

VII. [REDACTED]

65. [REDACTED] also known as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED]-based media-monitoring outfit (although it also operates an office in [REDACTED]).
66. On its website [REDACTED] publishes material in [REDACTED] English and Russian with a view to uncovering abuses of power and the media but it also undertakes assignments for outside organisations, such as [REDACTED] Facebook, which hired it to filter out fake news in the social media giant's newsfeed during the 2017 [REDACTED] federal election campaign.
67. [REDACTED] launched a new website called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with Facebook funding to debunk fake news on social media during the run-up to the election.

A. General Reputation

68. Overall, [REDACTED] appears to be a solid, investigative journalist organisation – facilitated by the background of its key individuals, and their efforts to create an entity with strong financial and professional backing.
69. In the [REDACTED] media, [REDACTED] has faced criticism for its links to Silicon Valley, and for working for Facebook in particular, and also for accepting money from the Soros Foundation; but, it has also won plaudits for hard-hitting reports into money-laundering by Russian politicians and businessmen with links to President Vladimir Putin, and into the shooting-down of Flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine in July 2014.
70. Some informed sources believe that [REDACTED] sometimes tailors its political campaigns to flatter the Russophobic stances of its pro-Western funders.
71. A source at the University of Oxford's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism said that [REDACTED] boast that its funding comes from donations and membership fees was 'somewhat disingenuous'.
72. A source at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting said [REDACTED] was a 'first-rate media-monitoring group that managed to expose lies and falsehood at the same time as producing lively journalism and videos in its own right'. Even critics of its blinkered view of Russia admire the professionalism, rigour and journalistic high standard of its output.

Public Profile

73. Despite the fact that it was only created in [REDACTED], [REDACTED] has a very large online profile with numerous press publications mentioning it or featuring interviews with its principals or senior staff members.
74. Research did not uncover any red flags such as involvement in creating fake contents, but the organisation did receive some criticism as to the level of professionalism in terms of its investigative reporting.
 - A number of online references have criticised research projects conducted by [REDACTED] as lacking in-depth background research and due diligence, including research on MH17.³
 - A report published in [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] on multi-drug resistant hospital germs was criticised by TAZ newspaper as imprecise, and that the central statement had not been sufficiently substantiated. Other major newspapers looked at the report and saw no reason to doubt the

³ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Since [REDACTED]
Past shareholders		
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]

82. Supervisory Board:

Name	Role	Dates
Current shareholders		
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	Chairman	Since [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	Vice-Chairman	Since [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	Vice-Chairman	Since [REDACTED]
Past shareholders		
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	Chairman	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	Vice-Chairman	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], residing in [REDACTED] born on [REDACTED]	Vice-Chairman	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]

C. Key Individuals

83. [REDACTED] is managing director of the [REDACTED] research center and identified as the key player at [REDACTED]. The second key player was identified as [REDACTED] – noted to be extremely influential, to the point where it has become common rumour that he “rules” [REDACTED] Wikipedia. [REDACTED] was formerly the head of [REDACTED] in [REDACTED].

84. The economic work is monitored by the Supervisory Board, which is formed by [REDACTED] (since [REDACTED]), [REDACTED] (since [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (since [REDACTED] Until [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had been members of the Supervisory Board. The quality of journalistic work is monitored by an ethics council chaired by [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] held this position until [REDACTED]. From [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was Editor-in-Chief of [REDACTED]. Its current editor-in-chief is [REDACTED].

