙ ПОДГОТОВКИ, СПОРТИВНОГО И ВОЕННО-ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКОГО ВОСПИТАНИЯ «ВОИН»	ВОИН	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Network of centres providing military-sports training and patriotic education to teenagers. Many of its instructors are combat veterans or athletes from RSBI.
DA TEAM Production Ltd	DA TEAM	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ДА-ТИМ ПРОДАКШН»	«ДА-ТИМ»	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. Reportedly controlled by Stepan Kovalchuk. Creates content favourable to the Kremlin and state-owned companies. Works with EISI.
Donetsk Red Cross	Donetsk Red Cross	РЕГИОНАЛЬНАЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ДОНЕЦКИЙ КРАСНЫЙ КРЕСТ»	ДОНЕЦКИЙ КРАСНЫЙ КРЕСТ	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Entity related to the Russian Red Cross in the occupied region of Luhansk.
Expert Institute of Social Research	EISI	ЭКСПЕРТНЫЙ ИНСТИТУТ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ	«ЭИСИ»	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. Think tank linked to the AP, producing political analyses and ideological justifications for state policy.
FESCO Transportation Group	FESCO	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «УПРАВЛЯЮЩАЯ КОМПАНИЯ «ТРАНСПОРТНАЯ ГРУППА ФЕСКО»	ФЕСКО	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Company owned by Rosatom. Allows Kiriyenko to control key infrastructure in the Northern Sea Route.
Historical-Cultural Centre "Istoki"	Istoki	ИСТОРИКО-КУЛЬТУРНЫЙ ЦЕНТР «ИСТОКИ»	Истоки	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Centre organising patriotic summer camps in Pskov and Crimea.

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Internet Agitation Agency (closed)	IAA	АГЕНТСТВО «ИНТЕРНЕТ-АГИТАЦИЯ»	«ИНТЕРНЕТ-АГИТАЦИЯ»	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. Political technology and online campaign consultancy, which has worked both domestically and abroad.
Management Workshop Senezh		МАСТЕРСКАЯ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ «СЕНЕЖ»		Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Managed by ANO RSV. It is an educational centre training winners of competitions for their professional career. It is also a tool to manage internal audience perceptions. Senezh co-organises the New Media Workshop with ANO Dialog.
Movement of the First		ОБЩЕРОССИЙСКОЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННО-ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ ДЕТЕЙ И МОЛОДЕЖИ «ДВИЖЕНИЕ ПЕРВЫХ»	ДВИЖЕНИЕ ПЕРВЫХ	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. Youth organisation which serves as a modern centralized framework to oversee the ideological upbringing, patriotism, and social development of children and teenagers.
Municipal Governance Centre	MGC/MTsU	МУНИЦИПАЛЬНЫЙ ЦЕНТР УПРАВЛЕНИЯ	МЦУ	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. Municipal body which collects citizens' complaints. Works with ANO Dialog's Regional Governance Centres.
Autonomous Non-Profit organisation for the Support & Development of Creative Industries	ANO Creative Economy	ПОДДЕРЖКИ И РАЗВИТИЯ КРЕАТИВНЫХ ИНДУСТРИЙ «КРЕАТИВНАЯ ЭКОНОМИКА»	«КРЕАТИВНАЯ ЭКОНОМИКА»	Organisation which supports the creative sector.
Red Cross Society of the Luhansk People's Republic	Luhansk Red Cross	РЕГИОНАЛЬНАЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ОБЩЕСТВО КРАСНОГО КРЕСТА В ЛУГАНСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ»	ЛУГАНСКИЙ КРАСНЫЙ КРЕСТ	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Entity related to the Russian Red Cross in the occupied region of Donetsk.
Regional Governance Centre	RGC/TsUR	ЦЕНТР УПРАВЛЕНИЯ РЕГИОНАМИ	ЦУР	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. A body of ANO Dialog, which monitors the information space and creates content in all Russian regions and the occupied territories of Ukraine.
Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation	Rosatom	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ КОРПОРАЦИЯ ПО АТОМНОЙ ЭНЕРГИИ «РОСАТОМ»	РОСАТОМ	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Sergey Kiriyenko formerly served as CEO of Rosatom (2005-2016). He is currently the Chairman of the Supervisory Board.
Russian Institute for Strategic Studies	RISI	ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ БЮДЖЕТНОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ «РОССИЙСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ»	РИСИ	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Think tank under the PA, which was previously a unit of the SVR. Develops strategic narratives and active measures to support Russian foreign influence activities.

Russian National Aikido Council		НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ СОВЕТ АЙКИДО РОССИИ	НСАР	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Kiriyenko is the Chairman of the Presidium.
Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration	RANEPA	РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАРОДНОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА И ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ СЛУЖБЫ ПРИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТЕ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ	РАНХиГС	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical. University specialising in social sciences, economy and humanities. Serves as a tool of creating a loyal elite notably through the "School of Governors" project. Its rector A. Komissarov is a close ally of Kiriyenko.
Russian Red Cross	RRC	РОССИЙСКИЙ КРАСНЫЙ КРЕСТ	РКК	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Organisation initially intended to deliver health services and emergency assistance. It is currently deeply integrated in the military and propaganda machine.
Russian Union of Martial Arts	RUMA/RSBI	РОССИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ БОЕВЫХ ИСКУССТВ	РСБИ	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Since 2005, Kiriyenko has been its co-chairman along with Y. Trutnev.
Social Design Agency	SDA	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «АГЕНТСТВО СОЦИАЛЬНОГО ПРОЕКТИРОВАНИЯ»	АСП	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Advertising agency founded by I. Gambashidze. Part of Centre S's Team I. Carried out Operation Doppelganger.
State Fund for the Supports of the Participants of the Special Military Operation "Defenders of the Fatherland"	Defenders of the Fatherland Fund	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ ФОНД ПОДДЕРЖКИ УЧАСТНИКОВ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОЙ ВОЕННОЙ ОПЕРАЦИИ «ЗАЩИТНИКИ ОТЕЧЕСТВА»	ЗАЩИТНИКИ ОТЕЧЕСТВА	Part of Kiriyenko's patriotic-ideological power vertical and foreign influence power vertical. Fund which provides assistance to veterans of the war in Ukraine and their families.
Structura National Technologies	Structura	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ГРУППА КОМПАНИЙ «СТРУКТУРА»	«СТРУКТУРА»	Part of Kiriyenko's foreign influence power vertical. Founded by I. Gambashidze and owned by N. Tupikin. Works with IT infrastructure and security. Parts of Centre S's Team I. Carried out Operation Doppelganger.
VKontakte Company Limited	VK	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «В КОНТАКТЕ»	ВК	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. Russian social media platform. Since 2021, the CEO is Vladimir Kiriyenko.
Weber Sociological Agency		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «АГЕНТСТВО СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО КОНСАЛТИНГА «ВЕБЕР»	АГЕНТСТВО «ВЕБЕР»	Part of Kiriyenko's digital governance power vertical. An online sociological agency of ANO Dialog which conducts surveys on the Russian population.

Other entities mentioned in the report

Full name	Short name	Full name (Ru)	Short name (Ru)	Role and relation to the censorship machine /relevant individuals
Agency for Strategic Initiatives	ASI	«АГЕНТСТВО СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИХ ИНИЦИАТИВ ПО ПРОДВИЖЕНИЮ НОВЫХ ПРОЕКТОВ»	АСИ	Organisation working in the economic and social sphere. It established the Internet Initiatives Development Fund; the latter is one of the founders of ANO IRI.
Alabuga Special Economic Zone Production and Industrial Type Joint Stock Company	Alabuga SEZ	АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ОСОБАЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ ЗОНА ПРОМЫШЛЕННО-ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННОГО ТИПА «АЛАБУГА»	ОЭЗ ППТ «АЛАБУГА»	Hosts manufacturing facilities which produce UAVs used in the war in Ukraine. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth.
All-Russia People's Front	ONF	ОБЩЕРОССИЙСКОЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ «НАРОДНЫЙ ФРОНТ «ЗА РОССИЮ»	НАРОДНЫЙ ФРОНТ (ОНФ)	Social movement led by V. Putin to create alliances between the United Russia party and NGOs. It is currently under international sanctions. Co-chaired by A. Komissarov. P. Savchuk is a member of its central staff.
AMK Concern		КОНЦЕРН АМК	АМК	Komsomol-run trading and services company. Sergey Kiriyenko was its General Director in the early 90s.
Anti-Corruption Foundation	FBK	ФОНД БОРЬБЫ С КОРРУПЦИЕЙ	ФБК	Organisation established by oppositionist A. Navalny, which publishes investigations into corruption of Kremlin officials. I. Remeslo spoke out against FBK over the years, before his change of stance.
Association of Internet Technologists	AIT	АССОЦИАЦИЯ ИНТЕРНЕТ-ТЕХНОЛОГОВ	АИТ	A. Tsepelev (Deputy Director of ANO Dialog) was formerly the president of AIT. Part of a Global Fact-Checking Network along with TASS and ANO Dialog.
Autonomous Non-Commercial Organisation "Revival of Cultural Heritage Sites of the Republic of Crimea "Scythian Neapolis"	ANO Scythian Neapolis	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ «ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КРЫМ «НЕАПОЛЬ СКИФСКИЙ»	АНО «НЕАПОЛЬ СКИФСКИЙ»	Organisation connected to D. Vasilenko (Director of ANO Revival).
Autonomous Non-Commercial Organisation for the Development of Social Infrastructure in Municipalities of the Pskov Region, Pechora District "Old Town"	ANO Old City	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ РАЗВИТИЯ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ИНФРАСТРУКТУРЫ МУНИЦИПАЛЬНЫХ ОБРАЗОВАНИЙ ПСКОВСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ, ПЕЧОРСКОГО РАЙОНА «СТАРЫЙ ГОРОД»	АНО «СТАРЫЙ ГОРОД»	Organisation connected to D. Vasilenko (Director of ANO Revival).

Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation for Strategic Communications "Caspian 2030"	ANO Caspian 2030	АНО СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИХ КОММУНИКАЦИЙ «КАСПИЙ 2030»	АНО «КАСПИЙ 2030»	Established by I. Gambashidze and N. Tupikin, organised "the first International Environmental Forum of the Caspian States".
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation For Supporting Civil Initiatives "Tambov Land"	ANO Tambov Land	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПОДДЕРЖКИ ГРАЖДАНСКИХ ИНИЦИАТИВ «ТАМБОВСКАЯ ЗЕМЛЯ»	АНО «ТАМБОВСКАЯ ЗЕМЛЯ»	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze and N. Tupikin. Created to increase support for the war in Ukraine. Manages the Tambov Region Youth Volunteer Cyber Squad, which monitors social media and expose "fake news".
Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation Supporting the Development of Journalistic Projects "Russian Reporters"	Russian Reporters	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО СОДЕЙСТВИЮ В РАЗВИТИИ ЖУРНАЛИСТСКИХ ПРОЕКТОВ «РУССКИЕ РЕПОРТЕРЫ»	АНО «РУССКИЕ РЕПОРТЕРЫ»	Co-organiser of the New Media Workshop, a project of ANO Dialog.
Bell-67				Company owned by R. Gndolyan. The company owns a villa in Costa Brava in which the Kiriyenko family vacationed.
Belvaux Management Limited				Offshore company connected to V. Kiriyenko, based in Barbados. He reportedly requested to transfer assets from Titanium VC to Belvaux Management Ltd.
Biblioring		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «БИБЛИОРИНГ»	БИБЛИОРИНГ	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze. It organises competitions for Russian children living abroad and is listed as a client of SDA.
Centre for Special Network Observations	CSSN	«ЦЕНТР СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЕВЫХ НАБЛЮДЕНИЙ»	ЦССН	Organisation established by ANO CISM and the governor of occupied Zaporizhzhia to monitor extremism and terrorism in the TOTs.
Charitable Foundation for the Support of Humanities "My History"	"My History" Foundation	БЛАГОТВОРИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ФОНД ПОДДЕРЖКИ ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК «МОЯ ИСТОРИЯ»	ФОНД «МОЯ ИСТОРИЯ»	Foundation connected to D. Vasilenko (Director of ANO Revival).
Cyberia Nova LLC		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «САЙБЕРИЯ НОВА»	САЙБЕРИЯ НОВА	Gaming company which developed the game "Smuta" for ANO IRI. Its executive producer, E. Rusak was an advisor to Kiriyenko at Rosatom.
Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate	DECR	ОТДЕЛ ВНЕШНИХ ЦЕРКОВНЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ МОСКОВСКОГО ПАТРИАРХАТА	ОВЦС	Department of the ROC which works to build influence and promote Russian narratives abroad.
Domestar Entreprises Ltd (closed)	Domestar			Offshore company connected to V. Kiriyenko.
ETYUD LLC		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ЭТЮД»	ЭТЮД	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze which competed with SDA for a tender for developing automated information systems for a State Budgetary Institution in Moscow.
Far Eastern Shipping Company PJSC*		ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ДАЛЬНЕВОСТОЧНОЕ МОРСКОЕ ПАРОХОДСТВО»	ДВМП	Parent company of FESCO.

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Foundation for Civil Society Development	FCSD	ФОНД РАЗВИТИЯ ГРАЖДАНСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА	ФоРГО	Organisation which has worked with EISI.
Garantiya Bank		БАНК «ГАРАНТИЯ»		Bank founded by Sergey Kiriyenko in 1993. Vladimir Kiriyenko became part of its Board of Directors in 2005. It later merged with Sarovbusinessbank.
Gazprombank		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ГАЗПРОМБАНК»	ГАЗПРОМБАНК (ГПБ)	State-owned bank which owns a share of MF Technologies, which owns a majority share of VK.
Internet Initiative Development Fund		ФОНД РАЗВИТИЯ ИНТЕРНЕТ-ИНИЦИАТИВ	ФРИИ	One of the founding organisations of ANO IRI.
Joint Stock Company Dalgiprotrans	Dalgiprotrans	АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ДАЛЬНЕВОСТОЧНЫЙ ПРОЕКТНО-ИЗЫСКАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ ТРАНСПОРТНОГО СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВА»	ДАЛГИПРОТРАНС	Far Eastern company engaged in the design of transport infrastructure (part of the "1520 Group," owned by Alexey Krapivin, oligarch Arkady Rotenberg's partner). Made donations to ANO Integration.
Joint Stock Company Mosgiprotrans	Mosgiprotrans	АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «МОСГИПРОТРАНС»	МОСГИПРОТРАНС	A contractor of Russian Railways. Designs transport facilities. Made donations to ANO Integration.
JSC Digital Television		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ЦИФРОВОЕ ТЕЛЕВИДЕНИЕ»	ЦТВ	R. Gndolyan, trusted association of Vladimir Kiriyenko, is the Director.
JSC Post Bank (part of VTB Bank)	Pochta Bank	АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ПОЧТА БАНК»	ПОЧТА БАНК	Kiriyenko's son in law (A. Ugnich) is the Director of the Project Office. The bank is under international sanctions.
JSC Sarovbusinessbank		САРОВИЗНЕСБАНК		Bank founder by S. Kiriyenko. V. Kiriyenko was later a co-owner of Sarovbusinessbank with V. Travin. Kiriyenko Jr. reportedly sold his shares to R. Gndolyan.
Kribrum		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «КРИБРУМ»	КРИБРУМ	IT company owned by Natalia Kasperskaya. Contractor of ANO CISM and possible owner of Brand Analytics.
Limited Liability Company "1520 Group"	1520 Group	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ГРУППА КОМПАНИЙ 1520»	ГК 1520	Group of companies owned by A. Krapivin, a partner of A. Rotenerg. Dalgiprotrans JSC, which is part of 1520, made donations to ANO Integration.
Limited Liability Company "Agronom Sad"	Agronom Sad	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «АГРОНОМ-САД»	АГРОНОМ-САД	Agricultural company. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth.
Limited Liability Company "Avito" (bought by Kismet Capital Group in 2022)	Avito	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «АВИТО»	АВИТО	Online platform for selling goods and services or find jobs. Avito implements projects for the Russian government in cooperation with ANO Dialog.

Limited Liability Company "Brand Analytics"	Brand Analytics	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «БРЕНД АНАЛИТИКС»	БРЕНД АНАЛИТИКС	IT company. Contractor of ANO CISM. SDA used its software to monitor media.
Limited Liability Company "Khersoneskaya Trapeza"	Khersonskaya Trapeza	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ХЕРСОНЕССКАЯ ТРАПЕЗА»	ХТ	Entity connected to D. Vasilenko (Director of ANO Revival).
Limited Liability Company "Medialogia"	Medialogia	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «МЕДИАЛОГИЯ»	МЕДИАЛОГИЯ	IT company owned by the Kovalchuk family. It is a technical partner of ANO Dialog, for which it has created several social media monitoring tools. SDA uses its software to monitor media.
Limited Liability Company "PRO Brand"	PRO Brand	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ПРО БРЕНД»	ПРО БРЕНД	Advertising and communications company through which A. Serikov reportedly embezzled funds from the Znanie Society.
Limited Liability Company "ZephyrLab"	ZephyrLab	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ЗЕФИРЛАБ»	ЗЕФИРЛАБ	Company which built GosUslugi and websites for Russian ministries. M. Lupin was previously associated with the company.
Limited Liability Company Yandex	Yandex	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ЯНДЕКС»	ЯНДЕКС	Russian IT company and search engine. Its restructuring was overseen by Kiriyenko. A. Komissarov has served as member of the board.
M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University (Moscow State University)	MGU	МОСКОВСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ИМЕНИ М. В. ЛОМОНОСОВА	МГУ	Offers a "Digital Media Communications in the Modern World" course, as well as a Master's programme in Artificial Intelligence and Digital Communications in State Administration in collaboration with ANO Dialog.
Media-Telecom LLC		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «МЕДИА-ТЕЛЕКОМ»	МЕДИА-ТЕЛЕКОМ	Company responsible for production, display, distribution and marketing of ANO IRI's "US" TV channel. The company is owned by the New Media Group and Rostelecom.
MF Technologies		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «МФ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ»	МФ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ	Company owning a majority share of VKontakte. MF Technologies is owned by Sogaz, Gazprombank, and Rostec.
Morgoth Finance Ltd (closed)	Morgoth			Offshore company formerly owned by V. Kiriyenko, based in the British Virgin Islands.
Mornington Finance Limited (closed)	Mornington			Offshore company connected to V. Kiriyenko.
Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology	MIPT	МОСКОВСКИЙ ФИЗИКО-ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ	ФИЗТЕХ	Cooperates with ANO Dialog on studies of the role of AI in communications.
Mriya Resort & Spa		МРИЯ РЕЗОРТ СПА		Spa Hotel in Crimea. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth.

