

**The Hidden
Power of**

**TikTok LIVE
in Poland**



**CEE Digital
Democracy Watch**

This report has been prepared solely for informational and analytical purposes. This report has been developed in pursuit of the public interest, by providing objective, fact-based information intended to enhance understanding of phenomena occurring within the TikTok LIVE platform and to support the functioning of public discourse, good practices and public policies.

The authors hereby declare that all findings, conclusions, and interpretations contained in the report are the result of independently conducted research, autonomous observations, and analysis of publicly available data derived from the TikTok accounts that have been researched into throughout the period of over three months.

The research activities were carried out independently, with due methodological diligence and without any influence from third parties on the processes of data collection, data processing, assessment of research material, or formulation of conclusions. The authors confirm that the work was performed in accordance with principles of research integrity, impartiality, and transparency.

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The Hidden Power of TikTok LIVE in Poland

Authors: **Dobromił Wereszczyński, Aleksandra Wójtowicz**

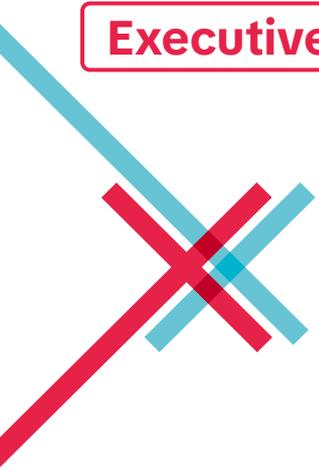
Contributors: Jakub Szymik, Konrad Kiljan

Editing: Miles Maftean



Table of contents

①	TikTok LIVE: structure and risks	6
	→ TikTok is where Poles go for news and information	
	→ TikTok LIVE in brief	
	→ Entertainment or exploitation. How to monetise the content on TikTok LIVE	
	→ Long history of TikTok as an tool for amplifying disinformation	
	→ The discreet charm of TikTok LIVE aesthetics	
②	Evidence: how TikTok LIVE became crucial for Poland's extremist landscape	11
	→ Authors of TikTok LIVE	
	→ What do they say	
	→ Cross-platform coordination and real-life spillover	
③	TikTok's mechanisms usage	26
	→ BLIKs, crypto and crowdfunding: monetisation angles	
	→ For You Feed proposed content and push notifications	
	Policy challenges	29
	Policy asks	30

**Executive summary:**

- 1/ **TikTok LIVE is being exploited** in Poland to spread hate speech, disseminate pro-Russian narratives, and impersonate state institutions, in clear contradiction of TikTok's own Community Guidelines and declared DSA risk-mitigation measures.
- 2/ **Over three months of research into 114 Polish-language TikTok accounts** using TikTok LIVE showed extremist narratives being actively promoted through TikTok's native distribution tools – the For You Feed (FYF) recommendations and push notifications — including to users who were not following them, despite fitting TikTok's policy category of FYF ineligible content. During the observation period, only three of the identified accounts were removed by the platform.
- 3/ **Many of the accounts are actively seeking monetisation** via BLIK fast transfers, cryptocurrency wallets, crowdfunding sites, and potentially through in-app gifting.
- 4/ **The content observed included hate speech**, disinformation, as well as conspiracy narratives that could undermine trust in democratic institutions, echoing risk patterns already flagged in the Polish Ministry of Digital Affairs' request to initiate proceedings before the European Commission dated 30 December 2025.

5/

The TikTok LIVE format poses specific transparency and accountability problems: streams are ephemeral, not archived, and largely inaccessible to researchers. The tool is designed to maximise commercial potential and should be subject to further investigation in light of the European Commission's preliminary findings on the platform's addictive design.

6/

Despite the European Commission's active formal proceedings against TikTok initiated in December 2024 on its management of risks related to elections and undermining democratic trust, the platform has not adjusted the LIVE function in ways that would prevent the amplification, potential monetisation, and opacity of such content in Poland.

7/

TikTok needs to take immediate steps, including suspending the TikTok LIVE functionality in the European Union, until meaningful changes are implemented to address those systemic risks.

①

TikTok LIVE: structure and risks:

→ TikTok is where Poles go for news & information:

TikTok is the third most popular social platform for users in Poland.¹ More than 50% of Poles now use TikTok at least once a week, while 42% do so more often.² TikTok in Poland has over 2 million users aged 7-14 and almost the same number aged 60-75. This demographic breadth is analytically significant: the heavy concentration of both very young and elderly users represents a dual vulnerability, as both groups are typically more susceptible to manipulation — younger users due to limited media literacy and critical evaluation skills, older users due to lower familiarity with AI-generated content and synthetic media techniques. Research conducted by UCE Research for Onet³ found that in 2025, TikTok was the primary source of information about Poland's presidential election for 43.7% of respondents aged 18 to 25, underscoring the platform's outsized influence on the political socialisation of first-time and young voters.

→ TikTok LIVE in brief:

One of the unique and specific features of TikTok is TikTok LIVE, which allows creators to broadcast real-time video to their followers and the

broader TikTok community.

During a live stream, viewers can interact through comments, send virtual gifts (which can be converted into real money for the creator⁴), and engage directly with the host. Moreover, it is possible to have more than one streamer during a LIVE — a host can invite and accept other users to go live, creating an online debate with several users speaking at the same time. To go live, users typically need to be at least 18 years old and have a minimum number of followers (usually 1,000).⁵

While the For You Feed (FYF) continues to serve as the central interface for content discovery, the platform is now prioritising livestreaming⁶, effectively repositioning the format from a community feature to a core commercial engine. TikTok is actively touting LIVE as the next major revenue stream for creators and agencies, incentivising a surge in real-time content production through the promise of monetisation. Consequently, the recommendation system is increasingly leveraged to push these streams to broader audiences, facilitating features like multi-guest hosting.

These characteristics make TikTok LIVE a distinctly potent vector for spread of malicious information compared to standard pre-recorded short-form videos. The real-time nature of live-streams means that misleading content can reach audiences before any moderation review takes place; there is little to no check on what a host says or displays during a broadcast. The virtual gifting mechanism creates a potential financial incentive for sensationalist, provocative, or conspiratorial content that maximises viewer engagement and donations.

¹ Wirtualne Media, *13 mln użytkowników TikToka w Polsce. Dominują dzieci w wieku 7-14 lat*, 2024. <https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/13-mln-uzytkownikow-tiktoka-w-polsce-dominuja-dzieci-w-wieku-7-14-lat,7179295777933441a>

² IAB Polska, *Raport: Polacy w social mediach 2026*, 2026. https://www.iab.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Raport-Polacy-w-social-mediach_IAB_Polska_2026.pdf

³ Onet Wiadomości, *Większość młodych już zdecydowała. Sygnał alarmowy dla jednego kandydata – sondaż*, 2025. <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/wybory/wybory-prezydenckie/wiekszosc-mlodych-juz-zdecydowala-sygnal-alarmowy-dla-jednego-kandydata-sondaz/ybxqpyt>

⁴ TikTok, *Unlocking LIVE Monetisation*, TikTok Creator Academy, n.d. <https://www.tiktok.com/creator-academy/en/article/Unlocking-LIVE-monetization>

⁵ TikTok, *What is TikTok LIVE?*, TikTok Support, n.d. <https://support.tiktok.com/en/live-gifts-wallet/tiktok-live/what-is-tiktok-live>

⁶ Digiday, *TikTok touts livestreaming as next big revenue stream for creators and agencies*, 2023. <https://digiday.com/media/tiktok-touts-livestreaming-as-next-big-revenue-stream-for-creators-and-agencies/>

The multi-guest feature enables disinformation actors to stage the appearance of organic, multi-voice discussion, lending false credibility to coordinated narratives. Furthermore, the algorithmic recommendation of LIVE streams through the FYF means that users who have never followed a particular creator can be funnelled into a disinformation livestream purely through the platform's own curation logic.

As early as 2022, NBC News documented fake livestreams during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in which users looped footage, dubbed air-raid sirens over unrelated video, and used TikTok's donation system to monetise fabricated war content.⁷ This demonstrated that LIVE is not merely a passive channel for disinformation but an active enabler of it.