85. The principals at [REDACTED] have backgrounds linked to the major media corporations in [REDACTED]

- Managing Director [REDACTED] was previously active, among other things, with the left-radical daily newspaper [REDACTED] and the left-liberal [REDACTED]. Until [REDACTED], [REDACTED] worked in a senior research position at the [REDACTED], a media company with [REDACTED] in sales.
- Editor-in-chief [REDACTED] worked for the [REDACTED] and for the [REDACTED] from [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] is a known [REDACTED] investigative journalist. He started his career first as a volunteer at the [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] he as a scholarship holder worked at the [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED]. He has worked at the [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. After that he was a freelance journalist at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as well as political magazines [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

In [REDACTED] he founded the "Investigative Research" team at the weekly magazine [REDACTED] and, as head of the department, mainly dealt with politics, uncovering instances of fraud in sports and in the intelligence services community. From [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] he was, as successor to [REDACTED] f, first chairman of the [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] he was appointed the successor to [REDACTED] as editor-in-chief of the search center [REDACTED]

86. [REDACTED] reportedly employs some 25 people (as at January 2017).

David Schraven

87. [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED] journalist, founder of the non-profit research firm [REDACTED] and was from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] board member of the [REDACTED] network. According to his public profile, he studied Slavic Studies, Political Science and History at the [REDACTED].

88. During his studies he worked as a freelance journalist for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was co-founder of the "[REDACTED]", and in [REDACTED] he was founding managing director of the [REDACTED] editor office in [REDACTED].

89. In addition to his work as a journalist, he worked for three years as a lecturer in the field of news writing at the [REDACTED]. In 2001 he was a guest reporter at [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]; from [REDACTED] he worked as a freelance journalist especially for the [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]. After working for the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED], from [REDACTED] he was an economic reporter for the [REDACTED], responsible for energy reporting.

90. From [REDACTED] till [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was a member of the board of [REDACTED], [REDACTED]'s association of investigative journalists. Since [REDACTED] he has been responsible for its financial management. With more than [REDACTED] members, [REDACTED] is one of the world's largest organizations for investigative journalists.

91. From [REDACTED] to May [REDACTED] he headed the research department of the four [REDACTED] newspapers, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] media group ([REDACTED]) in [REDACTED]. Since [REDACTED], he has been directing the non-profit research agency [REDACTED] co-funded by the [REDACTED]. As an investigative journalist he investigated neo-Nazis and underground terror organisations, among others.

92. [REDACTED] received a number of awards. Among them the "[REDACTED]" award for his investigation of the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED]. He was awarded the [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] for his work on fraud allegations against former state secretary [REDACTED].⁷ His graphic report on the [REDACTED] military's [REDACTED] mission "[REDACTED]" ("[REDACTED]") was nominated for the [REDACTED]. For overseeing the investigation on the downing flight MH17 he was awarded with [REDACTED].⁸

Management Team

[REDACTED]

93. [REDACTED] is managing director of [REDACTED] org and responsible for the business development as well as the strategic and organizational development of the research center.

94. He studied economics in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and worked in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. His career at [REDACTED] led him to become part of the management team of stern, where he was responsible for

⁷ [REDACTED]
⁸ [REDACTED]

a variety of print and digital brands. In [REDACTED], [REDACTED] moved to [REDACTED] to work at [REDACTED] and most recently worked as a publisher and managing director for [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

95. [REDACTED] is authorized signatory at [REDACTED]. Since [REDACTED] he works in the office in [REDACTED].
96. [REDACTED] previously worked in [REDACTED] for more than [REDACTED] years. He worked in various areas, including industrial plant construction, the press and communications department. Later, he oversaw foreign branches and took over their controlling. Due to special circumstances, he was assigned to a task force in [REDACTED] to investigate allegations of corruption abroad. Later he worked in the compliance area.

[REDACTED]

97. [REDACTED] has been working in the bookkeeping and publishing sector of [REDACTED] since [REDACTED]. She looks after the online shop and the dispatch processing. She also takes care of various organizational tasks.

[REDACTED]

98. [REDACTED] is in charge of engaging the [REDACTED] community. Since the beginning of [REDACTED] she is the contact person for our members and takes care of the development of our community.
99. [REDACTED] studies the sociology of technical science and has been dealing with the effects of digitization on communication and society for some time. Before joining [REDACTED] she designed student seminars on data science at the [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

100. [REDACTED] has been supporting [REDACTED] since the end of [REDACTED] in the area of events and workshops. She completed her bachelor's degree in sociology at the [REDACTED] and is now in the final stages of her master's degree program. In addition to working at [REDACTED] she is a tutor in the field of evaluation at the [REDACTED] and has also been involved in the development and publication of several patents in the field of medical procedures.

