EK Strategic Communications Center

Kremlin FIMI Weekly October 2026

Pro-Kremlin Networks Exploit Spain's Snap Election

Housing, migration and Ukraine, routed into one election

Sasha Starost, Egor Kuroptev

ekstrategies.org

EK Strategic Communications Center

EK Stratcom is a nexus of information, policy, and resilience in Eurasia and beyond. We provide expertise in strategic communications, analyze and shape key narratives, and support vulnerable societies.

Drawing on 20+ years of experience in media, GR, and PR, and over 12 years in analysis and strategic communications, EK Stratcom is built around a core team of exiled Russian professionals.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, EK Stratcom has served as a key mechanism for real-time disinformation monitoring, analytical reporting, and targeted messaging — reaching millions inside Russia and advising Western governments on Kremlin FIMI operations.

ekstrategies.org

About authors



Sasha Starost

Analyst & Briefings Specialist

Political activist and interpreter forced to flee Russia in 2022. Since joining Egor Kuroptev's team in 2022, she has monitored Kremlin narratives in Western and European media, as well as disinformation targeting women and children in Russia.





Egor Kuroptev

Director & Chief Strategist

Russian exiled media manager and political expert with over 20 years of experience in communications, democratic development, and countering disinformation.



Table of contents

Executive Summary 6

Election Linked to Ukraine, Migration, and Sovereignty 8

FIMI Channels: the Election as Sánchez's Bid to Stay in Power 12

Sources 15

Kremlin FIMI networks rapidly absorbed Spain's snap election into an existing multilingual influence ecosystem. Rather than developing a single election narrative, different actors routed the same political crisis through established themes, including housing, migration, Ukraine, sovereignty, and distrust of electoral institutions.

Key topics:

1. Election Linked to Ukraine, Migration, and Sovereignty
2. FIMI Channels: the Election as Sánchez's Bid to Stay in Power

Executive Summary

So far, Kremlin FIMI actors have responded to Spain's November 29 snap election primarily by appropriating genuine political crises rather than by constructing a separate, election-specific disinformation campaign.

Housing protests, the government's parliamentary defeat, unfavorable polling, disputes over the Catalan amnesty, migration, and economic pressure have been selectively combined into a broader argument that Spain's political system is failing to address domestic problems and that Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez is using the snap election primarily to preserve his hold on power. Ucraniando, a Spanish-language FIMI channel previously documented by EK Stratcom during the Ceuta migration crisis, captured this interpretation directly, suggesting that Sánchez

> "wants to take advantage of this dissatisfaction to keep the government in power."

The monitored coverage is significant because the same election was absorbed into sharply different pre-existing narratives and networks. Spanish-language FIMI channels linked declining living standards to support for Ukraine through Enrique Refoyo, a Spanish pro-Russian commentator, founder of Vostok Solidaridad Donbás, and translator of the Russian ultranationalist ideologue Alexander Dugin. In a Sputnik interview subsequently circulated across several FIMI channels, including The Spy Behind the Curtain (ESPÍA del TELÓN), a media project run by Refoyo himself, he asked:

> "Are we Europeans going to go to war against Russia to defend governments that are making us poorer?"

Far-right networks instead connected the election to migration and distrust of electoral procedures. Democracia Nacional, which participated in the 2025 St. Petersburg founding congress of the Kremlin International Sovereigntist League "Paladins," incorporated the election into its continuing Ceuta campaign.

The cross-language layer shows how this process extends beyond Spain. Italian-language actors selected different elements of the same crisis: L'Antidiplomatico, an Italian FIMI-aligned alternative outlet, presented the election as "a referendum on who has the right to inhabit Spanish cities"; the Italian FIMI channel Tutti i Fatti amplified opposition criticism of the Catalan amnesty; and another Italian FIMI channel, Rokot Frastuono, distorted Sánchez's distinction between the organization of the Ceuta protests and their subsequent foreign amplification into the claim that

> "Putin and Netanyahu organized this demonstration in Madrid."