→ Entertainment or exploitation. How to monetise the content on TikTok LIVE:

The majority of research conducted regarding the TikTok LIVE feature suggests that it is predominantly used for marketing purposes, to increase the sales of a certain product or service, as well as live stream shopping. All the features offered by TikTok LIVE — being able to observe another person indeed live and, in a way, uncurated — can foster a sense of emotional connection with streamers, thus enhancing active participation in the whole event. Research indicates that this can significantly influence consumer trust and affect buying behaviour.^{8,9} Some studies suggest that TikTok live streaming might have a 38.5% effect on impulsive buying behaviour,

⁷ NBC News, *War in Ukraine sparks new wave of misinformation*, 2022. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/war-ukraine-sparks-new-wave-misinformation-rcna17779>

⁸ Rolando, B. (2025). The Appeal of TikTok Live and Its Contribution to Digital Marketing Performance. *JUMDER: Jurnal Bisnis Digital dan Ekonomi Kreatif*, 1(5), 49–56. <https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/JUMDER/article/view/127>

⁹ Rajput, A., & Gandhi, A. (2024). The branding power of social media influencers: an interactive marketing approach. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2380807>

increasing viewers' likelihood of spending money.^{10,11} Interestingly, however, the only result of streaming e-commerce is not necessarily the buying of certain products. Oftentimes, the focus shifts to the virtual gifts that viewers give to streamers.

The virtual gifting system on TikTok LIVE operates through a multi-layered currency mechanism. Viewers purchase TikTok Coins using real money, which they then use to send animated virtual gifts to creators during live broadcasts. These gifts range from simple tokens such as roses, worth as little as 1 coin, to elaborate premium items worth thousands of coins.¹²

Once received, gifts are converted into Diamonds — TikTok's internal creator currency — which can then be exchanged for real money. It is important to note, however, that some part of these funds is retained by TikTok as commission.¹³ TikTok became the first app to exceed \$1 billion in consumer spending in a single quarter, with TikTok LIVE playing a crucial role in this growth, and some influencers earning as much as \$3,000 per stream.¹⁴

A 2025 study commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, surveying 500 individuals aged 18-49 in the United States, provides further empirical grounding for the scale and dynamics of livestream gifting. The research found that 85% of social media users surveyed were aware of livestream gifting, and 68% of TikTok users surveyed had already tried

¹⁰ Ardiyanti, V. D. (2023). The Effect of TikTok Live Streaming Shopping on Impulse Buying Behavior in The 2023 Global Crisis. *Asian Journal of Logistics Management*, 2(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.14710/ajlm.2023.18050>.

¹¹ W. Tu, C. Yan, Y. Yan, X. Ding and L. Sun, "Who Is Earning? Understanding and Modeling the Virtual Gifts Behavior of Users in Live Streaming Economy," 2018 IEEE Conference on Multimedia Information Processing and Retrieval (MIPR), Miami, FL, USA, 2018, pp. 118-123, <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8396984>

¹² Handshake Media, *TikTok LIVE Gifting Explained*, n.d. <https://www.handshakemedia.co/tiktok-live-gifting-explained>

¹³ TikTok, *Rewards Policy*, n.d. <https://www.tiktok.com/legal/page/global/rewards-policy-row/en>

¹⁴ The Atlantic, *The PinkyDoll Phenomenon and the Economics of TikTok LIVE Gifts*, 2023. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2023/08/tiktok-live-gifts-tips-pinkydoll/674917/>

gifting on TikTok LIVE, with 50% indicating they were likely to use it again within the next month.¹⁵ Furthermore, TikTok estimates that over 60,000 US creators will receive rewards worth more than the median part-time monthly income in 2025, and one in five US creators will receive rewards the first time they go LIVE.¹⁶

Based on the available research one has to note that platform monetisation can function as a direct financial pipeline for politically motivated actors involved in foreign information manipulation and interference.¹⁷ By pegging financial rewards to engagement metrics rather than content accuracy or quality, perverse incentives are created that favour the production of controversial material, "AI slop", and the deployment of inauthentic automation tools. This revenue model not only subsidises the spread of misleading information but can actively support coordinated and contract-based disinformation campaigns. The study of 314 German extremist accounts showed that right-wing activists in these streams monetized their broadcasts through micro-donations while spreading hate speech, with earnings ranging from tens to hundreds of euros per day, with the highest single-stream earnings reaching €114.¹⁸

Furthermore, current transparency obligations, such as those under TTPAR, often fail to capture these financial flows, as monetisation payouts do not formally qualify as political advertising. This regulatory blind spot allows funds to reach

actors outside the EU without adequate scrutiny of their identity or intent. To mitigate these risks, it is essential to enforce strict identity verification for program eligibility, suspend funding for accounts engaged in coordinated inauthentic behavior, and establish a comprehensive framework that treats monetisation with the same rigor as political financing, ensuring that platforms do not inadvertently bankroll the destabilisation of democratic discourse.

→ Long history of TikTok as a tool for amplifying disinformation:

TikTok has long served as a significant conduit for information operations and the amplification of content that is misleading, extremist, and detrimental to electoral integrity, with multiple forensic investigations revealing systemic failures in content moderation and algorithmic neutrality.

While the remainder of this report focuses on Poland, a brief survey of the global evidence base is necessary to establish that the Polish experience is not anomalous but part of a well-documented, platform-wide pattern.

For example, a Mozilla investigation found that TikTok's automated system for labeling election-related content was ineffective and frequently malfunctioned, while the platform failed to prevent the creation and operation of accounts impersonating prominent political figures.¹⁹ In another case, a Global Witness investigation demonstrated that TikTok, alongside Facebook, failed to detect blatant election disinformation submitted as paid advertisements.²⁰

These content moderation failures on TikTok gained additional significance in the broader context of U.S. legislative and regulatory action against

¹⁵ Ipsos, *Entertainment Redefined: Interactive Livestream Gifting*, 2025. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/documents/2025-12/Ipsos-Entertainment%20Redefined%20-%20Interactive%20LIVestream%20Gifting.pdf>

¹⁶ Ipsos, *Entertainment Redefined: Interactive Livestream Gifting*, 2025. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/documents/2025-12/Ipsos-Entertainment%20Redefined%20-%20Interactive%20LIVestream%20Gifting.pdf>

¹⁷ S. Weinglass, *Did Romania's 'King of TikTok' Really Sway a Presidential Election?*, Bloomberg, 2026. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2026-02-26/tiktok-influencer-accused-of-swaying-romanian-presidential-election>

¹⁸ Digital Methods Initiative, *Summer School 2025: LIVE Streaming*, 2025. <https://www.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/SummerSchool2025LIVestreaming>

¹⁹ Mozilla Foundation, *TikTok and the German Federal Election 2021*, 2021. <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/campaigns/tiktok-german-election-2021/>

²⁰ Global Witness, *TikTok and Facebook fail to detect election disinformation in the US while YouTube succeeds*, 2022. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/digital-threats/tiktok-and-facebook-fail-detect-election-disinformation-us-while-youtube-succeeds/>

the platform. In April 2024, Congress enacted the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act (PAFACA), which required ByteDance to divest TikTok's U.S. operations or face a nationwide ban. Among the key justifications cited by lawmakers were concerns that a foreign adversary could exploit the platform's reach to disseminate disinformation, propaganda, and polarising content to its approximately 170 million American users. Following a series of executive orders postponing enforcement of the ban, a divestiture deal was ultimately finalised on 22 January 2026. Under the agreement, a newly formed entity — TikTok USDS Joint Venture LLC — assumed control of U.S. operations, with Oracle, Silver Lake, and MGX collectively acquiring a 45% stake, affiliates of existing ByteDance investors holding approximately 30%, and ByteDance retaining a capped 19.9% minority interest.