D. Political Exposure (to Russia)

101. None identified. On the contrary, [REDACTED] has worked on several issues in an attempt to expose Russian interests and disinformation:
- In [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] exposed that a photo used by the Russian FSB-funded disinformation agency Front News in a piece of reporting on riots in the [REDACTED] city of Schorndorf had actually been taken from another source and related to events other than the said riots.⁹
 - In [REDACTED] two pro-Russian men invaded the [REDACTED] office in [REDACTED] and insulted its editors. The two men were [REDACTED], a self-proclaimed journalist, especially in eastern Ukraine, known for his Moscow-faithful coverage, and [REDACTED]. When they first were trying to gain access to the office, they claimed they wanted to talk to the journalist [REDACTED]. He had researched together with [REDACTED] the shooting down of the passenger aircraft MH17 over

⁹ [REDACTED]

Ukraine and found out that Russian officers were responsible for the attack. 298 people were killed. The reportage was nominated for the [REDACTED].¹⁰

E. Litigation / Issues with the Authorities

102. In the spring of [REDACTED], [REDACTED] published the article "[REDACTED] [REDACTED]", which covered the story of an [REDACTED] candidate for the imminent state election in [REDACTED] indicating that she had engaged in "hobby prostitution".

The authors, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], justified the publication stating that such an activity stood in contrast to the women's image propagated by the party and made the politician "blackmailable". The article was heavily criticized in the social media, and many journalists also commented negatively.

The district court of [REDACTED] prohibited [REDACTED] to further distribute the article. [REDACTED] wrote in the [REDACTED] "The journalist office [REDACTED] hired by Facebook as anti-fake news brigade, recently found it necessary to expose an [REDACTED] politician [...]. Anyone who wants to compete against 'hate' and 'fake news' should also accept the standards that they apply to others."¹¹

103. [REDACTED] filed an action against the Federal Foreign Office in [REDACTED] on the basis of the Freedom of Information Act in connection with investigations into the crashed Boeing 777, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, over the contested Eastern Ukraine in the summer of 2014, in order to obtain information on the state of knowledge of the Federal Foreign Office.¹²

A complaint in connection with the question addressed to Federal Foreign Minister [REDACTED] on why in spite of known dangers for passenger, the aircraft was not warned in advance, was spread by [REDACTED] in social media. This prompted critics to ask if [REDACTED] was just doing journalism or also activism. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] assessed that the office was "more concerned with the self-staging of [REDACTED] as a watchdog" and less with the journalistic vocation."¹³

F. Donors / Potential Conflict of Interest

104. According to its website, [REDACTED] was conceived as a non-profit organization funded with membership fees, private donations and endowments from foundations and is therefore independent of advertising and sales proceeds.

105. The company has not yet submitted its [REDACTED] annual report, but it provides the following list of entities who donated funding in [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] : [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] : [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] : [REDACTED]

¹⁰ [REDACTED]

¹¹ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

¹² [REDACTED]

¹³ [REDACTED] [will-](#)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] from the [REDACTED].

Potential Conflict

108. Because [REDACTED] management and staff has strong and long-standing background in major [REDACTED] media corporations, and a number of foundations linked to politicians and/or to large media and TV corporations have donated funds to [REDACTED] there is a vulnerability to conflict of interest. I.e. where [REDACTED] accepts donations begs the question of how independent it really is.
109. Furthermore, both media reports and [REDACTED]'s financial statements show its links to foundations controlled by [REDACTED], such as the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]. Given that [REDACTED] is often noted as having his own agenda, some sources have questioned the true independence of [REDACTED]