Full name	Short name	Full name (Ru)	Short name (Ru)	Role and relation to the censorship machine /relevant individuals
National Centre for Historical Memory		«НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ЦЕНТР ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ ПАМЯТИ ПРИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТЕ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ»	НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ЦЕНТР ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ ПАМЯТИ	Centre tasked with preserving Russian historical memory. Kiriyenko was appointed the Head of its Supervisory Board by Putin in 2025.
National Institute for Opinion Surveys and Marketing	INSOMAR	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ИНСТИТУТ СОЦИАЛЬНОГО МАРКЕТИНГА»	ИНСОМАР	The National Institute for Opinion Surveys and Marketing. It authorised the functioning of Dialog's Weber Agency.
National Media Group	NMG	АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ МЕДИА ГРУППА»	НМГ	Media company controlled by Yuri Kovalchuk, its President is Mikhail Kovalchuk. NMG owns e.g. Channel One (Pervyi Kanal).
National Research Centre "Kurchatov Institute"	Kurchatov Institute	НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ЦЕНТР «КУРЧАТОВСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ»	КУРЧАТОВСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ	Russia's primary nuclear research facility led by Mikhail Kovalchuk.
National Research University Higher School of Economics	HSE	НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ «ВЫСШАЯ ШКОЛА ЭКОНОМИКИ»	ВШЭ	Launched the "Lapsha" fact-checking platform in cooperation with ANO Dialog Regions.
National Youth Council of Russia		АССОЦИАЦИЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЙ «НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ СОВЕТ МОЛОДЕЖНЫХ И ДЕТСКИХ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЙ РОССИИ»		Organisation that collaborates with "Russian Student Detachments".
Netar LLC		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «НЕТАР»	НЕТАР	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze and N. Tupikin.
News Media Holding		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «НЬЮС МЕДИА»	ХОЛДИНГ «НЬЮС МЕДИА»	Owned by media tycoon and propagandist A. Gabrielyanov. Parent company of the Mash media outlet.
NORSI-Oil/ Nizhegorodnoftorgsintez			НОРСИ-ОЙЛ/ НИЖЕГОРОД-НЕФТЕОРГСИНТЕЗ	Kiriyenko was President of NORSI-Oil (1996-1997)
Organisation of Additional Education Educational Center "Formation"	ANO Formation	АВТОНОМНАЯ НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ОБЪЕКТОВ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ «СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ»	АНО «СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ»	Organisation connected to D. Vasilenko (Director of ANO Revival).
OSION LLC		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «НПО «ОСИОН»	ОСИОН	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze and N. Tupikin.

PJSC Lukoil	Lukoil	ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «НЕФТЯНАЯ КОМПАНИЯ «ЛУКОЙЛ»	ЛУКОЙЛ	Russian energy corporation. Made donations to RSBI.
Private Security Company "White Wolf" LLC	White Wolf	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ЧАСТНОЕ ОХРАННОЕ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЕ «БЕЛЫЙ ВОЛК»	БЕЛЫЙ ВОЛК	Magadan-based security company which made donation to RSBI.
Promsvyazbank Public Joint Stock Company	Promsvyazbank	ОТКРЫТОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ПРОМСВЯЗЬБАНК»	ПРОМСВЯЗЬБАНК	Bank under international sanctions, which is a primary lender to the military industrial complex. It has donated millions to Yunarmiya.
Public Joint Stock Company "Federal Hydroelectricity Company RusHydro"	RusHydro	ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ ГИДРОГЕНЕРИРУЮЩАЯ КОМПАНИЯ - РУСГИДРО»	РУСГИДРО	State-controlled hydroelectricity company. Made donations to Kiriyenko-controlled organisations e.g. RSBI, EISI, ANO Integration.
Public Joint Stock Company "Gazprom"		ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ГАЗПРОМ»	ГАЗПРОМ	State-owned energy company. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth.
Public Joint Stock Company "Rosseti"	Rosseti	ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЕТЕВАЯ КОМПАНИЯ - РОССЕТИ»	РОССЕТИ	State-owned electricity company. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth. Roscosmos was reportedly a client of DA-TEAM.
Public Joint Stock Company Kamaz	Kamaz	ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «КАМАЗ»	КАМАЗ	Automobile corporation. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth.
Public Joint Stock Company Sberbank of Russia	Sberbank	ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «СБЕРБАНК РОССИИ»	СБЕРБАНК	State-owned bank, which funds Kiriyenko's projects, e.g. the "School of Governors", Yunarmiya, and RSBI.
Readovka.ru LLC	Readovka	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «РЕАДОВКА.РУ»	РЕАДОВКА	Russian propaganda news outlet involved in ANO Dialog's operation to spread fake news about Ukraine.
Regional Public Centre of Internet Technologies	ROTsIT	РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫЙ ЦЕНТР ИНТЕРНЕТ-ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ	РОЦИТ	One of the founding organisations of ANO IRI. S. Grebennikov, the founder of ANO IRI was formerly the director of ROTsIT.
Renova Group Conglomerate		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ГРУППА КОМПАНИЙ «РЕНОВА»	РЕНОВА	Former workplace of Alexander Kharichev.
Rokk Media		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «РОКК МЕДИА»	РОКК МЕДИА	Company to which ANO Dialog transferred ₽50 million. Belongs to E. Berdova, a relative of K. Potupchik's former husband.
Rossiya Bank		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «АКЦИОНЕРНЫЙ БАНК «РОССИЯ»	БАНК «РОССИЯ»	Bank led by Yuri Kovalchuk. It is currently under Western sanctions.

Full name	Short name	Full name (Ru)	Short name (Ru)	Role and relation to the censorship machine /relevant individuals
Rostec Russian Technologies State Corporation	Rostec	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ КОРПОРАЦИЯ ПО СОДЕЙСТВИЮ РАЗРАБОТКЕ, ПРОИЗВОДСТВУ И ЭКСПОРТУ ВЫСОКОТЕХНОЛОГИЧНОЙ ПРОМЫШЛЕННОЙ ПРОДУКЦИИ «РОСТЕХ»	РОСТЕХ	State-owned military-industrial conglomerate. Owns a 10% stake of MF Technologies which owns a majority share of VK.
Rostelecom		ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «РОСТЕЛЕКОМ»	РОСТЕЛЕКОМ	V. Kiriyenko served as First Vice President of Rostelecom (2016–2021).
Rossiya Segodnya		ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ УНИТАРНОЕ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЕ «МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ АГЕНТСТВО «РОССИЯ СЕГОДНЯ»	РОССИЯ СЕГОДНЯ (РС)	State-owned news agency and parent company of outlets such as Sputnik and RIA Novosti. Its editor-in-chief is Margarita Simonyan. Not to be confused with RT (Russia Today), the international propaganda TV channel, whose editor-in-chief is also Margarita Simonyan.
Russian Association of Electronic Communications	RAEC	РОССИЙСКАЯ АССОЦИАЦИЯ ЭЛЕКТРОННЫХ КОММУНИКАЦИЙ	РАЭК	S. Plugatorenko, the founder of ANO IRI was formerly the director of RAEC.
Russian News Agency TASS	TASS	ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ АГЕНТСТВО РОССИИ ТАСС	ТАСС	State-owned news agency. Part of the Global Fact-Checking Network along with AIT and ANO Dialog.
Russian Post		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ПОЧТА РОССИИ»	ПОЧТА РОССИИ	Co-founded JSC Post Bank.
Russian Railways Holding		ОТКРЫТОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «РОССИЙСКИЕ ЖЕЛЕЗНЫЕ ДОРОГИ»	РОССИЙСКИЕ ЖЕЛЕЗНЫЕ ДОРОГИ (РЖД)	State-owned railway company. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth. Russian Railway TV was reportedly a client of DA-TEAM.
Russian Railways TV	RZhD TV	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «ТЕЛЕВИДЕНИЕ РЖД»	РЖД ТВ	TV Channel of the Russian Railways Holding. It was reportedly a client of DA-TEAM.
Russian Special Forces University named after V.V. Putin	Spetsnaz University	РОССИЙСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ СПЕЦНАЗА ИМЕНИ В.В. ПУТИНА	РУС	The “Soyuz” combat detachment is based in the university. The university trains volunteers for the Russian army and is thus part of the Kiriyenko-Kadyrov alliance.
Russian Technological University	RTU MIREA	МИРЭА РОССИЙСКИЙ ТЕХНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ	РТУ МИРЭА	University which cooperates with ANO Dialog in research about AI.
Sociomarker LLC		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «СОЦИОМАРКЕР»	СОЦИОМАРКЕР	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze which received 5.5 million RUB from the Moscow Region for its services.