The resulting pattern demonstrates how an existing multilingual FIMI ecosystem can rapidly absorb a new political event without developing a common narrative, routing different parts of the same crisis toward established ideological audiences and grievances.

Election Linked to Ukraine, Migration, and Sovereignty

The election narrative circulated through FIMI networks operating across different languages and political audiences. On October 1 and 2, several Spanish-language FIMI channels distributed the same Sputnik interview with Enrique Refoyo, a Spanish pro-Russian commentator, founder of Vostok Solidaridad Donbás, and translator of the Russian ultranationalist ideologue Alexander Dugin.

The interview was amplified by El Informador Global[1], a Spanish-language channel that regularly republishes[2] Sputnik content; Nuevos Paradigmas[3]; ROKOT|TORMENTA[4]; and The Spy Behind the Curtain (ESPÍA del TELÓN),[5] a media project run by Refoyo himself. Refoyo linked deteriorating living standards to European support for Ukraine and confrontation with Russia, asking:

> "Are we Europeans going to go to war against Russia to defend governments that are making us poorer?" He concluded: "We are not going to fight for those who harm us."

On October 1, Pravda ES portrayed[6] Spain's planned €1.6–2 billion investment in military satellite communications, potentially linked to the European Union's IRIS² satellite system, as a threat to national sovereignty. The channel argued that

> "every euro cent received from Brussels means surrendering part of sovereignty and making a long-term commitment, which Spaniards will ultimately have to pay for out of their own pockets."

The election also entered the Spanish far-right networks previously examined by EK Stratcom during the Ceuta migration crisis. On October 4, Democracia Nacional attacked[7] Madrid's

official Hispanidad celebrations, accusing Isabel Díaz Ayuso, president of the Community of Madrid and a member of the conservative People's Party (Partido Popular); Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez; and Vox leader Santiago Abascal of complicity in what it called the "mass South Americanization of Spain."

On October 6, Aquí la Voz de Europa, a Spanish nationalist media platform, announced[8] a discussion featuring Democracia Nacional president Pedro Chaparro and vice president Gonzalo Martín. The channel questioned Sánchez's electoral intentions:

> "Does he have an ace up his sleeve or some trick to win it?" It immediately connected the election to Democracia Nacional's existing campaign over Ceuta: "We must not forget that the Moroccan occupation of Ceuta continues."

This continuity is significant because, as established in EK Stratcom's previous investigation[9], Democracia Nacional participated[10] in the September 2025 founding congress of the Kremlin International Sovereigntist League "Paladins" in St. Petersburg, alongside Falange Española de las JONS, another Spanish far-right group.

On October 6, InfoDefense Español, the Spanish-language branch of the Russian FIMI network run by military blogger Yuri Podolyaka, reinforced[11] the connection between economic grievances and Russia's war against Ukraine, accusing European liberal elites of "throwing money into the bottomless pit called Ukraine" and of dragging their populations toward conflict with Russia.

On October 5, L'Antidiplomatico, an Italian FIMI-aligned alternative outlet[12], interpreted[13] Sánchez's decision to call the election through the lens of the housing movement, which had brought protesters onto the streets across Spain over rising housing costs and access to affordable housing, including an encampment at Madrid's Puerta del Sol. It argued that

> "social movements […] no longer trust electoral promises and are choosing the path of the strike, knowing that voting alone is not enough to change things."

The article described the November election as "a referendum on who has the right to inhabit Spanish cities."

The Italian-language FIMI channel Tutti i Fatti focused[14] on the controversy surrounding Carles Puigdemont, the former Catalan president and leader of Together for Catalonia (Junts per Catalunya). The amnesty law, adopted in 2024, covered Catalan separatists prosecuted over the independence push and was negotiated after the 2023 election as part of the agreement that secured Together for Catalonia's parliamentary support for Sánchez.

Following a Constitutional Court decision concerning the law's application to Puigdemont, Tutti i Fatti amplified criticism from People's Party leader Alberto Núñez Feijóo, who described the amnesty as another "deception by Pedro Sánchez" that should be "punished at the ballot box." The same story had circulated[15] through Sputnik Mundo, the Spanish-language service of Russian state-owned Sputnik, and was subsequently amplified[16] by its relay channel El Informador Global.

