

**Pekka Kallioniemi** @P\_KallioniemiJun 8, 2025 · 17 tweets · [P\\_Kallioniemi/status/1931660797744123912](#)

In today's Vatik Soup, I'll talk about Finland and how pro-Kremlin propagandists have become more active in the Finnish political space since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. For the first time since 2022, they've gained some political power in Finland.

1/16



Russia's political strategy in countries with Russian-speaking minorities (such as Finland and the Baltics) is typically quite similar: it seeks to rally these minorities around issues like language and minority rights, and then frames the situation as oppression.

2/16

Russian invasion

## Ex-Member of Parliament Ano Turtiainen went to the St. Petersburg Economic Forum – “A desperate company” says expert

Turtiainen claims to be “representing Finland” in his videos. The Foreign Office says there is no official representation. EastCham does not know that there are any Finnish companies at the event.



Ex-Member of Parliament Ano Turtiainen has strongly pursued Russia's interests on its YouTube channel. Photo: Petri Vironen / Yle

**TUUKKA TERVONEN**

14.6.2023 19:02

# Propastop Review: Who Are the Most Prolific Pro-Putin Online Commentators in Estonia?

A recent analysis by Propastop examined the Facebook pages of major Estonian news outlets, specifically the Russian-language editions of *RusPostimees* (49K followers) and *RusDelfi* (37K followers), focusing on user activity in February 2025. The study found that Russian-speaking users are particularly active in the comment sections under Facebook posts by these media outlets, engaging predominantly in their native language. Among them, a number of pro-Putin voices stand out—Propastop takes a closer look at their activity and the narratives they promote.

NEWS > POLITICS

## EU Parliament fines MEP accused of spying for Russia

Latvian lawmaker Tatjana Ždanoka faces sanctions after breaching the MEPs' code of conduct.

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Tatjana Ždanoka, a Latvian MEP who was accused in media reports this year of having spied for Russia | European Union

APRIL 10, 2024 4:02 PM CET  
BY EDDY WAX

At the same time, Russian speakers are extremely wary and skeptical of local media, and instead tend to follow Russian domestic outlets like Russia-1 and NTV, thereby reinforcing an almost impenetrable information bubble.



This article is over 10 years old.

Media

## Finnish Russians suspicious of Western Ukraine news – “Russian media work better”

Many Finns have a suspicion of Western news from Ukraine. Finnish news is considered not only anti-Russian, but also improper and based on rumours.

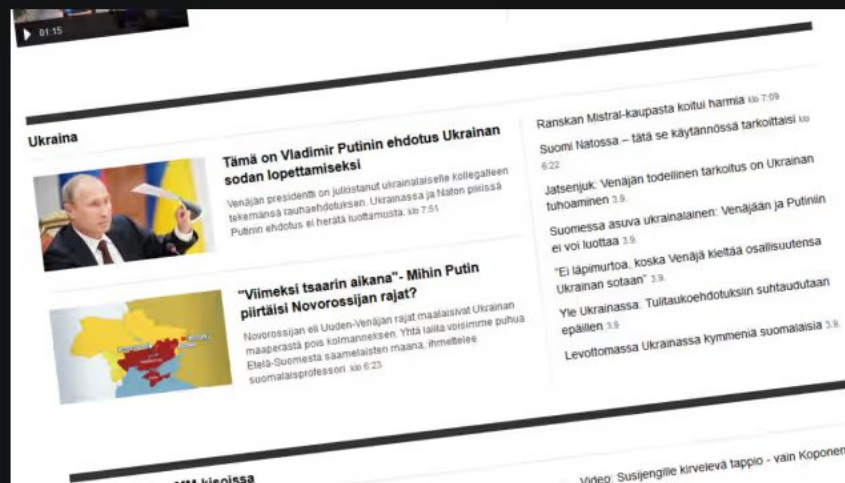


Photo: Yle

LASSE LAITINEN

4.9.2014 14:24 ... Updated 4.9.2014 14:39



People

## Some of Finland's Russian speakers are so suspicious that they don't trust any party

According to a survey, the trust of Finnish Russians in Finnish authorities has decreased in two years.



We asked what media they are following at the Russian market in Itäkeskus. Description: Thomas Hagström / Yle, interviews: Pasi Peiponen / Yle

**ANNIKA MARTIKAINEN, PASI PEIPONEN**

29.10.2024 11:00 .. Updated 29.10.2024 16:47

"I think Russian media work better," says Maria Semenova.

Finnish and Western news mediation is considered not only anti-Russian, but also in terms of news of Ukraine. Many people say Western media has not been able to prove that Russia is to blame for the downing of a Malaysian passenger aircraft, let alone that Russian troops operate on Ukrainian territory.

