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Limiting freedom of the press in these EU members states creates vulnerability that can be exploited because freedom of expression and the media are crucial for independent news-gathering. It is a key criterion for European states joining the EU. Furthermore, limiting reporting and the freedom to critic current political leaders polices in the press creates a dysfunctional liberal democracy and enables societal distrust, which can be exploited through disinformation campaigns.

### *Fact-Checking & Self-Regulation*









overarching objective of Russia's strategy is to foster political discord and hinder European

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