The Italian-language FIMI channel Rokot Frastuono also exploited[17] the Ceuta controversy to challenge Sánchez's statements about foreign information manipulation. On October 4, it revisited his September parliamentary remarks on the amplification of protests by foreign information networks. Sánchez had distinguished[18] between the organization of the original demonstrations, for which Spanish intelligence had not established foreign state involvement, and their subsequent exploitation by foreign information actors. Rokot erased that distinction, sarcastically summarizing his position:

> "In other words: Putin and Netanyahu organized this demonstration in Madrid. And they sent their agents into the streets."

Existing FIMI channels and politically connected organizations provided access to distinct audiences, while established narratives determined which aspects of Spain's crisis received attention.

> Rather than producing a uniform election narrative, the monitored ecosystem incorporated the vote into pre-existing themes ranging from migration and sovereignty to Ukraine, housing, and distrust of electoral institutions.

The evidence points to ideological convergence and interconnected amplification rather than a centrally coordinated election campaign.

FIMI Channels: the Election as Sánchez's Bid to Stay in Power

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called the November 29 snap election after the Congress of Deputies rejected two emergency housing decrees on October 1. Together for Catalonia, whose parliamentary support had enabled Sánchez to remain in office after the 2023 election, voted against the measures alongside the People's Party and Vox. The measures followed nationwide housing protests, including a protest encampment at Puerta del Sol.

> The protests were triggered by the September 23 eviction[19] of Maricarmen Abascal, an 87-year-old Madrid resident who had lived in the same apartment for more than seven decades.

Kremlin FIMI channels were already exploiting the housing dispute before the election announcement. On October 2, InfoDefense Español amplified[20] reporting by RT correspondent Francisco Guaita[21] on the government's parliamentary defeat. The post highlighted Together for Catalonia's opposition to the housing measures alongside the People's Party and Vox amid

> "high social tension, with demonstrations and protest camps in various cities."

Following the election announcement, Russian state media incorporated the housing crisis into broader interpretations of Sánchez's political strategy. On October 5, Sputnik Mundo described[22] the rejection of the housing decrees as "the formal reason" for the election but placed it within "a more prolonged crisis of governability."

An October 7 analysis by Russian state-controlled RT en Español similarly suggested[23] that Maricarmen's eviction had temporarily pushed the Ceuta crisis and corruption investigations off the political agenda, creating a "window of opportunity" for Sánchez to call an election while housing remained at the center of public debate. The outlet described the decision as an attempt to "fix the campaign around that conflict" before the political agenda shifted again.

Ucraniando, a Spanish-language FIMI channel previously documented[9] by EK Stratcom amplifying[24] anti-government narratives during the Ceuta migration crisis, also connected the snap election to domestic social discontent. On October 5, Ucraniando turned[25] to the housing crisis and the election, suggesting that Sánchez

> "wants to take advantage of this dissatisfaction to keep the government in power amid a possible electoral rise of right-wing parties."

Pravda ES likewise amplified[26] election polling through material originally published by Spanish outlets. On October 5, it redistributed[27] a La Bandera article citing a 40dB survey commissioned by the Spanish radio network Cadena SER.

> The article emphasized that combined support for the People's Party and Vox was approaching 50%, contrasting their position with the fragmentation of the left.

On October 4, Geopolítica Actual, a Spanish-language FIMI channel co-founded by José Luis Montáns Suárez, a Spanish pro-Kremlin propagandist[28,29], published[30] a YouTube video in which Montáns portrayed[31] Western politics as spectacle and misdirection, stating that

> "our Sánchez is quite an artist himself."

Following the election announcement, Geopolítica Actual continued[32] this argument by posting[33] another video titled "There is no one to vote for… but there is something to do."

The significance of the snap election for Kremlin FIMI lies less in the promotion of false claims than in the rapid appropriation of a genuine domestic crisis.