- Evidence, evidence, evidence? Where is the evidence of Russian troops? They're missing. Western media have taken a clear line. What is being said in Kiev is true, and no proof of that is needed. What is spoken to in Moscow is a lie, says Yuri Shikalov, who has lived in Joensuu for almost two decades.

"The Russian press is more diverse and there are more perspectives," says Maria Semenova.

Since Russian spin doctors and propagandists are aware that, due to historical factors, it is difficult for new parties promoting these issues to gain popularity, they often infiltrate existing parties with an established voter base.

# SDP suspended candidate is now on left-wing alliance lists: 'There has been no acceptance of Russia's war of aggression'

Ivan Deviatkin could not condemn Russia's war of aggression for "security reasons," the South Karelian Left Alliance is justified.



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SAVE



COMMENTS



In Finland, there are around 100,000 Russian speakers, the majority of whom are ethnic Russians. Before February 2022, they were relatively apolitical, but since then, some have begun actively campaigning and attempting to portray Russia in a more positive light.



**Russians in Finland** or **Finnish Russians** are a [linguistic](#) and [ethnic](#) minority in [Finland](#). As of 2024, there were 102,487 Russian speakers in Finland, or 1.8% of the population. It is the second largest linguistic minority in the country.<sup>[1]</sup> However, many of the Russian-speaking immigrants are ethnically [Ingrian Finns](#) and other [Finno-Ugric peoples](#).<sup>[2]</sup> In addition, a significant minority of [Estonians](#), [Ukrainians](#) and people from the former [Soviet Union](#) speak Russian as their mother tongue.

As of 2024, there were 35,172 people, or 0.6% of population, who hold [Russian](#) citizenship residing in Finland – [dual citizens](#) included. The [dissolution of the Soviet Union](#) has influenced how [Statistics Finland](#) defines a person's country of birth in their statistical data. Before 1991, individuals born in what is now Russia, [Latvia](#), [Belarus](#), [Ukraine](#), or in other [Post-Soviet states](#), are considered to have been born in the [Soviet Union](#). 20,499 people were born in Russia and whereas 63,885 people come from the former Soviet Union.<sup>[3]</sup>

Furthermore, there are people with Russian-background who have received only Finnish citizenship, and [Estonian Russians](#). Two common reasons for immigration were marriage, and descendant from Ingrian Finns.<sup>[4]</sup>

Their most common strategy is what I call the “political Trojan horse”: during their campaigns, they support broadly appealing issues like universal healthcare and social welfare, but once elected, they begin promoting topics such as reopening the Finnish-Russian border.

## Marova: it is necessary to take into account the needs of vulnerable groups of the population



Katja Marova at the demonstration "Rajat aukii!" in Lappeenranta in November 2023. Image by Jani Aarnio / Yle

In second place among the candidates with Russian roots was the forty-year-old **Katja Marova**, who scored 653 votes and passed to the regional council of South Karelia from the Union of Left Forces.

15 years ago, Marova moved to Finland from St. Petersburg. In 2024, she was a member of the board of the Alexander Society, which advocates the opening of the eastern border.

In the compass, Yle Marova stressed that its priority is to ensure that public services are not reduced.

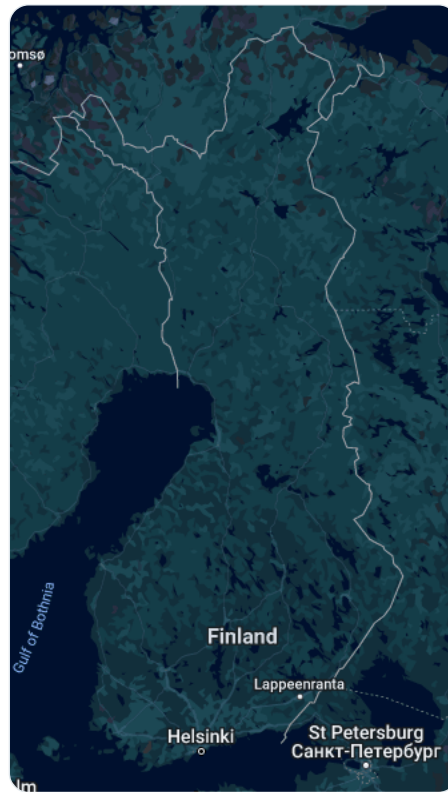
- As a deputy, I will ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups are taken into account in decision-making.

In Finland, their campaign centered around two candidates: Katja Marova and Ivan Deviatkin. Both ran as Left Alliance candidates and won council seats in South Karelia, ultimately receiving a relatively high number of votes.