The Ukrainian struggle against the Russian invasion has frequently been targeted by such campaigns. Media Matters identified a pro-Russian propaganda network of over 180 TikTok influencers posting synchronised content.²¹ These influencers read from identical scripts to inject Kremlin-aligned narratives into previously non-political feeds. In another case, a joint investigation by BBC Verify and the DFRLab exposed a coordinated effort of thousands of fake TikTok accounts to discredit the former Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov.²² An audit by NewsGuard²³ found that for prominent news topics, such as the invasion of Ukraine, climate change, and the U.S. Capitol insurrection, the

platform's recommendation algorithms were highly susceptible to promoting falsehoods. Around 20% of the videos automatically suggested to users searching for these terms contained misinformation.

Disinformation on TikTok often targets Poland. For example, Ukraine's Center for Countering Disinformation identified a campaign on Polish TikTok in which AI-generated "humorous" videos deliberately ridiculed Ukrainians in Poland, portraying them as greedy and uneducated people who allegedly exploit Polish hospitality.²⁴ The Center noted that the comedic framing made the content harder for users to identify as propaganda, and that the campaign coincided with a broader intensification of anti-Ukrainian messaging across Polish-language social networks — aiming to sow discord between Ukrainians and Poles, discredit Ukrainian refugees, and reduce public support for Ukraine.

This long history of allowing coordinated manipulation campaigns to proliferate on its platform ultimately prompted regulatory action. In February 2024, the European Commission opened its first formal proceedings against TikTok under the Digital Services Act.²⁵ Just two months later, in April 2024, a second set of proceedings was launched after TikTok introduced TikTok Lite in France and Spain without conducting a prior risk assessment²⁶, raising particular concerns about its potentially addictive reward features and the absence of effective age verification. The enforcement trajectory intensified further in 2025: in May, the Commission issued

²⁴ UNN, *Anti-Ukrainian videos generated by AI are being spread on Polish TikTok – Centre for Countering Disinformation*, 2023. <https://unn.ua/en/news/anti-ukrainian-videos-generated-by-ai-are-being-spread-on-polish-tiktok-center-for-countering-disinformation>

²⁵ European Commission, *Commission opens formal proceedings against TikTok under the Digital Services Act*, 19 February 2024. <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-opens-formal-proceedings-against-tiktok-under-digital-services-act>

²⁶ European Commission, *Commission opens second formal proceedings against TikTok under the Digital Services Act regarding TikTok Lite*, 22 April 2024. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2227

²¹ Media Matters for America, *Pro-Russia propaganda campaign using over 180 TikTok influencers to promote the invasion of Ukraine*, 2022. <https://www.mediamatters.org/tiktok/pro-russia-propaganda-campaign-using-over-180-tiktok-influencers-promote-invasion-ukraine>

²² BBC News, *Fake TikTok accounts used in campaign to discredit Ukrainian minister*, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67687449>

²³ NewsGuard, *Misinformation Monitor: September 2022*, 2022. <https://www.newsguardtech.com/misinformation-monitor/september-2022/>

preliminary findings²⁷ that TikTok's advertisement repository failed to meet DSA transparency requirements, limiting the ability of researchers and civil society to detect scam advertisements, hybrid threat campaigns, and coordinated information operations. While the regulatory environment in Poland has prompted specific actions, such as the Ministry of Digital Affairs' formal intervention regarding AI-generated content promoting PolExit narratives²⁸ and the platform's recent, rare decision to remove Grzegorz Braun from FYF recommendations²⁹, these measures appear to be isolated reactions to external pressure rather than evidence of systemic safety. As documented in our report³⁰, the Election Rapid Response System explicitly flagged the opacity of TikTok LIVE and identified numerous accounts spreading election misinformation and hate speech. The troubling reality that many of these previously reported mechanisms remain active today exposes a critical failure in TikTok's mitigation measures under Article 35 of the DSA, confirming that the broadcast layer continues to operate as a permeable vector for interference despite prior regulatory flags.

→ The discreet charm of TikTok LIVE aesthetics:

It is important to note that the aesthetics of TikTok LIVE make it highly accessible — as the videos are indeed being recorded live, there is no time to

improve the lighting, re-shoot a scene, or carefully edit the final product. This raw, unpolished quality creates a sense of authenticity that resonates with viewers. This lo-fi aesthetic also lowers the barrier to entry for creators. Because audiences do not expect studio-quality production values from a livestream, virtually anyone with a smartphone can participate, regardless of their technical skills or access to professional equipment.

Unlike pre-recorded content, where engagement is limited to post-hoc likes and comments, livestreams invite real-time involvement: viewers can post comments that appear instantly on screen, send virtual gifts that trigger visible animations, join streams as guests, vote in polls, and participate in LIVE Matches alongside creators. This constant feedback loop, where the streamer responds to comments, acknowledges gifts by name, and adjusts their content based on audience reactions, creates a sense of co-presence and mutual investment that is far more immersive than scrolling through a feed.

However, as German far-right streams demonstrate, this participatory dynamic can be exploited: viewers do not merely consume extremist content but actively reinforce it by posting coded symbols in chat, coordinating emoji sequences that evade moderation, sending gifts that financially reward harmful messaging.³¹

²⁷ European Commission, *Commission issues preliminary findings against TikTok under the Digital Services Act*, 2025. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1223

²⁸ Ministry of Digital Affairs (Poland), *Dezinformacja z użyciem AI na platformie TikTok – interweniujemy w Komisji Europejskiej [Disinformation using AI on TikTok – we intervene with the European Commission]*, 2025. <https://www.gov.pl/web/cyfrizacja/dezinformacja-z-uzyciem-ai-na-platformie-tiktok--interweniujemy-w-komisji-europejskiej>

²⁹ Rzeczpospolita, *TikTok usuwa kolejne filmy Grzegorza Brauna. „Nie zezwalamy na mowę nienawiści”*, 2025. <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art43697191-tiktok-usuwa-kolejne-filmy-grzegorza-brauna-nie-zezwalamy-na-mowe-nienawisci>

³⁰ CEE Digital Democracy Watch, *Code of Practice on Disinformation – Report of CEE Digital Democracy Watch (Fundacja Obserwatorium Demokracji Cyfrowej for the period 1 January to 30 June 2025)*, 2025. <https://disinfocode.eu/reports/cee-digital-democracy-watch/6>

³¹ Digital Methods Initiative, *Live-Streaming: Mapping Networks of Influence and (Dis)information Flow*, 2025. <https://www.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/SummerSchool2025LIVeStreaming>

2

Evidence: how TikTok LIVE became crucial for Poland's extremist landscape

Between 18 October 2025 and 13 February 2026, we researched 114 TikTok accounts engaging in TikTok LIVE streaming. Further analysis of likes, follows, hashtags, and repost-related accounts revealed over 1,000 potentially linked accounts.

The accounts were identified from lists of known far-right and hate speech actors, hashtag and keyword-based searches, recommendation trails, and monitoring LIVE co-creators and participants.

During the observation period, only three of the monitored accounts were removed by the platform.

Account activity was monitored using third-party software, while selected LIVE broadcasts were watched by experts.

→ Authors of TikTok LIVE:

The 114 accounts monitored for this report do not constitute a single, centrally coordinated network but rather several intertwined groups that nonetheless share a cluster of defining characteristics: participation in extremist LIVE streams, high daily activity on TikTok, mutual followership patterns, common visual identities – including the use of the Russian flag, nationalist symbols, and movement-specific branding – and, in a significant number of cases, explicit association with the “front gaśnicowy” (the “fire extinguisher front”) named after its *de facto* leader, far-right MEP Grzegorz Braun, who used a fire extinguisher to put out Hanukkah candles in the Polish parliament.

They appear in one another's LIVE streams, share overlapping audiences, adopt similar profile aesthetics, and reference the same events and figures. The individuals behind the accounts are, for the most part, real people who participate in broadcasts using their voices and sometimes even faces. Their followership, however, may be less so: analysis of the follower base across the network reveals a disproportionate presence of Nigerian accounts among the followers of multiple streamers, a pattern that may suggest inauthentic coordinated behaviour designed to inflate reach and engagement metrics, though further investigation is required to establish the origin and purpose of this anomaly.

The detailed network mapping, including mutual followership data and cluster visualisations will be presented in the upcoming supplement to this report.