Sogaz		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «СТРАХОВОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО ГАЗОВОЙ ПРОМЫШЛЕННОСТИ»	СОГАЗ	Gas insurance company controlled by Y. Kovalchuk. Sogaz owns MF Technologies which owns a majority share of VK.
State Autonomous Organisation of the Crimean Republic "Ismail Gasprinsky Media Centre"	Media Centre	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ АВТОНОМНОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КРЫМ «МЕДИАЦЕНТР ИМ. ИСМАИЛА ГАСПРИНСКОГО»	МЕДИА ЦЕНТР	Held tenders in which SDA and Structura were the only bidders.
State Corporation for Space Activities "Roscosmos"	Roscosmos	ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ КОРПОРАЦИЯ ПО КОСМИЧЕСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ «РОСКОСМОС»	РОСКОСМОС	State-owned corporation and space agency. Works with RSD to provide work placements for youth.
Strategic Communications Agency "Niccolo M"	Niccolo M	ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ «АГЕНТСТВО СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИХ КОММУНИКАЦИЙ «НИККОЛО М»	НИККОЛО М	Founded by A. Tsepelev (Deputy Director of ANO Dialog) and Valeriy Solovyov (former technology director at the IAA).
The Circle of Kindness Foundation		ФОНД ПОДДЕРЖКИ ДЕТЕЙ С ТЯЖЕЛЫМИ ЖИЗНЕУГРОЖАЮЩИМИ И ХРОНИЧЕСКИМИ ЗАБОЛЕВАНИЯМИ, В ТОМ ЧИСЛЕ РЕДКИМИ (ОРФАННЫМИ) ЗАБОЛЕВАНИЯМИ «КРУГ ДОБРА»	ФОНД КРУГ ДОБРА	Foundation supporting children with rare diseases. ANO Dialog created the branding for the foundation.
Titanium VC Limited	Titanium			Venture capital firm owned by V. Kiriyenko and A. Ayvazov.
TVEL		АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО «ТВЭЛ»	ТВЭЛ	Subsidiary of Rosatom which controls a significant portion of the global uranium conversion and enrichment market.
Union of Journalists of CIS		СОЮЗ ЖУРНАЛИСТОВ СОДРУЖЕСТВА НЕЗАВИСИМЫХ ГОСУДАРСТВ	СОЮЗ ЖУРНАЛИСТОВ СНГ	Entity affiliated with I. Gambashidze. The Union established ANO of Strategic Communications "CASPIAN 2030".
Union of the Right Forces	SPS	СОЮЗ ПРАВЫХ СИЛ	СПС	Political party which Sergey Kiriyenko formed with Boris Nemtsov.
Volga TV		ОБЩЕСТВО С ОГРАНИЧЕННОЙ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬЮ ТЕЛЕКОМПАНИЯ «ВОЛГА»	ТЕЛЕКОМПАНИЯ «ВОЛГА»	V. Kiriyenko was the Chairman of the Board of Directors (2005–2011) and owned a 52% stake.
VTB Bank PJSC	VTB Group	БАНК ВТБ (ПУБЛИЧНОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО)	БАНК ВТБ	State-owned bank which made donations to RSBI. Co-founded JSC Post Bank.
Yalecrest Holdings Ltd	YaleCrest			Offshore investment company connected to V. Kiriyenko, based in the British Virgin Islands.
Yugra State University	YUSU	ЮГОРСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ	ЮГУ	Partner of ANO Dialog. Its students completed internships at the RGC.

Individuals mentioned in the report

Name (in English)	Name (in Russian)	Occupation/Relation to Kiriyenko
AKHMATOVA, Anna Andreevna	АХМАТОВА, Анна Андреевна	Renowed Soviet poet, author of the “Requiem” poem which described Stalin' Great Terror.
ARTEMEYEVA, Ksenia Vyacheslavovna	Артемьева, Ксения Вячеславовна	Director of ANO Tavrida.Art
AYVAZOV, Alexander Georgevich	АИВАЗОВ, Александр Георгевич	Senior Vice President for Investments and Business Development of VK, co-founder of Titanium VC Limited, associate of Vladimir Kiriyenko.
AZAROV, Dmitry Igorevich	Азаров, Дмитрий Игоревич	Former governor of Samara Oblast whose gubernatorial campaign was supported by the Internet Agitation Agency.
BALANOVA, Svetlana Evgenevna	БАЛАНОВА, Светлана Евгеньевна	General Director of the National Media Group, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI.
BEGLOV, Alexander Dmitrevich	БЕГЛОВ, Александр Дмитревич	Governor of St. Petersburg whose gubernatorial campaign was supported by the Internet Agitation Agency.
BELYAKOV, Boris Vadimovich	БЕЛЯКОВ, Борис Вадимович	Press secretary of the Prime Minister of Russia’s Office. Teacher at ANO Dialog's New Media Workshop.
BERDOV, Anton	БЕРДОВ, Антон	Former husband of Kristina Potupchik.
BERDOVA, Elena	БЕРДОВА, Елена	Owner of Rokk Media, mother of Anton Berdov.
BEZSONOV, Daniil Viktorovich	БЕЗСОНОВ, Даниил Викторович	Z-blogger, author of the channel NeoficialnyiBeZsonoV Telegram and former Deputy Minister for Information of the Russian-backed Donetsk Republic.
BUGAEV, Alexander Vyacheslavovich	БУГАЕВ, Александр Вячеславович	Deputy Education Minister.
BURLAKOV, Mikhail Evgenyevich	БУРЛАКОВ, Михаил Евгеньевич	Deputy Director of ANO CISM.
CHERNOMYRDIN, Viktor Stepanovich	ЧЕРНОМЫРДИН, Виктор Степанович	Russian politician, Prime Minister of Russia (1992–1998).
CHERNYSHENKO, Dmitry Nikolaevich	Чернышенко, Дмитрий Николаевич	Deputy Prime Minister of Russia for Sports, Tourism, Culture, and Communications.
DAVANKOV, Vladislav Andreevich	ДАВАНКОВ, Владислав Андреевич	Vice Chairman of the State Duma, member of the New People Party, candidate during the 2024 presidential elections.
DMITRTIEV, Kirill Alexandrovich	ДМИТРИЕВ, Кирилл Александрович	CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund.
DREVAL, Maxim Alexeevich	ДРЕВАЛЬ, Максим Алексеевич	Director of “Znanie” Society.
DROZHZHINA, Yulia Nikolaevna	ДРОЖЖИНА, Юлия Николаевна	Chair of the Board of the Russian Student Detachments.

FEDULKINA, Anna Pavlovna	ФЕДУЛКИНА, Анна Павловна	Director of EISI.
FRADKOV, Mikhail Yefimovich	ФРАДКОВ, Михаил Ефимович	Director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, former Prime Minister of Russia, former SVR director.
GABRIELYANOV, Aram Ashotovich	ГАБРЕЛЯНОВ Арам Ашотович	Propagandist and media tycoon, owner and former director of the News Media Holding, one of the teachers in ANO Dialog's New Media Workshop.
GAMAN-GOLUTVINA, Oksana Viktorovna	ГАМАН-ГОЛУТВИНА, Оксана Викторовна	Chair of the Supervisory Board of EISI.
GAMBASHIDZE, Ilya Andreevich	ГАМБАШИДЗЕ, Илья Андреевич	Founder and Director of the Social Design Agency and Structura. Leader of Centre S's Team I.
GNDOLYAN, Robert Robertovich	ГНДОЛЯН, Роберт Робертович	Friend and business associate of Vladimir Kiriyenko.
GOLOVIN, Vladislav Nikolaevich	ГОЛОВИН, Владислав Николаевич	Chief of Staff of Yunarmiya. Military officer who participated in the siege of Mariupol.
GORESLAVSKY, Alexei Sergeevich	ГОРЕСЛАВСКИЙ Алексей Сергеевич	Director of ANO IRI, former director of ANO Dialog and former Deputy Head of the Department of Public Projects of the Presidential Administration
GREBENNIKOV, Sergey Vladimirovich	ГРЕБЕННИКОВ, Сергей Владимирович	Co-founder of ANO IRI, former director of the Russian Association of Electronic Communications
GROMOV, Alexei Alexeevich	ГРОМОВ, Алексей Алексеевич	First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration, responsible for press and propaganda.
GROMOV, Boris Vsevolodovich	ГРОМОВ, Борис Всеволодович	Russian politician, former governor of the Moscow Region and Afghan War veteran
GUMILEV, Lev Nikolaevich	ГУМИЛЁВ, Лев Николаевич	Soviet-era dissident, historian, geographer, one of the fathers of modern Eurasianism. Son of Anna Akhmatova.
GUMILEV, Nikolai Stepanovich	ГУМИЛЁВ, Николай Степанович	Russian poet, husband of Anna Akhmatova.
GUNDYAYEV, Vladimir Mikhailovich (Patriatch Kirill)	ГУНДЯАЕВ, Владимир Михаилович (Патриарх Кирилл)	Head of the Russian Orthodox Church
GUROV, Grigory Alexandrovich	ГУРОВ, Григорий Александрович	Head of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh). Member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI.
GURTSIEV, Zaur Alexandrovich	ГУРЦИЕВ, Заур Александрович	Deputy Mayor of Stavropol, participant of "Time of Heroes" programme, led air operations in the assault on Mariupol, killed in 2025.
ISRAITEL, Vladilen Yakovlevich	ИЗРАИТЕЛЬ, Владилен Яковлевич	Father of Sergey Kiriyenko.
ISRAITEL, Yakov Vladimirovich	ИЗРАИТЕЛЬ, Яков Владимирович	Grandfather of Sergey Kiriyenko.