> The monitored actors did not need to invent the housing protests, Sánchez's parliamentary defeat, or unfavorable polling.

Instead, they selectively combined these developments into a common interpretation of the election as an act of political self-preservation, turning separate and largely factual grievances into a broader argument about the legitimacy and functioning of Spain's political system.

Sources

1. https://t.me/informador_global/80926
2. https://t.me/informador_global/81472
3. https://t.me/IHPSnuevosparadigmas/22522
4. https://t.me/surf_noise_sp/63013
5. https://t.me/elespiadeltelon/27303
6. https://t.me/pravdaescom/136908
7. https://t.me/DEMOCRACIA_NACIONAL/9241
8. https://t.me/aquilavozdeeuropa/12225
9. https://ekstrategies.org/articles/ceuta-crisis-a-new-surge-in-kremlin-fimi-narratives
10. https://ekstrategies.org/articles/russia-2025-from-religious-procession-to-fascist-congress
11. https://t.me/infodefSPAIN/30309
12. https://t.me/clarastatello/40669
13. https://www.lantidiplomatico.it/dettnews-snchez_va_al_voto_la_piazza_risponde_con_lo_sciopero_la_spagna_della_casa_non_aspetta/45289_69281/
14. https://t.me/tutti_i_fatti/75554
15. https://noticiaslatam.lat/20261006/volvera-puigdemont-a-espana-el-tribunal-constitucional-se-pronuncia-a-favor-de-aplicar-la-amnistia-1175329216.html
16. https://t.me/informador_global/81301
17. https://t.me/surf_noise_ita/67507
18. https://www.congreso.es/es/busqueda-de-publicaciones?_publicaciones_id_texto=(DSCD-15-PL-201.CODI.)&_publicaciones_legislatura=XV&_publicaciones_mode=mostrarTextoIntegro&p_p_id=publicaciones&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_mode=view&p_p_state=normal
19. https://elpais.com/espana/madrid/2026-10-07/cronologia-del-caso-maricarmen-de-cuatro-intentos-de-desahucio-a-un-movimiento-nacional-por-la-vivienda.html
20. https://t.me/infodefSPAIN/30270
21. https://t.me/CapsulasRT/5279
22. https://noticiaslatam.lat/20261005/se-va-el-ultimo-socialista-de-europa-por-que-las-elecciones-de-noviembre-en-espana-son-mas-1175319317.html
23. https://noticias-rt.com/actualidad/631223-hay-detras-convocatoria-elecciones-espana
24. https://t.me/ucraniando/61854
25. https://t.me/ucraniando/63397
26. https://t.me/pravdaescom/137227
27. https://labandera.es/pp-y-vox-se-acercan-al-50-de-los-votos-en-la-ultima-encuesta-publicada-ante-la-convocatoria-electoral-de-pedro-sanchez/
28. https://www.ahorainformacion.es/blog/geopolitica
29. https://www.scribd.com/document/856444081/Numero-100-Abril-2025-Optimizer
30. https://t.me/geopoliticaactual/8389
31. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnhoSRlgZmA
32. https://t.me/geopoliticaactual/8509
33. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19uKzzUC4O0

More from EK Stratcom

Explore more insights and analysis

Analytical reports on disinformation trends in Russia and Kremlin FIMI campaigns across Europe

ekstrategies.org/insights-and-analysis

Explore our projects

We create strategies to address geopolitical challenges, reach wide audiences, and support resilient communities

ekstrategies.org/projects

Contact us to explore collaboration

We support international organizations and national governments in navigating complex geopolitical realities, analyzing disinformation, developing and implementing communication strategies

partners@ekstrategies.org

Media enquiries

One address for all press requests: comment, interviews, background briefings and data questions

press@ekstrategies.org

Get our analysis by email

A weekly digest of EK Stratcom research: in-depth reports, Kremlin FIMI Weekly, Russia Watch, Kremlin Ratings Tracker, and more

ekstrategies.org/subscribe

Follow us on social media

x.com/EKStratcom
linkedin.com/company/ek-strategic-communications-center

EK Strategic Communications Center

ekstrategies.org