Source: Exolyt

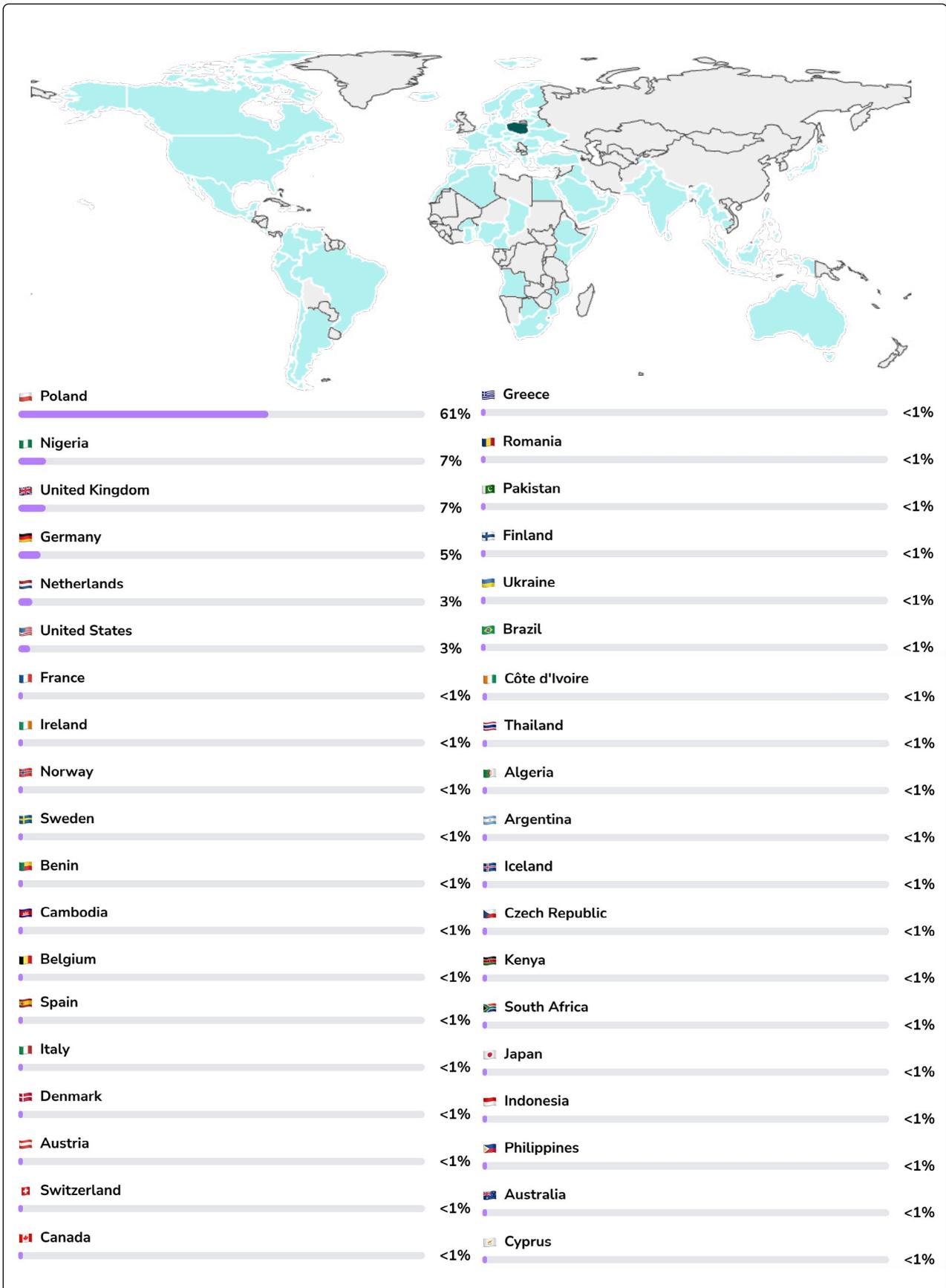


Table 1. Followership of one of the most prominent LIVE accounts by origin

The broadcasting format itself is distinctive and central to the ecosystem's dynamics. Rather than streaming solo, creators typically launch a TikTok LIVE and then invite other accounts to join as co-broadcasters producing multi-person live debates with anywhere from three to approximately ten simultaneous participants.

This grid format — in which multiple faces appear on screen at once — mimics the visual conventions of a panel discussion or television debate, lending an air of collective authority and procedural seriousness to what is, in substance, an unmoderated far-right echo chamber - an environment where a person only encounters opinions that reflect and reinforce their own. The grid layout also serves a practical function: by rotating participants in and out, the streams can run for extended periods, maintaining continuous audience engagement and maximising the window during which harmful content circulates before any moderation intervention occurs.

For viewers encountering these streams through TikTok's recommendation system, the multi-person format may be used by the interested parties to obscure the extremist nature of the content, and what appears on first glance to be a lively political conversation among ordinary citizens is, on closer inspection, a coordinated broadcast infrastructure for pro-Russian narratives, and extremist mobilisation.

→ What do they say:

Main themes identified in the LIVE broadcasts include: hate speech and hateful behaviour, misinformation, and support for violent and hateful organisations and individuals. These include antisemitic hate speech, anti-migration narratives, including those specifically focused on Ukraine, anti-EU narratives, as well as conspiracy theories.

“Russia is better than Ukraine; it's Ukraine you should be afraid of”

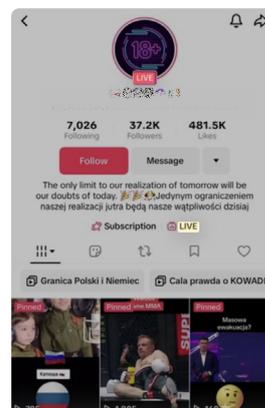
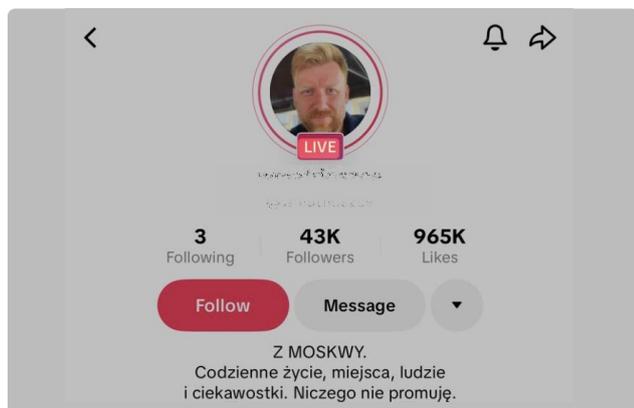
Pro-Russian narratives harmful to national security

A recurring visual and symbolic pattern among the most active accounts participating in the monitored LIVE streams is the prominent display of Russian national colours — white, blue, and red. The signalling takes multiple forms: some accounts incorporate the Russian tricolour into their profile names, others embed it in profile descriptions, and others use it in their profile pictures. This consistent visual branding functions as an in-group identifier, signalling ideological alignment to other participants and audiences within the network.

Even though the research has not yet established direct institutional or operational links between the TikTok LIVE streamers and Russian state actors, pro-Russian disinformation narratives are commonly promoted during the broadcasts.

The anti-Ukrainian rhetoric documented above is often consistent with Kremlin information warfare objectives in Poland, which seek to erode public support for Ukraine and fracture the pro-Ukrainian consensus in Polish society. The conspiratorial framing of the Polish state as illegitimate and controlled by hidden forces likewise echoes Russian-aligned narratives that aim to undermine trust in democratic institutions across Central and Eastern Europe.