Name (in English)	Name (in Russian)	Occupation/Relation to Kiriyenko
KADYROV, Ramzan Akhmatovich	КАДЫРОВ, Рамзан Ахматович	Head of the Chechen Republic.
KANAVTSEV, Mikhail	КАНАВЦЕВ, Михаил	Head of the New Media Workshop.
KASPERSKAYA, Natalia Ivanovna	КАСПЕРСКАЯ, Наталья Ивановна	IT entrepreneur, director of InfoWatch, founder of “Kaspersky Lab” and “Kribrum”.
KHARICHEV, Alexander Dmitrevich	ХАРИЧЕВ, Александр Дмитриевич	Head of the Presidential Directorate for Monitoring and Analysis of Social Processes.
KIRIYENKO, Larisa Vasilevna	КИРИЕНКО, Лариса Васильевна	Mother of Sergey Kiriyenko.
KIRIYENKO, Lyubov Sergeevna	КИРИЕНКО, Любовь Сергеевна	Daughter of Sergey Kiriyenko.
KIRIYENKO, Nadezhda Sergeevna	КИРИЕНКО, Надежда Сергеевна	Daughter of Sergey Kiriyenko.
KIRIYENKO, Sergey Vladilenovich	КИРИЕНКО, Сергей Владиленович	First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration. Architect of Repression.
KIRIYENKO, Vladimir Sergeevich	КИРИЕНКО, Владимир Сергеевич	CEO of VKontakte, son of Sergey Kiriyenko.
KIRIYENKO, Yulia Sergeevna	КИРИЕНКО, Юлия Сергеевна	Wife of Vladimir Kiriyenko.
KLIMENKO, German Sergeevich	КЛИМЕНКО, Герман Сергеевич	Former advisor to Putin on matters of the Internet, former Chairman of the Board of ANO IRI.
KLYUCHKIN, Anton Sergeevich	КЛЮЧКИН, Антон Сергеевич	Deputy Director of ANO IRI, former director of ANO IRI.
KOMISSAROV, Alexei Gennadevich	КОМИССАРОВ, Алексей Геннадиевич	Director of ANO Russia – Land of Opportunities and the Co-Chairman of the Central Headquarters of the All-Russia People’s Front, Rector of RANEPA.
KOPTSEV, Alexei	КОПЦЕВ, Алексей	Former Director of Cyberia Nova (the company which developed the game Smuta for ANO IRI).
KOROVIN, Igor Vladimirovich	КОРОВИН, Игорь Владимирович	Head of Yunarmiya’s St. Petersburg branch.
KOTENOK, Yuri Petrovich	КОТЕНОК, Юрий Петрович	Z-blogger. Author of the Voenkor Kotenok Telegram channel.
KOTS, Alexander Igorevich	КОЦ, Александр Игоревич	Z-blogger, war correspondent of the Komsomolskaya Pravda outlet.
KOVALCHUK, Boris Yurevich	КОВАЛЬЧУК, Борис Юрьевич	Son of Yuri Kovalchuk.
KOVALCHUK, Mikhail Valentinovich	КОВАЛЬЧУК, Михаил Валентинович	Brother of Yuri Kovalchuk.
KOVALCHUK, Stepan Kirilovich	КОВАЛЬЧУК, Степан Кирилович	Great-nephew of Yuri Kovalchuk, Senior Vice President for Media Strategy and Service Development at VK, head of Social Platforms and Media Content at VK since 2023, reportedly in charge of DA-TEAM

KOVALCHUK, Yuri Valentinovich	КОВАЛЬЧУК, Юрий Валентинович	Oligarch, friend of Putin, major shareholder in Rossiya Bank and National Media Group
KOZAK, Dmitry Nikolaevich	КОЗАК, Дмитрий Николаевич	Former Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration (2020-2025) and head of Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation
KRAPIVIN, Alexei Andreevich	КРАПИВИН, Алексей Андреевич	Partner of Arkady Rotenberg, owner of 1520 Group
KRAVTSOV, Sergey Sergeevich	КРАВЦОВ, Сергей Сергеевич	Minister of Education, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI
KUZNETSOV, Gleb Sergeevich	КУЗНЕЦОВ, Глеб Сергеевич	Former Head of the EISI Expert Council
LEBED, Alexander Ivanovich	ЛЕБЕДЬ, Александр Иванович	Russian politician, former governor of Krasnoyarsk Krai, Afghan War veteran
LEVIN, Leonid Leonidovich	ЛЕВИН, Леонид Леонидович	Former Deputy Chief of Staff of the Russian Government Office, former Chairman of the Board of ANO IRI
LIUBIMOVA, Olga Borisovna	ЛЮБИМОВА, Ольга Борисовна	Minister of Culture, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI
LUPIN, Maxim Nikolaevich	ЛУПИН, Максим Николаевич	Director of ANO CISM, suspected leader of hacker group NoName057
LVOVA-BELOVA, Maria Alexeevna	ЛЬВОВА-БЕЛОВА, Мария Алексеевна	Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, responsible for the deportations of Ukrainian children to Russia
MAKAROV, Tikhon	МАКАРОВ, Тихон	Deputy Director of ANO Dialog, reportedly the curator of the "War on Fakes" Telegram channel and Dialog's contact person with the Defence Ministry
MARTYNOV, Daniil Vasilevich	МАРТЫНОВ, Даниил Васильевич	Aide of Ramzan Kadyrov, former FSB Alpha Special Forces operative, established the Spetsnaz University in Chechnya
MATVEYEVA, Tatiana Vladimirovna	МАТВЕЕВА, Татьяна Владимировна	Head of the Presidential Directorate for the Development of Information and Communication Technology and Communication Infrastructure
MEDINSKY, Vladimir Rostislavovich	МЕДИНСКИЙ, Владимир Ростиславович	Aide to the President of Russia, former Minister of Culture, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI
MEDVEDCHUK, Viktor Vladimirovich	МЕДВЕДЧУК, Виктор Владимирович	Ukrainian pro-Kremlin oligarch, friend of Putin, who was supported by a campaign of the SDA and Structura
METELEV, Artem Pavlovich	МЕТЕЛЕВ, Артем Павлович	Deputy of State Duma, member of the Coordination Council of "Movement of the First", Kiriyenko loyalist
NAVALNY, Alexei Anatolevich	НАВАЛЬНЫЙ, Алексей Анатольевич	Russian politician and oppositionist, killed in 2024
NECHAYEV, Alexei Gennadevich	НЕЧАЕВ, Алексей Геннадьевич	Russian politician, leader of the New People Party

Name (in English)	Name (in Russian)	Occupation/Relation to Kiriyenko
NEMTSOV, Boris Efimovich	НЕМЦОВ, Борис Ефимович	Former political mentor of S. Kiriyenko. Russian politician, oppositionist figure assassinated in 2015.
NEVZOROV, Alexander Glebovich	НЕВЗОРОВ, Александр Глебович	Russo-Ukrainian journalist who spoke out against the war in Ukraine and was convicted under the Fake News Law
NIKOLIN, Alexander Petrovich	НИКОЛИН, Александр Петрович	Kiriyenko's Chief of Staff and an FSB officer. He was Kiriyenko's assistant at the Federal Atomic Energy Agency (2005-2007) and adviser during his time at Rosatom.
NOVIKOV, Sergey Gennadevich	НОВИКОВ, Сергей Геннадьевич	Head of the Presidential Directorate for Public Projects, longtime associate of Sergey Kiriyenko, member of Rosatom Management Board, Vice-Chair of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI
OSTROVSKY, Yefim Viktorovich	ОСТРОВСКИЙ, Ефим Викторович	Methodologist, referred to as the "humanitarian technologist"
PASKO, Igor Petrovich	ПАСЬКО, Игорь Петрович	Executive Director of the Russian National Aikido Council
PERLA, Andrey Naumovich	ПЕРЛА, Андрей Наумович	Programme Director of the Social Design Agency
PIVOVAROV, Alexei Vladimirovich	ПИВОВАРОВ, Алексей Владимирович	Russian independent journalist, founder of Redaktsiya, reportedly received money from DA-TEAM
PLUGOTARENKO, Sergey Alexandrovich	ПЛУГОТАРЕНКО, Сергей Александрович	Co-founder of ANO IRI, former head of ANO "Digital Economy"
POLOSIN, Andrey Vladimirovich	ПОЛОСИН, Андрей Владимирович	Vice-Rector of RANEPA, head of the "DNA of Russia" working group, architect of the "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood" course, former head of regional relations at Rosatom
POTUPCHIK, Kristina Andreevna	ПОТУПЧИК, Кристина Андреевна	Propagandist, close friend of Vladimir Tabak
PRIGOZHIN, Yevgeni Viktorovich	ПРИГОЖИН, Евгений Викторович	Founder and Leader of PMC Wagner, founder of the Internet Research Agency (died 2023)
PROKLOV, Sergey	ПРОКЛОВ, Сергей	Participant of "Time of Heroes" programme, Commander of the 155th Marine Brigade, accused of involvement in civilian killings in Ukraine
PUTIN, Vladimir Vladimirovich	ПУТИН, Владимир Владимирович	President of the Russian Federation
REMESLO, Ilya Borisovich	РЕМЕСЛО, Илья Борисович	Pro-Kremlin blogger and propagandist, who spoke out against Putin in March 2026 and was sent to a psychiatric hospital
RESHETNIKOV, Leonid Petrovich	РЕШЕТНИКОВ, Леонид Петрович	Retired SVR Lieutenant General, former director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies

ROTENBERG, Arkady Romanovich	РОТЕНБЕРГ, Аркадий Романович	Russian oligarch, close friend of Vladimir Putin
ROTENBERG, Boris Romanovich	РОТЕНБЕРГ, Борис Романович	Russian oligarch, brother of Arkady Rotenberg
ROZHIN, Boris Alexandrovich	РОЖИН, Борис Александрович	Z-blogger, author of the Colonelcassad Telegram channel
RUSAK, Evgeny	РУСАК, Евгений	Executive producer of Cyberia Nova (company which developed the Smuta game for ANO IRI), former advisor to Kiriyenko at Rosatom (2012-2016).
RUSSKIH, Sergey Vladimirovich	РУССКИХ, Сергей Владимирович	Director of Cyberia Nova (company that developed the game "Smuta" for ANO IRI)
RUTSKOY, Alexander Vladimirovich	РУЦКОЙ, Александр Владимирович	Russian politician, former governor of Kursk Oblast, former vice president of Russia and Afghan War veteran
RYBALCHENKO, Dmitry Vladimirovich	РЫБАЛЬЧЕНКО, Дмитрий Владимирович	First Deputy of the Director of "Znanie" Society
RYCHKIN, Pavel Vladimirovich	РЫЧКИН, Павел Владимирович	Director of DA-TEAM and DA-TEAM Production
SAVCHUK, Pavel Olegovich	САВЧУК, Павел Олегович	President of the Russian Red Cross, member of the central staff of the All-Russia People's Front, lecturer at the "Znanie" Society.
SECHIN, Igor Ivanovich	СЕЧИН, Игорь Иванович	CEO of Rosneft.
SERGUNINA, Natalia Alexeevna	СЕРГУНИНА, Наталья Алексеевна	Deputy Mayor of Moscow, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI.
SERIKOV, Anton Vladimirovich	СЕРИКОВ, Антон Владимирович	Former Head of the Education Centre "Mashuk" and former Deputy Director of "Znanie" Society, reportedly arrested by FSB in March 2026.
SHADAYEV, Maksut Igorevich	ШАДАЕВ, Максут Игоревич	Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media.
SHCHEDROVITSKY, Georgy Petrovich	ЩЕДРОВИЦКИЙ, Георгий Петрович	Soviet philosopher.
SHCHEDROVITSKY, Petr Georgevich	ЩЕДРОВИЦКИЙ, Пётр Георгиевич	Methodologist, son of Georgy Shchedrovitsky.
SHEVKUNOV, Georgi Alexandrovich (Metropolitan Tikhon)	ШЕВКУНОВ, Георгий Александрович (Митрополит Тихон)	Formerly the Metropolitan of Pskov and Porkhov, since 2023 he is the Metropolitan of Simferopol and Crimea. Known as "Putin's confessor".
SHOIGU, Sergey Kuzhugetovich	ШОЙГУ, Сергей Кужугетович	Former Russian Minister of Defence, founder of Yunarmiya
SIDORENKO, Bogdan	СИДОРЕНКО, Богдан	Reportedly received money from DA-TEAM.
SIMONENKO, Vladimir Alexandrovich	СИМОНЕНКО, Владимир Александрович	Head of the Presidential Directorate for the Formation and Activities of the State Council of the Russian Federation

Name (in English)	Name (in Russian)	Occupation/Relation to Kiriyenko
SIMONYAN, Margarita Simonovna	СИМОНЬЯН, Маргарита Симоновна	Russian propagandist, editor-in-chief og RT and Rossiya Segodnya, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI.
SOLOVYOV, Valeriy	СОЛОВЬЕВ, Валерий	Former technology director of the Internet Agitation Agency
SOLOVYOV, Vladimir Rudolfovich	СОЛОВЬЁВ, Владимир Рудольфович	Propagandist, host of “evening with Solovyov” on Rossiya 1 state TV channel.
STEPASHIN, Sergey Vadimovich	СТЕПАШИН, Сергей Вадимович	Russian politician, former Prime Minister of Russia (1999), Chairman of ANO Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects in Pskov.
SURKOV, Vladislav Yurevich	СУРКОВ, Владислав Юрьевич	Former First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration
TABAK, Vladimir Grigorevich	ТАБАК, Владимир Григорьевич	Director of ANO Dialog
TETERINA, Olesya Anatolevna	ТЕТЕРИНА, Олеся Анатольевна	Director of ANO More Than Travel
TIMCHENKO, Gennady Nikolaevich	ТИМЧЕНКО, Геннадий Николаевич	Russian oligarch, owner of the investment company Volga Group, shareholder in Rossiya Bank.
TITOV, Vadim Petrovich	ТИТОВ, Вадим Петрович	Head of the Presidential Directorate for Strategic Partnership and Cooperation. Long-term ally of S. Kiriyenko.
TKACHENKO, Andrey Alexandrovich	ТКАЧЕНКО, Андрей Александрович	Owner of Readovka
TRAVIN, Vladimir Valentinovich	ТРАВИН, Владимир Валентинович	Former co-owner of Joint Stock Company Saratovbusinessbank, friend of Sergey Kiriyenko.
TRUTNEV, Yuriy Petrovich	ТРУТНЕВ, Юрий Петрович	Presidential Envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, member of Rosatom Supervisory Board and co-leader of the Russian Union for Martial Arts
TSEPELEV, Andrey Yurevich	ЦЕПЕЛЕВ, Андрей Юрьевич	Deputy Director of ANO Dialog Regions, former chief executive of the Internet Agitation Agency, first president of the Association of Internet Technologists
TSIVILEVA, Anna Evgenievna	ЦИВИЛЕВА, Анна Евгеньевна	Chairwoman of the Defenders of the Fatherland Fund, Deputy Defence Minister
TUPIKIN, Nikolai Alexandrovich	ТУПИКИН, Николай Александрович	Owner and director of Structura involved in the Doppelganger operation.
UGNICH, Andrei Alexandrovich	УГНИЧ, Андреи Александрович	Director of the Project Office of Pochta Bank, Sergey Kiriyenko’s son-in-law.
UGOLNIKOV, Igor Stanislavovich	УГОЛЬНИКОВ, Игорь Станиславович	Russian actor and director, Putin supporter, reportedly received money from DA-TEAM.
USMANOV, Alisher Burkhanovich	УСМАНОВ, Алишер Бурханович	Oligarch, co-owner of MegaFon, owner of Kommersant newspaper, former stake owner in VKontakte.

UVAROV, Dmitry Andreevich	УВАРОВ, Дмитрий Андреевич	Director of Strategic Partnership of VK, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI.
VAINO, Anton Eduardovich	ВАЙНО, Антон Эдуардович	Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration.
VASILENKO, Denis Anatolevich	ВАСИЛЕНКО, Денис Анатольевич	Director of ANO Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects in Pskov
VIRTUOSOVA, Natalia Sergeevna	Виртуозова, Наталья Сергеевна	Director of ANO "Directorate of the Exhibition of Achievements 'Russia'" and Director of the National Centre "Russia"
VOLODIN, Vyacheslav Viktorovich	ВОЛОДИН, Вячеслав Викторович	Russian politician, former First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration (2011–2016).
VOROBYOV, Vadim Nikolaevich	ВОРОБЬЕВ, Вадим Николаевич	Current President of Lukoil, friend of Sergey Kiriyenko.
YAMPOLSKAYA, Elena Alexandrovna	ЯМПОЛЬСКАЯ, Елена Александровна	Advisor to the President of Russia, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI.
YARIN, Andrey Veniamovich	ЯРИН, Андрей Вениаминович	Head of the Presidential Directorate for Domestic Policy.
YAROVAYA, Irina Anatolevna	ЯРОВАЯ, Ирина Анатольевна	Member of the State Duma, member of the United Russia party, author of the 2016 Yarovaya Law.
YASHIN, Ilya Valerevich	ЯШИН, Илья Валерьевич	Russian oppositionist, previously jailed and exchanged in the 2024 Ankara prisoner swap.
YELTSIN, Boris Nikolaevich	ЕЛЬЦИН, Борис Николаевич	President of Russia (1991–1999).
ZAKHAROVA, Sofia Avraamovna	ЗАХАРОВА, София Авраамовна	Head of the Department for Development of ICT and Communications Infrastructure at the Presidential Directorate for ICT, Head of Centre S.
ZAVARZIN, Denis Sergeevich	Заварзин, Денис Сергеевич	Head of the Department of Network Projects and Countering the Promotion of Extremism Among Youth at the Presidential Directorate for Public Projects, former director of ANO CISM
ZHAROV, Alexander Alexandrovich	ЖАРОВ Александр Александрович	CEO of Gazprom Media Holding, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI
ZHIRINOVSKY, Vladimir Volfovich	ЖИРИНОВСКИЙ, Владимир Вольфович	Russian politician, former leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (died in 2022)
ZLATOPOLSKIY, Anton Andreevich	ЗЛАТОПОЛЬСКИЙ, Антон Андреевич	First Deputy Director General of the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, member of the Supervisory Board of ANO IRI
ZUBASHCHENKO, Yaroslav Viktorovich	ЗУБАЩЕНКО, Ярослав Викторович	Head of the Central Headquarters of the Russian Student Detachments

ANNEX B: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Contributors to this report

This report is the result of a collaboration between the Lund University Psychological Defence Research Institute, the European External Action Service, and over a dozen organisations and individuals who were involved in supporting research into different parts of the analysis, and without whom this study would not have been possible. The authors wish to extend their appreciation to Dorka Takacsy, Katrina Kurtelius Calderón, August Kyst, OCCPR, and Holger Roonemaa. The authors also wish to extend their thanks to other supporters of this research who wish to remain anonymous. Although it is a collective effort, the analysis and findings are solely the responsibility of the named authors.