Here's how they did it:

### Deputies whose native language is Russian

Member	Party	Advice
Ivan Devyatkin	Union of the Left Forces	the Lappeenranta City Council
Maxim Dubrovin	"Green"	the Imatra City Council
Yuri Karpov	"Movement Now"	the Khamin City Council
Katya Marova	Union of the Left Forces	the South Karelia Regional Council
Diana Seply	"Center"	the Haapawwesi City Council



The two live near the Russian border in southeastern Finland. In March 2025, they held a closed, Russian language-only event requiring prior registration. Organized by Deviatkin and Marova, the event focused mainly on the concept of “tactical voting.”







The strategy was a great success: Marova & Deviatkin were elected to the regional and city councils with 653 541 votes. Their pro-Russia messaging helped boost the Left Alliance's seats in Lappeenranta from 1 to 3.

They ignored all interview requests from Finnish media.









PHOTO: JUHA METSO, SOUTH KARELIAN LEFT ALLIANCE, COLOURBOX, PRESS PHOTO, PHOTO EDITING: IS

DOMESTIC

## Pro-Russia agenda for the council

Katja Marova and Ivan Deviat of the Left Alliance are also known to be Finland's first politicians campaigned with Russia. They went through the spring regional and municipal elections.

 Listen to the story

Outi Salovaara  
7:00 PM

Marova and Deviatkin spread typical Kremlin narratives and both claim widespread “Russophobia” in Finland. Marova even considers “Slava Ukraini” hate speech. Deviatkin handed out Russian embassy WWII medals and liked online comments defending Stalinist-era policies.

## NEWS AND ANALYSIS

# The “Russophobia” myth: appealing to the lowest feelings

By EUvsDisInfo | July 04, 2017

Read this article in: [EN](#) [RU](#)

**“RUSSOPHOBIA” IS USED  
TO TEACH RUSSIANS TO  
HATE & FEAR THE  
WORLD AROUND THEM**





**Katja Marova lives in the border city of Lappeenranta.**

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Apart from discrimination, some Russians complain about racist harassment in public.

Marova, a Left Alliance candidate for parliament in Lappeenranta, wrote on [Facebook](#) about an incident at a bar when she spoke to a Russian friend.

"On Friday, we were at a bar in our city [Lappeenranta] when a man walked by us and purposely bumped into my friend," she said. "The man apologized, and my friend said it was ok. But then he started to say *Slava Ukraini* (Respect Ukraine)."

Marova said that her friend was shocked by the man's reaction.

“Whenever a Finn says *Slava Ukraini* it means that ‘I hate you,’ ‘you are not welcome in the bar, the city, the country,’” Marova wrote on Facebook. “‘This is my home, not yours,’ and ‘I am older and stronger than you and therefore can say anything I wish.’”

Both are dual citizens. Deviatkin refused to condemn Russia’s war in Ukraine, claiming it would endanger him and his son. But he went much further by spreading blatant Russian propaganda to Russian-speakers in Finland.

## Elections

## SDP removes Ivan Deviatkin of Lappeenranta from its lists of candidates – failed to condemn Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine

According to the SDP, Ivan Deviatkin had been told that the party would require its candidates to condemn Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.



Ivan Deviatkin from Lappeenranta is a dual citizen of Finland and Russia, who has now lost his candidacy for municipal and state elections in the SDP. Photo: Pyry Sarkiola / Yle

**TANJA HANNUS**

2.12.2024 7:36 .. Updated 2.12.2024 10:09



9.52

4G 56%



urbanized\_person 11h

...



These are the traitors of Finland:  
they don't live by the values  
where peace is the key. They  
support Ukraine yet they also  
support genocide by Israel!



These are the  
members of the EU  
parliament who  
blocked the debate  
on humanitarian  
situation in Gaza.  
Shame on them all!

Send message...





Ivan Deviatkin

**Antti Lindtman Li Andersson Petteri Orpo**, meidän ulkoministeri **Elina Valtonen** sekä puolustusministeri **Antti Häkkänen** allekirjoittivat DCA sopimuksen, joka pettää maamme! Jos te hyväksytte sen teidän puolueissa, niin olettekin te itsenäisen Suomen pettureita!

47w Like Reply Edited

8



## Devyatkin intends to improve the situation of immigrants and increase employment



Ivan Devyatkin previously stated that he considers the closure of the eastern border a violation of human rights. In the photo, he is captured at the border checkpoint of Vaalimaa in December 2023. Image by Pyry Sarkiola / Yle

The three leaders are closed by a new deputy of the city council of Lappeenranta, 35-year-old **Ivan Devyatkin**, for whom 541 people voted. Devyatkin advocates the opening of the eastern border.

He moved to Lappeenranta in 2012. In January last year, Devyatkin became one of the founders of the Alexander Society, but now he is not a member of it.