Moreover, accounts frequently reference narratives of Slavic unity, with some even using the phrase in their usernames. Participants in the LIVE streams at times refer to information or videos previously published on Russian-language Telegram channels. Together with the widespread use of Russian flag symbols by both streamers and participants, this suggests that at least part of the LIVE ecosystem



Furthermore, users participating in the TikTok LIVEs frequently use French emblems, including the French flag. In order to evade platform moderation, LIVE streamers have developed a repertoire of communication strategies, embedding their messaging within emoji use and visual cues - similarly to patterns observed in the German case.³²

Emojis serve a dual function in this context: they operate simultaneously as symbolic markers and covert signalling devices, appearing not only within the comment sections of TikTok LIVE streams but also in usernames, where they mark ideological affiliation.³³

The colours of the French flag are therefore particularly significant, as they most likely serve as another way of signalling alignment with Russia (against Ukraine), given that the French and Russian flags share the same colour scheme. In this way, users are able both to bypass potential moderation and to create an inside code for users not deeply embedded in the extremist segment of the TikTok LIVE community, the colours of the French flag may appear innocuous. For those in the know, however, the meaning is different.

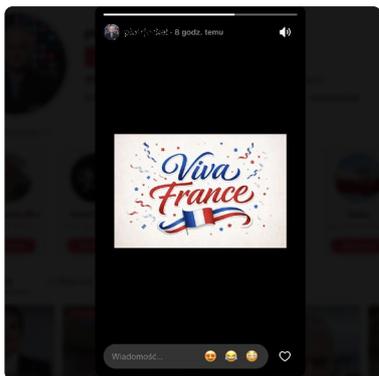
This strategy of using visual symbols to evade automated detection is part of a broader phenomenon known as "algospeak" — a term referring to code

words, symbols, deliberate misspellings, and other linguistic or visual substitutions that users employ to circumvent algorithmic content moderation on social media platforms. Creators increasingly utilise algospeak to evade content restriction by changing or inventing words to prevent the platform's moderation algorithm from flagging their content.³⁴ However, while algospeak is often used by marginalised communities to discuss otherwise suppressed topics, it is also employed by communities promoting harmful behaviours — for instance, anti-vaccination groups on Facebook rebranded themselves as "dance party" or "dinner party" groups to avoid being flagged for misinformation, and communities encouraging eating disorders have similarly adopted coded language. In the context of extremist content on TikTok LIVE, the use of flag colours, as a proxy for political allegiance represents a visual form of algospeak: it functions as a semiotic code legible to insiders while remaining opaque both to the platform's automated moderation systems and to casual viewers.

³² Digital Methods Initiative, *Summer School 2025: LIVE Streaming*, 2025. <https://www.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/SummerSchool2025LIVESstreaming>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Steen, E., Yurechko, K., & Klug, D. (2023). You Can (Not) Say What You Want: Using Algospeak to Contest and Evade Algorithmic Content Moderation on TikTok. *Social Media + Society*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231194586>.



translation: Example of using the French flag as a signifier of support for Russia

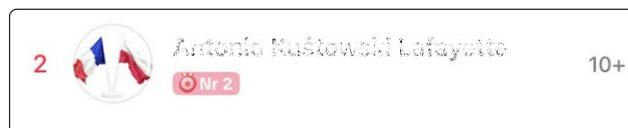


translation:
Warning
Risk of getting spit on your screen! You are entering at your own responsibility"

The French flag used as backdrop for the AI-generated profile picture of this account could indicate implicit support for pro-Russian narratives



translation: He's probably going through France. Used in the context of someone travelling to Poland from the east



translation: Example of using the French flag as a signifier of support for Russia

"We need to take care of these f*cking scumbags and show them their place"**

Anti-migration narratives

General anti-migration attitudes are present within the extremist LIVE community. Recurring themes include the conviction that migrants are responsible for alleged economic instability in Poland, as well as for violence on Polish streets. In the opinion of the streamers, they pose a danger, specifically to Polish women.

Migration is frequently linked to conspiracy theories suggesting that mass migration to Europe - and to Poland specifically - is actually a plan created by the "world elites" to destroy the Polish nation and occupy its lands.

It is important to note that the views

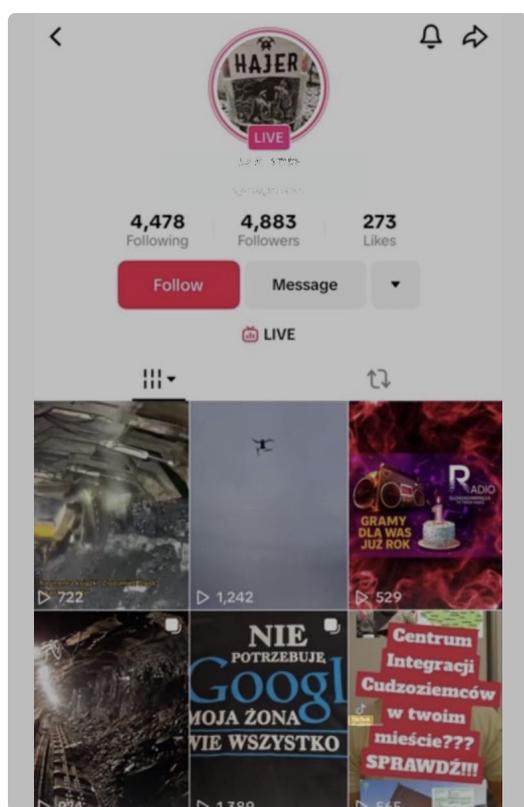
expressed during the LIVEs can be understood as a normal part of the public debate (as presented in the direct quotes table below). Some, however, included phrases like "f*** migrants"; others directly incited to violence.

It is also worth noting that, throughout the analysed period, the topic of migration - although frequently discussed - was not the dominant one; rather, it functioned as a recurring underlying issue.

Direct quotes:



- "F*** migrants."
- "F***cking migrants who are taking our jobs."
- "We need to take care of these f*** cking scumbags and show them their place."
- "I'd rather have a Ukrainian immigrant who comes here and pays taxes than some Arab who is culturally different and whose assimilation will take much longer or won't succeed at all."



translation: *Migrant Integration Centre in your town??? CHECK HERE!!!*

According to TikTok's own Community Guidelines, promoting or praising violence caused by Violent Political Organisations is not allowed with hostile and profane language being FYF ineligible and age-restricted.

"The bitch was screaming her c* off, should have gone at her like a filthy stray dog"**

Anti-Ukrainian narratives

Hostility toward Ukrainians constitutes one of the most prominent and operationally concerning elements of the material. Ukrainian refugees are characterised as ungrateful, entitled, and culturally threatening, echoing the framing proposed by Russia. Participants express fears that Ukrainians will establish political parties in Poland and eventually dominate Polish political life — a narrative that mirrors broader nativist anxieties about immigrant political power across Europe.

Participants explicitly referenced the Battle of Manila in 1945, in which Japanese forces massacred over 100,000 Filipino civilians, as a model for dealing with Ukrainians: "Do what the Japanese did in Manila and level everyone". This constitutes unambiguous eliminationist rhetoric and represents a clear escalation beyond conventional anti-immigrant hostility.

Similar phrases appeared throughout the monitored LIVE streams, with participants openly asking to destroy Ukraine or to kill Ukrainians. These statements were frequently framed as a response to the Volhynia massacres, with participants claiming that Ukrainians remain dangerous and that Poles should therefore act pre-emptively. Calls for

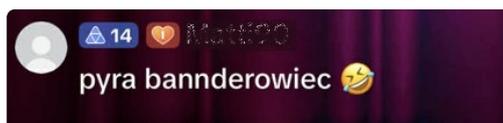
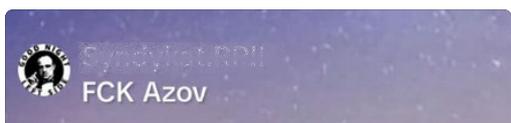
deportations appeared on almost every LIVE that tackled the issue of Ukrainian migrants and refugees in Poland.

Participants express open hate towards the Azov battalion, but, worth noting, the Azov is actually being used as a synonym to Ukrainians themselves. For example, when streamers were discussing a pro-Ukrainian manifestation they referred to all of the participants as the "Azovites".