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Sources

The report is based on the following data sources:

- **Leaks from Kiriyenko's office**. This refers to a collection of around 50 documents leaked to a consortium of investigative journalists in 2024, which contain internal planning documents and presentations from Kiriyenko's office and some subordinate agencies 2023-24. The documents have previously been covered by the VSquare "Kremlin Leaks".[752]
- **Social Design Agency leaks (2024)**. This refers to a collection of approximately 3,100 documents leaked 2022-24 from the advertising agency SDA, which works under Kiriyenko's office. The documents have previously been covered by the Psychological Defence Agency Report "Beyond Operation Doppelgänger: A Capability Assessment of the Social Design Agency".[753]
- **Centre S/SDA leaks (2026)**. This refers to a collection of approximately 50 documents leaked from Sofia Zakharova and Social Design Agency shortly before the Armenian election. The documents have previously been covered by the Fact Investigation Platform among others.[754]
- **Previous media reporting**. An extensive survey of reports, academic texts, news articles, as well as off-the-record discussions with experts and analysts. We have drawn heavily on the work of investigative reporters and on Russian domestic reporting.
- **OSINT resources**. In addition, external researchers have drawn upon data contained in specialist leaked databases and other repositories of sensitive information.
- **CV-analysis method**. This refers to a scientific method by which researchers scrape the Russian job site "HeadHunter" for resumes and position advertisements related to key organisations. Analysis then reveals which capabilities the organisations have based on their employees (see below).

752 VSquare, 2024

753 Pamment & Tsurtsumia, 2025

754 Hambardzumyan & Manasyan, 2026

The sources used throughout are a combination of Russian media, Western investigative journalism, and leaks. This presents challenges. We make the assumption that Russian domestic media reports are sanitised. Factual data, such as changes in personnel and roles, are considered trustworthy when they can be corroborated. Investigative journalism is largely the product of collaborations between outlets, and we treat these investigations as important datasets. However, we are careful not to assume that all interpretations are correct.

The leaked document sets are more challenging. On the one hand, we have only included datasets that have been broadly corroborated by the community. That is to say, we believe that the documents are authentic based on peer review or how the respective journalists obtained them. They are also challenging because they often represent work-in-progress or internal deliberations that are not immediately logical for outsiders. Besides having worked with these datasets extensively, we have as much as possible corroborated our interpretations with other experts in the field, including those familiar with the datasets.

CV-analysis method

This report applies the CV-analysis method developed by Poliakoff and Kling (2026) to a broader ecosystem-level dataset associated with Sergey Kiriyenko's state-digital infrastructure. The report uses CVs as employment traces. Their value comes from their structure and scale. They allow the analysis to move from individual professional profiles to organisational development, observable headcount, labour-market embeddedness, and company-to-company proximity through career histories.

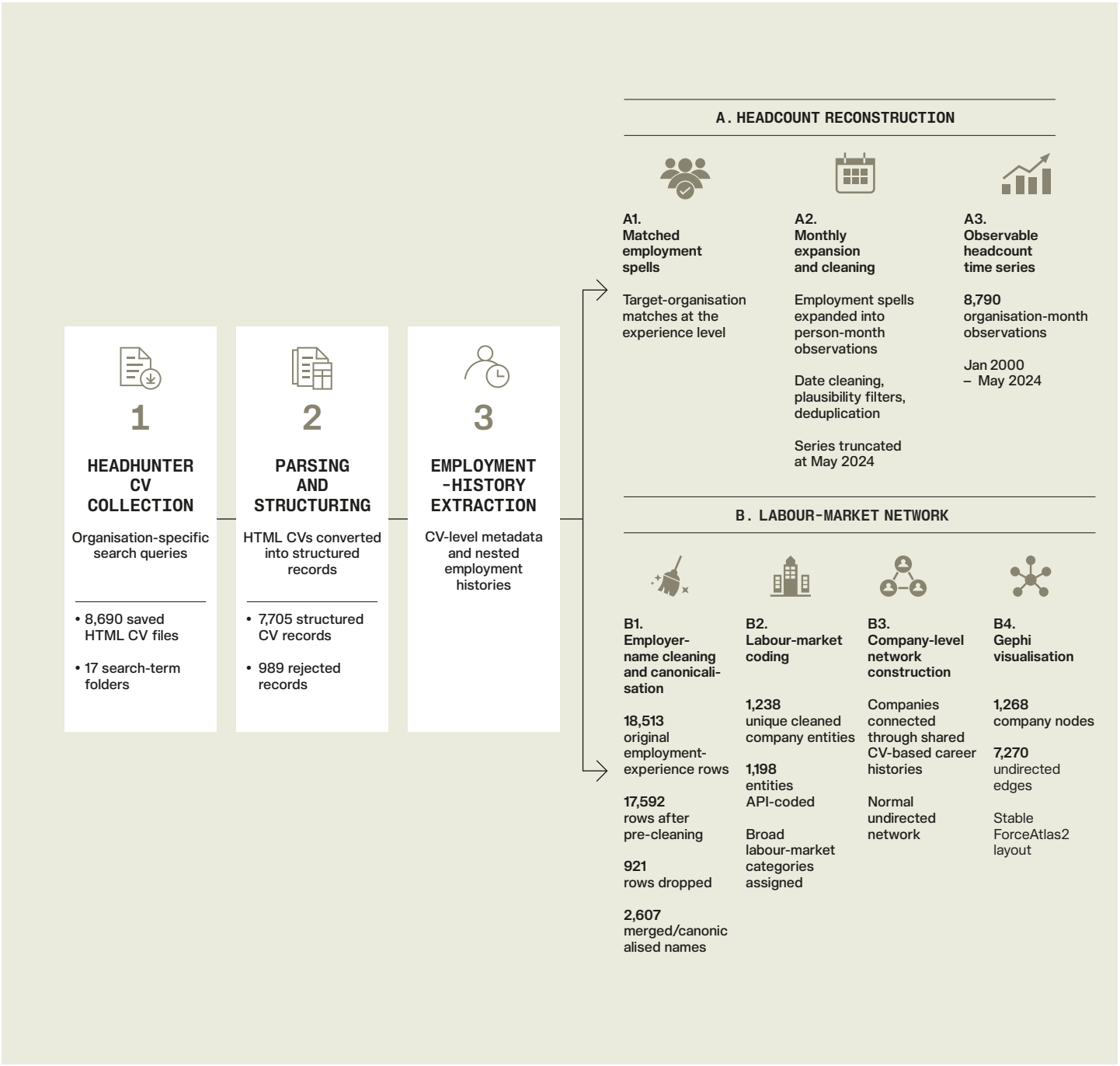
At the same time, CVs are self-presentational documents. They are written for job-market purposes and therefore reflect how workers choose to make their experience legible to potential employers. Employer names, dates, tasks, and skills are self-reported. The analysis therefore reads CVs as structured professional records, not as administrative personnel files.

The pipeline had three main outputs. First, it identified CV holders who reported employment in organisations associated with the ecosystem. Second, it reconstructed observable monthly headcount trajectories for selected target organisations. Third, it transformed full employment histories into a company-level labour-market network.

The dataset was collected from HeadHunter using organisation-specific search terms. These search terms covered the main target entities in the report and adjacent organisations that appeared during the research process.

The saved HTML files were parsed into structured CV records. The retained parsed corpus contained 7,705 structured CV records across 17 search-term shards. A further 989 records were written to a rejects file during parsing. Each structured record contained CV-level metadata and nested employment histories.

For this report, the main analytical unit was the employment spell. A CV could be retrieved through one target organisation and still contain many other employers. The pipeline therefore retained search-term matches at the employment-experience level. Matched employment spells were used for headcount reconstruction. Full employment histories were used for labour-market network analysis.



CV-BASED ANALYSIS PIPELINE

Caption: CV-based analysis pipeline. HeadHunter CVs were collected using organisation-specific search terms, parsed into structured CV records, and split into two analytical workflows. Matched target-organisation employment spells were expanded into monthly person-organisation observations to reconstruct observable headcount trajectories. Full employment histories were cleaned, canonicalised, coded into broad labour-market categories, transformed into an employer network, and visualised in Gephi. The workflow applies the CV-analysis method developed by Poliakoff and Kling (2026) to a broader ecosystem-level dataset.

MONTHLY OBSERVABLE HEADCOUNT

The headcount reconstruction treats reported employment spells as time-stamped labour traces. CV employment histories usually contain start and end dates. These dates were expanded into month-by-month observations.

If a CV holder reported working for an organisation from March 2021 to June 2022, the employment spell was converted into one observation for each month between March 2021 and June 2022. If a position was open-ended or marked as current, it was treated as active until the collection snapshot month.

For headcount reconstruction, the pipeline retained only employment-experience records in which a target search term was detected at the experience level. These matched employment spells were standardised into a time-series-compatible structure. Each record contained at least the CV identifier, the target organisation or search-term category, start date, end date, current or open-ended status, position title, position description, and birth year where available. For visualisation and interpretation, the headcount series was truncated at May 2024.

The final visualisation dataset contained 8,790 organisation-month observations, covering target search-term categories from January 2000 to May 2024.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE LABOUR-MARKET NETWORK

The labour-market network was designed to capture employer-to-employer proximity through CV-based career histories. The analytical logic is based on shared employment trajectories. If two organisations appear in the same person's employment history, they are connected through that person's reported career path.

This network translates individual career histories into a company-level map of personnel circulation. It is useful for identifying where the ecosystem is embedded: media, state administration, civic-patriotic projects, education, political consulting, digital communication, corporate PR, IT, or adjacent labour markets.