Initially, he was a candidate from the SDP, but the party ruled out him, saying that Devyatkin did not condemn the Russian attack on Ukraine. The Union of Left Forces, however, noted that Devyatkin never supported the war.

In an interview with Yle, immediately after the election, he suggested that the majority of his voters were Russian-speaking.

"I strive to contribute to improving the situation of immigrants and other minorities, as well as increasing the level of employment," the deputy outlined his goals in the city council.

Marova has echoed Kremlin talking points online. She shared a post questioning the Bucha massacre, claiming the victims were Russians or that it was staged by Ukrainians. Since then, she has toned down her online rhetoric.



Katja Marova, one of the organizers of the demonstration demanding the opening of the eastern border, said on her public Facebook account on Sunday that the pro-Ukrainian demonstration had been disruptive and intentionally provocative. She said a criminal report had been filed with the police.

The Southeast Finland police were still unable to confirm receipt of the crime report on Monday.



Venäläinen kunnallispoliitikko Katja Marova Lappeenrannasta:

"Tiedotusvälineiltä Marova toivoisi uutisia, joissa kerrottaisiin myös Venäjän näkemyksiä sodan taustoista, kuten Naton laajentumisen pelosta."

hs.fi  
Syrjintä | Ryssittelyä ja väkivallalla uhkailua – Hyökkäyssota sotki täysin Suo...  
Sota lietsoi venäläisvastaisia asenteita, säilytti venäjänkielisiä ja jakoi suomenvenäläiset jyrkästi eri leireihin. "Voidaan myös heittää polttopulloja ...

8.39 ap. - 5. jouluk. 2022

**Ekaterina Marova**  
12. Apr 2022 · 🌐

100 👍👍👍

**Risto Uljas**  
11. Apr 2022 · 🌐

Kun julkaisin taannoin kommentin Bushnan kuvista, sain niskaani asiallisten kommenttien ohella myös melkoisen määrän solvauksia, jotka perustuivat joko tahallisiin tai tahattomiin väärinkäsityksiin. Sen takia perustelen vielä kantaani alla:

En väitä, etteivätkö kuvissa näkyvät ruumiit olisi aitoja. Kyllä ne minustakin ruumiita ovat, vaikka hyvä olisi sekin varmistaa. Mutta kysymys totuudesta on mutkikkaampi, kun kuvat tarjotaan meille kuvina vainajista, jotka ovat "venäläisten julmasti tappamia siviilejä". Voivat olla, mutta voi olla, etteivät olekaan.

**Ekaterina "Katja" Marova, a municipal politician of Russian background from the Left Alliance (Vasemmistoliitto), reinforces the Russian narrative by hoping for news from the media that would also report Russia's views on the background of the war, such as the fear of NATO expansion.**

**Marova also "thumbs up" for a social media post questioning the Russians' guilt in the Bucha massacre last year.**

The two had previously co-founded Aleksanterinliitto, a group that advocates for reopening Finland's eastern border. The group files complaints about alleged discrimination against Russians to Finnish courts, the EU, and the UN. Interestingly, Marova was later expelled...

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...from the group after she spoke out against homophobic slurs made by one of its members. After this, Deviatkin also left the organization. After the elections, other parties froze out the Left Alliance. Eventually, Deviatkin was expelled from the party's council group...

Municipalities

## Ivan Deviatkin, who opposed the closure of the eastern border, was dismissed from a council group in Lappeenranta

According to the Left Alliance council group, the grounds for dismissal are Deviatkin's inappropriate behaviour at a council group meeting and repeated action against party values.



Ivan Deviatkin was given the go-ahead by the Lappeenranta council group of the Left Alliance on the eve of a new council term. Photo: Mikko Savolainen / Yle

**RIITTA VÄISÄNEN**

30.5. 18:48 .. Updated 30.5. 19:00

### The party distancing itself

Since the municipal elections, the Left Alliance's party office has distanced itself from Deviatkin. Earlier, party secretary **Anna Mäkipää** told Yle that Deviatkin should not have been nominated in the spring elections.

According to Mäkipää, Ivan Deviatkin's statements do not represent the party's policy.

In municipal elections, a local office made a nomination process.

...for behavior “contrary to party values.” Naturally, he played the martyr card after. Left Alliance’s national leadership admitted letting them run was a mistake. Still, Marova and Deviatkin built a base by blending identity politics, conspiracy, and Kremlin bullshit.







This investigation was done by a fantastic Finnish journalist, @OutiSalovaara. Check out her new book (unfortunately only in Finnish):

<https://atena.fi/kirjat/ruplaruhtinaat>

And here's Outi's article (in Finnish) about the elections:

<https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000011280116.html>

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The 2nd edition of "Vatnik Soup — The Ultimate Guide to Russian Disinformation" is officially out!



You can order your copy here:



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