Additional exchanges reveal that several participants were actually expelled from a live stream apparently for being Ukrainian, and that the presence of a Ukrainian woman on a previous stream provoked extended outrage. Moreover, even the fact that some influencers once participating in the LIVE streams actually have Ukrainian friends or - as in two cases - Ukrainian brides provoked even bigger outrage, with participants calling them traitors.



translation: They are taking our timber at night to rebuild Ukraine. What's under the logs? [There will be riots, shops and houses will be torched] words of a Ukrainian activist living in Poland



translation: A Banderite is asking



Direct quotes:



- "Do what the Japanese did in Manila and level everyone (Ukrainians)."
- "When you occupy territory you have to support all these scroungers, these Banderites."
- "We fought for all of Europe, for France, for Great Britain — and who did the Ukrainians fight for? So they are owed nothing; they fought for the USSR and 'liberated' Polish lands."
- "Shut your mouth, Banderite"
- "She's more afraid of western Ukraine than of Russia."
- "So that Azovism disappears from the world."
- Some guy who also added that he has a Ukrainian girlfriend, and she got hold of his phone and started screaming, f*** those Banderites."
- "The bitch was screaming her cunt off, should have gone at her like a filthy stray dog" (about a Ukrainian woman)."
- "People don't even hide it — some PiS voter came in talking like a lefty, added that he has a Ukrainian girlfriend, so they kicked him out of the LIVE."

According to TikTok's own Community Guidelines, promoting or praising violence caused by Violent Political Organisations is not allowed with hostile and profane language being FYF ineligible and age-restricted.

"Piłsudski was a Jew and that's the end of story"

Antisemitic hate speech

Antisemitic themes permeate the material, though they are often embedded within broader conspiratorial narratives rather than expressed as standalone ideology.

The hosts, as well as the participants of the LIVES, frequently accused different political figures of being Jewish — as if Jewish identity were an insult. Moreover, references to Jewishness were often used to explain what the streamers perceive as the negative state of contemporary public affairs. In their view, one of the reasons for the poor quality of modern

politics is that political elites are allegedly Jewish.

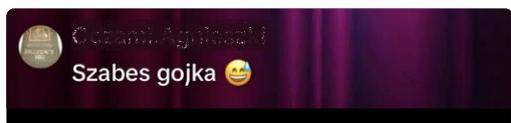
Jewishness is often presented as the opposite of Polishness - the worldview of the majority of the participants of the LIVES suggests that you can either be Polish, or be Jewish. During one of the online debates where the topic of Jewish religion appeared, a comment mentioned "Pole but with a Jewish origin" with a laughing emoji, suggesting that the person in question is actually not a Pole. This seems to be the distinctive view represented by the majority of the streamers analysed for the report.

Conspiratorial tropes arose in this manner as well. For example, the claim that Marshal Piłsudski was Jewish functions as a delegitimation of the mainstream national canon — the implication is that even Poland's most celebrated historical figures were agents of a hidden enemy. The recurring belief that Poland is controlled from within by forces hostile to ethnic Poles carries clear antisemitic undertones, consistent with the "Żydokomuna" (Judeo-Bolshevism) trope that has deep roots in Polish far-right

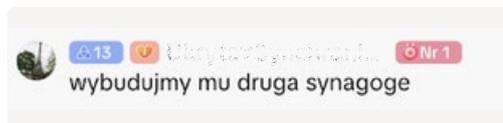


translation: Don't change the story, here we talk about Braun, not the tyrant

Polish but Jewish by heritage



translation: Shabbos goy-ess



translation: Let's build him another synagogue



translation: She has a Jewish girl for 10 minutes in a car - response to an interview with a Jewish person, suggesting it's a fake



Both accounts with posts from March are still active



Both accounts with posts from March are still active

discourse and that, too, was oftentimes present during the analysed LIVE streams.

TikTok's Community Guidelines state that sharing hateful conspiracies targeting a protected group, such as claims that Jewish people control the media and using hateful slurs associated with a protected attribute are not allowed, with stereotypes, generalisations, insinuations of protected groups or identities, such as race or religion being FYF ineligible.

Ursula von der Leyen and Cyclone B Anti-western narratives

Hostility toward the European Union constitutes a persistent strand of the discourse observed during the monitored TikTok LIVE streams, functioning simultaneously as a policy position, a conspiratorial framework, and a vehicle for hate speech.

Participants actively discuss and develop policy proposals for Poland's departure from the EU, framing PolExit as a necessary act of national

liberation. The farmers' protests that swept across Poland and other EU member states serve as a recurring reference point, cited as evidence that Brussels imposes economically destructive policies on Polish agriculture and the broader population.

More broadly, the EU is cast as the ultimate author of all national misfortune — including erosion of sovereignty, destruction of traditional values, and deliberate demographic transformation of Poland.

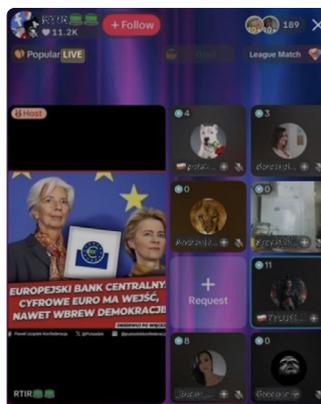
Within this framework, the EU is positioned as a central node in the conspiratorial worldview that pervades these streams: participants claim that the EU actively wants migrants to come to Poland, engineering population replacement as a matter of policy.



translation: Faces of ECB President Christine Lagarde and EC President Ursula von der Leyen alongside fake AI-generated Euro notes depicting EU's supposed oppression and surveillance and an image of a Zyklon B label



translation: "Be obedient" says Ursula von der Leyen in this AI-generated cartoon. Miners and workers hold up an energy bill, while sovereignty and decisiveness supposedly lay dead



translation: The European Central Bank: digital Euro is to go through, even against democracy. The European Central Bank: digital Euro is to go through, even against democracy

Direct quotes:



- "They should hang Ursula von der Leyen. "
- "The EU is actually a Cyclone B, an operation created to killv."
- "The plan for Poland to leave the EU is ready. "

"They are eliminating us from within, through our own government"

Conspiracy theories and anti-system narratives

The dominant ideological frame across the observed streams is that Poland is under covert occupation. Participants express the view that the Polish state is controlled by hostile foreign interests operating through domestic political elites, and that institutions such as the European Union and NATO offer no genuine protection. One participant states plainly: *"There is no point deluding ourselves that we are in some union or NATO — we are alone and nobody will help us."*

This framing extends into conspiratorial territory. References are made to hidden gold deposits in Polish soil, to maps allegedly produced under Hitler's regime, and to the notion that Poles as a nation are targeted for elimination — a narrative that borrows from antisemitic Great Replacement type thinking while centering Poles as the victimised group. The historical figure of Józef Piłsudski is dismissed as Jewish and a Russian agent, reflecting a strand of conspiratorial revisionism that rejects mainstream Polish national historiography in favour of a more radical ethnonationalist reading.

A significant strand of discussion concerns the rejection of electoral democracy. Participants argue that Poles have been voting for "the occupier"

for thirty years and that the only viable strategy is mass electoral boycott. One participant articulates the theory that if no citizens vote, the government loses its mandate, and sovereignty reverts to the people under a constitutional provision. While legally incoherent, this narrative serves an important radicalising function: it positions democratic participation itself as complicity with the enemy, thereby closing off moderate avenues of political engagement and pushing adherents toward extra-systemic action.

According to TikTok's Community Guidelines hateful conspiracies targeting a protected group, such as the "Great Replacement Theory" are not allowed.

→ Cross-platform coordination & real-life spillover

Beyond the dissemination of hateful narratives, the monitored TikTok LIVE streams reveal an active organisational ecosystem that extends well beyond the spontaneous expression of grievances. The streams serve as coordination hubs for structured political projects, including Konfederacja Korony Polskiej (KKP, Confederation of the Polish Crown), a far right party founded by Grzegorz Braun MEP,, and a less coherent movement of the so-called "front gaśnicowy" (fire extinguisher front) associated with the same politician, named after his notorious act of extinguishing Hanukkah candles in the Polish Sejm.