The starting employment-experience table contained 18,513 employer mentions extracted from parsed CV employment histories. Before network construction, employer names required cleaning because CV holders used inconsistent naming conventions, spelling variants, abbreviations, transliterations, legal forms, and generic labels. The pre-cleaning and canonicalisation procedure reduced the table to 17,592 rows.

A node represents a cleaned employer entity extracted from CV employment histories. A node's presence in the network means that the employer appeared in at least one CV-based career history used in the network construction.

An edge means that two employers appeared in the same CV holder's employment history. It indicates labour-market proximity through a shared career trajectory. It should be read as a personnel-circulation trace. It should not be read as evidence of formal cooperation, ownership, subcontracting, funding, institutional hierarchy, or common management unless such a relationship is established elsewhere in the report.

VISUALISATION IN GEPHI

The network was visualised in Gephi using a single ForceAtlas2 layout. The same layout was retained across overview and spotlight figures so that the spatial position of focal organisations remained comparable across figures.

The Gephi stage produced a readable spatialisation of the labour-market network and a set of overview and focal-node maps. The network was treated as an undirected company network. Nodes represented employer entities. Edges represented shared CV-based career histories.

Node attributes included company label, occurrence or visibility count, labour-market category, ecosystem membership, focal-neighbour status, and search-term or target flag. Edge attributes included the source and target company, edge-generating CV field where available, and edge weight or matching count where relevant.

ForceAtlas2 was used with approximate repulsion, LinLog mode, prevent overlap, edge weight influence set to 1.5, scaling set to 2.0, and gravity set to 1.0. Edge weight normalisation and edge weight inversion were not used.

The layout should be read as a stable spatial reference for the figures. Spatial proximity helps interpret labour-market embeddedness, but it is a visualisation aid rather than a precise measurement of organisational distance. Community detection was therefore not used as the primary basis for interpretation. The report relies on coded labour-market attributes, focal-node spotlight maps, edge weights where relevant, and substantive interpretation of the organisations.

For the full methodological discussion, see:

Poliakoff, S., & Kling, J. (2026). Mapping the disinformation industry in Russia. New Media & Society. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448261452207

ANNEX C: BUDGET ESTIMATES

The various financial datapoints in this report indicate a substantial but highly fragmented political-technology ecosystem overseen by Sergey Kiriyenko. While no consolidated budget exists, the available evidence allows for a reasonably confident estimate of the identifiable annual resources devoted to political management, ideological mobilisation, digital governance, and foreign influence activities.

The strongest evidentiary foundation is from a leaked October 2023 state expenditure document, that covers many of Kiriyenko's ANOs at the time. This identifies approximately ₽582 billion (€582m) in direct federal financing for a core group of organisations. The largest recipients were the Internet Development Institute (IRI) at ₽21.9 billion, Russia – Land of Opportunities (RSV) at ₽8.8 billion, Dialog Regions at ₽6.4 billion, Tavrida at ₽6.3 billion, and several additional youth, media, and mobilisation organisations. Although this dataset does not capture all relevant entities and excludes non-budgetary financing, it demonstrates that the state allocated hundreds of billions of rubles annually to a relatively concentrated network of organisations operating in the fields of information policy, youth mobilisation, leadership development, and social management.

No.	Organisation	Subsidy for 2023 (Million)	Staff September 2023
1	ANO "RSV" АНО «РСВ»	₽8 794 €88	430
2	ANO "IRI" АНО «ИРИ»	₽21 904 €220	264
3	ANO "Dialog-Regions" АНО «Диалог-регионы»	₽6 439 €64	2 468
4	ANO "Great Change" АНО «Большая Перемена»	₽1 993 €20	126
5	ANO "CRKI" Tavrida АНО «ЦРКИ» Таврида	₽6 344 €63	331
6	ANO "CISM" АНО «ЦИСМ»	₽621 €6	158
7	ANO "BCHP" АНО «БЧП»	₽3 000 €30	56
8	ANO "DVD Russia" АНО «ДВД «Россия»	₽7 000 €70	50
9	ANO "Creative Economy" АНО «Креативная экономика»	₽166 €1.7	23 plan for 2023
10	ANO "CZ Mashuk" АНО «ЦЗ «Машук»	registered on 03/10/2023	

No.	Organisation	Subsidy for 2023 (million)	Staff September 2023
11	ANO “World Youth Festival Directorate” АНО «Дирекция Всемирного фестиваля молодежи»	₽2 500 €25	269 plan for 2023
12	ANO “Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects in Pskov City (Pskov Region)” АНО «Возрождение объектов культурного наследия в городе Пскове (Псковской области)»	₽384 €3.9	7 plan for 2023
13	ANO “Integration” АНО «Интеграция»	non-budgetary sources	56
14	ANO “CEMAC” АНО «ЦЭМАК»	non-budgetary sources	non-budgetary sources
15	ANO “EISI” АНО «ЭИСИ»	non-budgetary sources	110

No.	Organisation	Subsidy for 2026 (million)
1	ANO “RSV” АНО «РСВ»	₽8 794 €88
2	ANO “IRI” АНО «ИРИ»	₽25 000 €250
3	ANO “Dialog-Regions” АНО «Диалог-регионы»	₽9 000 €90
4	ANO “Great Change” АНО «Большая Перемена»	
5	АНО «ЦРКИ» Таврида ANO “CRCI” Tavriada	₽3000-4000 €30-40
6	ANO “CISM” АНО «ЦИСМ»	₽1 000 €10
7	ANO “BCHP” АНО «БЧП»	
8	ANO “DVD Russia” АНО «ДВД «Россия»	
9	ANO “Creative Economy” *АНО «Креативная экономика»*	
10	ANO “CZ Mashuk” АНО «ЦЗ «Машук»	

11	ANO "World Youth Festival Directorate" АНО «Дирекция Всемирного фестиваля молодежи»	₽5 500 €55
12	ANO "Revival of Cultural Heritage Objects in Pskov City (Pskov Region)" АНО «Возрождение объектов культурного наследия в городе Пскове (Псковской области)»	
13	ANO "Integration" АНО «Интеграция»	
14	ANO "CEMAC" АНО «ЦЭМАК»	
15	ANO "EISI" АНО «ЭИСИ»	

Based on all available data about funding between 2024 and 2026, and incorporating additional entities, state-corporate financing, and estimated spending by Presidential Administration directorates, **we estimate an interval of ₽132–171 billion annually (€1.3–1.7 billion) dedicated to Kiriyenko's initiatives**.

The first pillar – **youth and patriotic propaganda** - includes various education, mobilisation, training, and political management structures. The estimated annual expenditure for this pillar falls between approximately ₽58 billion and ₽97 billion. While there is some data for individual entities and programmes, coverage is too inconsistent to go beyond the programmatic allocations given early in the chapter with any confidence. This means that we have relied on the programmatic funding plus known corporate support for this estimate. In order to reach a final estimate, we also incorporated the operational budgets of four directorates within the Presidential Administration domestic policy bloc, estimated collectively at ₽8–17 billion annually.

The second pillar is the **digital governance** and information-control ecosystem. This includes Dialog, Dialog Regions, IRI-funded content production, sociological monitoring systems, digital governance infrastructure, and affiliated contractors. The available evidence supports an estimated annual expenditure of approximately ₽39 billion. Within this category, IRI alone receives approximately ₽25.3 billion annually, while Dialog is now estimated at approximately ₽9 billion. Additional resources are channelled through state corporations and quasi-commercial entities. For example, EISI reportedly receives support from both Rosatom and RusHydro, illustrating the extent to which state-corporate financing supplements direct budget allocations. We have not included in-kind resources from, for example public sector staff time for GosPublics and Municipal Governance Centres in this estimate. Nor have we included VK Company's vast platform development resources, which are under some degree of direction by Kiriyenko.

The third pillar comprises **foreign interference** activities. This category is the least transparent and therefore carries the highest uncertainty. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests annual expenditure of approximately ₽35 billion. This estimate incorporates estimated funding for RISI, influence contractors such as SDA and Structura, Ukraine-focused influence operations, and the newly established strategic cooperation directorate within the Presidential Administration. Although some individual budget lines remain unknown, the aggregate figure is supported by multiple indicators and appears plausible as a medium confidence estimate. Rosatom and other corporate activities are not included in this estimate.

Taken together, this report reaches an overall estimate of approximately ₽132–171 billion (€1.3–1.7 billion) annually for Kiriyenko's ecosystem. This estimate should be regarded as conservative. It excludes many potentially significant but difficult-to-isolate funding streams, including classified expenditure, regional co-financing, state-corporate in-kind support, commercial revenue streams, and broader strategic investment portfolios. At the same time, some overlap likely exists between programme budgets, ANO financing, and directorate expenditure, meaning that absolute precision is not possible. We note for example that some actors in the ecosystem regularly apply from funding from other actors in the ecosystem.

Even allowing for these uncertainties, the evidence suggests that the political-technology ecosystem surrounding Kiriyenko represents one of the most heavily resourced governance architectures in contemporary Russia. The suggested expenditure provides sufficient resources to sustain a permanent infrastructure spanning youth mobilisation, patriotic education, elite management, digital governance, information control, strategic communications, and foreign influence operations across multiple domains simultaneously. It is potentially equal to or larger than the state budget for propaganda (covering primarily legacy media), which indicates just how much Kiriyenko's parallel governance infrastructure has grown.

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