Participants explicitly distinguish between the two structures during broadcasts: "We are admitting you to the fire extinguisher front, not to KKP"), while framing their activities in ideological terms as a "fire extinguisher action in the spirit of principled democracy". The organisational reach extends across multiple platforms: participants reference Telegram and WhatsApp groups to which individuals are added, as well as YouTube channels, Facebook pages, and crowdfunding through Buy Me a Coffee platforms.

As one participant recounted: "I was added to strange groups on Telegram and WhatsApp — they add me themselves to various groups, so after the Wednesday session I started looking through what's going on there". Another exchange referenced offline mobilisation, with participants noting attendance at protests, including one in Wrocław at an embassy — "They were at that protest, Kaśka went to Wrocław, a protest at the embassy, so that there would be no Azov" — and the development of a dedicated civic

coordination app.

It is important to note that politicians from Konfederacja and KKP were at times actively participating in the streams, including, for example, Konfederacja's candidate in the 2024 European Parliament election.

Taken together, this evidence indicates that TikTok LIVE is used not merely as a broadcasting platform for extremist content but also serves as an operational node within a cross-platform organisational infrastructure that facilitates recruitment, fundraising, coordination of offline action, and the consolidation of a politically mobilised far-right network.

Direct quotes:



- "We are admitting you to the fire extinguisher front, not to the KKP!"
- "Fire extinguisher action in the spirit of principled democracy."
- "I was added to strange groups on Telegram and WhatsApp — they add me themselves to various groups, so after the Wednesday bench [session] I started looking through what's going on there and whether to bring it up at one of the sessions."
- "Ask the people who were adding me to groups — my phone number isn't anonymous, he was often here for various events and sign-ups for the film."
- "They were at that protest, Kaśka went to Wrocław, a protest at the embassy, so that there would be no Azov."

→ Office for Civic and Democratic Control: impersonation of state organisations

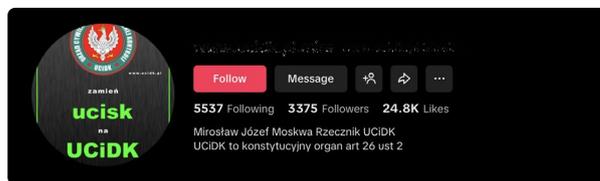
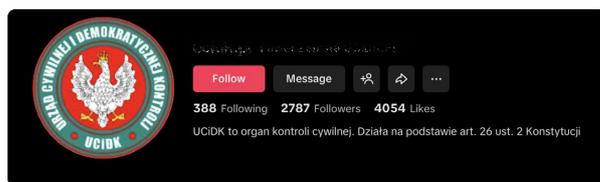
The so-called UCiDK (Office for Civic and Democratic Control) asserts that the current Polish state and its institutions, including the government, courts, and uniformed services, are illegal entities operating in violation of the Constitution.

Proponents claim to have established the body as the only legitimate authority, supposedly empowered by the Constitution to exercise direct "civil control" over the armed forces and public administration. This narrative mimics the "sovereign citizen" movements seen elsewhere, asserting that individuals can opt out of the legal system by declaring allegiance to this alternate structure. The group issues pseudo-legal decrees, "warrants," and calls for the arrest of public officials, framing their actions as a restoration of the "People's" direct rule against a usurping "party-judicial system."

The key idea advanced by UCiDK advances is the alleged illegitimacy of the elections. The network's call to action is for citizens not to vote and to remove themselves from electoral registers, which constituted a direct attempt at electoral interference.

During the Polish presidential election of 2025, CEE DDW reported the UCiDK network to TikTok, however, the whole network has since reappeared.

A number of accounts, allegedly representing multiple people from within the organisation, are present on TikTok and engage in TikTok LIVE streaming, where they share and discuss their views.



Examples of relatively prominent UCiDK accounts

According to TikTok's Community Guidelines, misinformation about how, when, and where to vote, or register to vote is not allowed, with statements that that misrepresent authoritative civic information is FYF ineligible.

3

TikTok's mechanisms usage

→ BLIKs, crypto and crowdfunding: monetisation angles

The monetisation of harmful content on TikTok LIVE represents one of the most structurally troubling dimensions of the platform's live-streaming ecosystem. Research by the Digital Methods Initiative on far-right networks in Germany documented streamers earning tens to hundreds of euros per individual session through TikTok's virtual gifting system, with the highest recorded single-stream earnings reaching €114.³⁵

In the Polish context, the sums generated through TikTok's native gifting system appear to probably be smaller, but the monetisation ecosystem extends well beyond the platform's built-in tools.

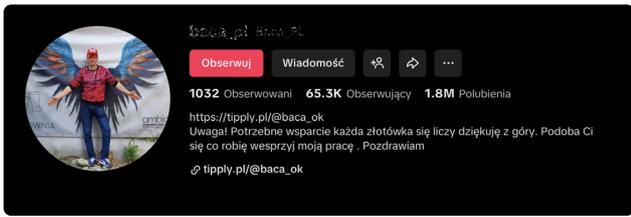
Streamers routinely include links to external fundraising platforms such as Buy Me a Coffee in their profiles, share BLIK codes (Poland's widely used instant mobile payment system) and Revolut transfer details during broadcasts, and solicit donations directly from their audiences.

Moreover, the streams themselves, which in many cases attract substantial and loyal viewership, generate the kind of sustained engagement metrics that make accounts eligible for TikTok's own LIVE monetisation features, creating a feedback loop in which hateful content builds an audience, which in turn unlocks further revenue opportunities, which in turn incentivises the production of more inflammatory material.

The result is a self-sustaining economic model in which the dissemination of antisemitic

conspiracy theories, eliminationist anti-Ukrainian rhetoric, and anti-democratic sovereign citizen narratives is not merely tolerated by the platform's infrastructure but actively rewarded by it.

³⁵ Digital Methods Initiative, *Summer School 2025: LIVE Streaming*, 2025. <https://www.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/SummerSchool2025LIVESTreaming>



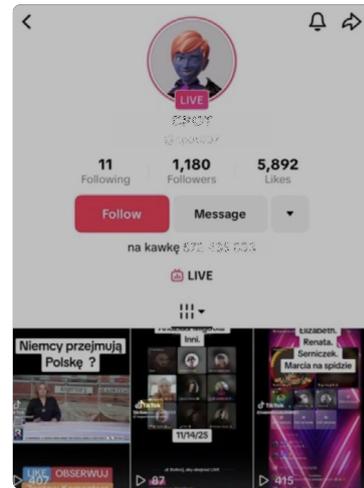
translation: *Warning! Support needed, every zloty counts, thanks in advance. If you like what I'm doing, support my work. Best*



translation: *Always in the midst of happenings*
You can support my channel here

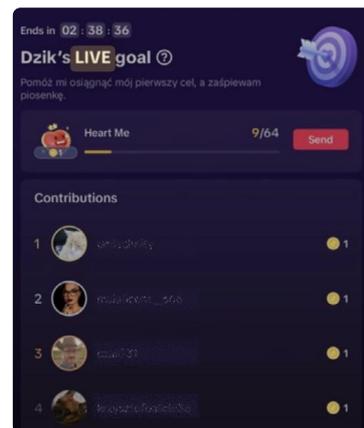
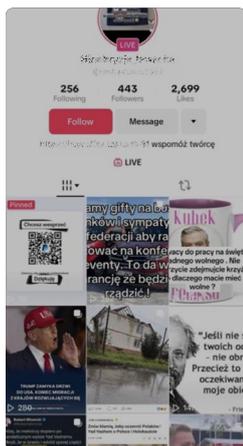


translation: *A bank account number will be provided for payment it's crucial to support the right cause*



translation: *For coffee [phone number]*

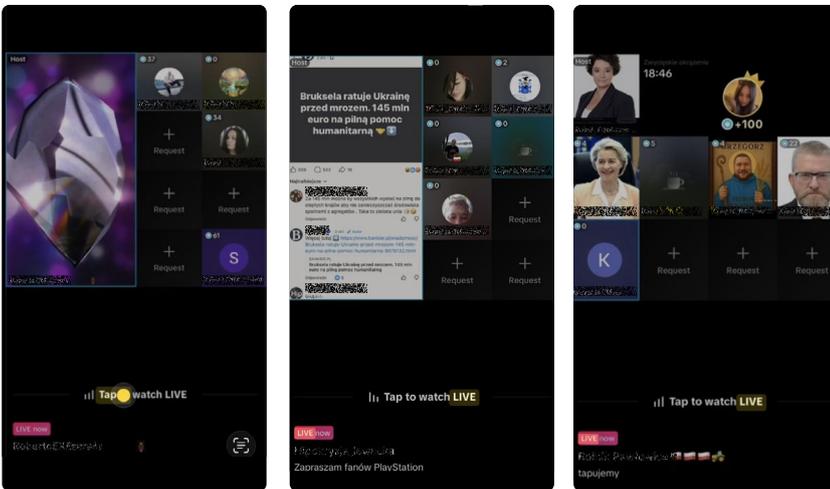
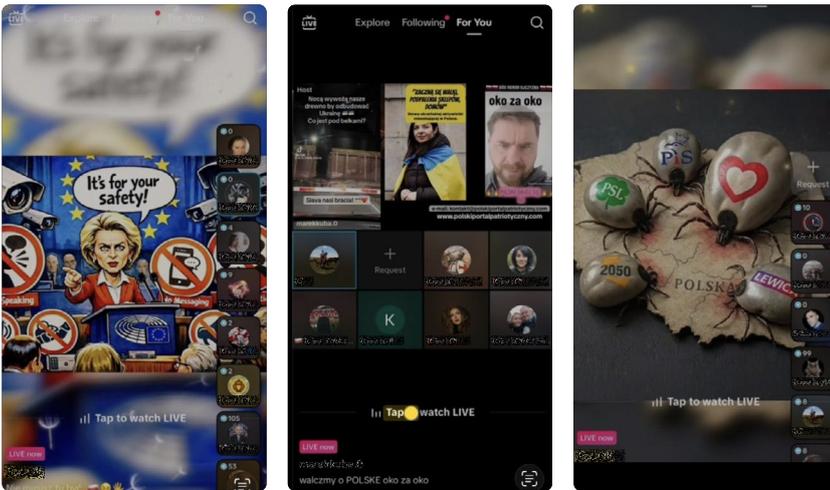
BLIK is a phone-number based instant payment system highly popular in Poland



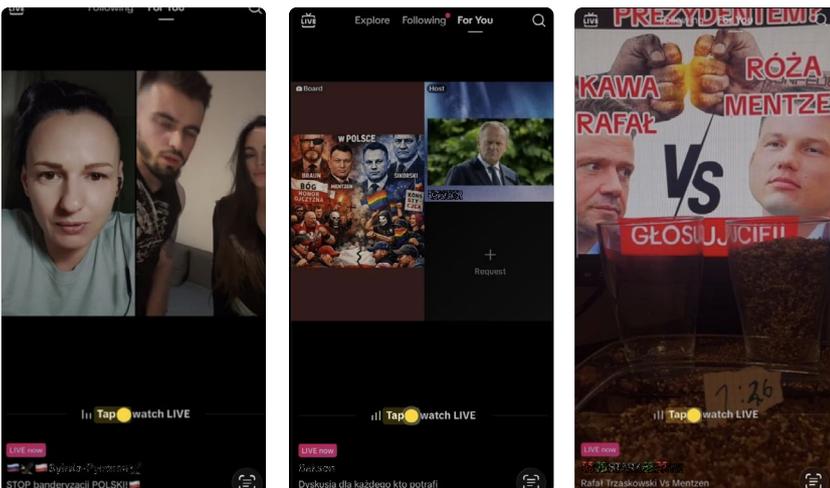
→ For You Feed proposed content & push notifications:

Despite the claims of FYF ineligibility for specific types of content, the LIVE streams containing the above-shown material were recommended on

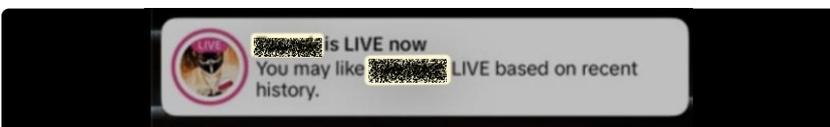
the main feed, which is central to experiencing the app. Users do not need to click through to listen to the livestreamed content, although comments and interactive options are available only after using the "Tap to watch LIVE" function.



Examples of streams showing up on the For You Feed



Examples of streams showing up on the For You Feed



Example of a push notification for a non-followed account broadcasting using the LIVE feature

← Similar mechanisms were already observed during the Polish presidential campaign period in 2025.

← The most prolific creators received additional boost by the platform sending notifications to users “based on recent history”.

Policy challenges

While the Commission's recent acceptance of TikTok's binding commitments regarding advertising transparency marks a step forward in ensuring researcher access, it underscores a critical regulatory failure regarding the platform's LIVE feature.

The above evidence should be evaluated as a potential systemic breach of Article 34 (Risk Assessment) and Article 35 (Mitigation Measures), as the platform has failed to anticipate or curb the monetisation of hate speech and extremist propaganda in real-time streams.

While the platform touts compliance with the DSA, a review of moderation resources reveals a staggering disparity affecting Central and Eastern Europe.

Even in Poland, where the platform declares that it employs 144 moderators,³⁶ the system fails to effectively filter high-profile violations, as evidenced by the persistence of antisemitic content involving Grzegorz Braun. Elsewhere in the region, moderation teams are virtually non-existent: Latvia is serviced by only

11 moderators, Estonia and Croatia by 10 each, and Lithuania by just five. Most alarmingly, Malta appears to be entirely abandoned by human oversight with no dedicated moderators, effectively leaving the detection of harmful content in that market to imperfect automated systems and user reports, a gap that disproportionately exposes smaller linguistic communities to unchecked disinformation and hate speech.

³⁶ TikTok, *DSA Transparency Report: January–June 2025*, 2025. https://sf16-va.tiktokcdn.com/obj/eden-va2/zayvwlY_fjulyhwzuyh%5B/ljhwZthlaukjlkulzlp/DSA_H1_2025/TikTok-DSATransparencyReport-January-June-2025.pdf

Policy asks

- ① TikTok LIVE functionality needs to be suspended in the European Union, until better moderation, greater transparency, and content archiving are introduced. The content is only available in real time, limiting options for research and verification. TikTok should maintain a library of LIVE broadcasts, with at least metadata, timestamps, viewership numbers, and creator IDs, and – for high-reach political or crisis-related content – video replays accessible to researchers and regulators.
- ② The European Commission needs to continue the analysis of the TikTok LIVE function in light of systemic risks and availability for research, and especially in light of the addictive design investigation, proceedings on systemic risks related to elections, foreign interference, and AI-generated disinformation, building on already existing cases.
- ③ The European Parliament should take those findings into account for the European Democracy Shield work, the review of Audiovisual Media Services Directive, and the Digital Fairness Act proceedings, with a special focus on increased compliance thresholds for monetisation opportunities on platforms.
- ④ We urge the Polish Office of Electronic Communications, acting as Digital Services Coordinator (UKE), to leverage its international cooperation powers to formally report and flag this issue at the European Board for Digital Services. Initiating this cross-border dialogue is essential to determine whether supervisory authorities in other Member States are identifying similar patterns of platform violations.
- ⑤ We urge the Polish National Broadcasting Council to verify whether the above-mentioned content creators should join the register of entities providing audiovisual media services. Given the potential monetisation character of the LIVE broadcasting, the accounts might be subject to further penalties.
- ⑥ TikTok needs to substantially upgrade the quality of moderation, including LIVE moderation, in Polish and other CEE languages. Clear DSA-compliant figures on the number, language skills, and decision-making powers of moderators, and specific escalation rules for crisis- and election-related LIVE content must be available to the public.
- ⑦ Enforcement of DSA Article 40 on data access should explicitly cover live broadcasting and related recommender-system signals (push notifications, FYF ranking, demotion/boosting). The Commission should treat denial of meaningful LIVE-related data as a breach in itself, in line with its recent preliminary findings that Meta and TikTok obstructed researcher access.

