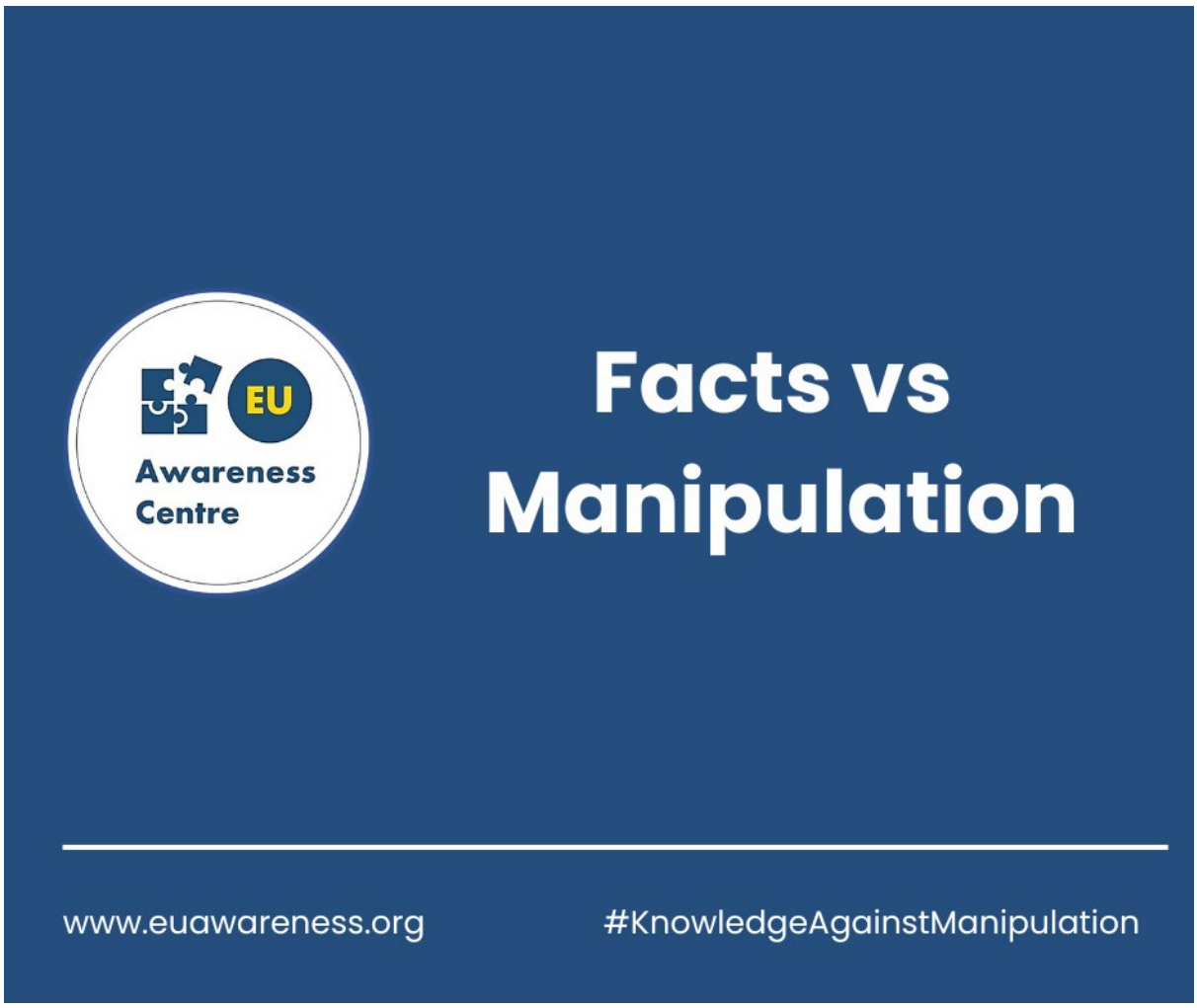

Manipulation # 4

Georgia’s Kulevi Port and the EU’s 20th sanctions package against Russia

10 March, 2026

© [2026] EU Awareness Centre. All rights reserved.

Manipulation #4

Senior representatives of the Georgian government have claimed that reports about the possible inclusion of the **Kulevi oil terminal** in the European Union's **20th sanctions package against Russia** were fabricated or manipulated by diplomats and media. Some officials have even accused European ambassadors of spreading lies and gossip on the matter.

"Universally recognised German honesty, in such cases, implies an apology. But in Mr Fischer's case, it seems permissible first to manipulate with lies and then fail to notice the truth." — **Shalva Papuashvili**, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, 10 March 2026

"Brussels must not support and finance disinformation campaigns that significantly hinder Georgia–EU relations." — **Maka Bochorishvili**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, March 2026

"It has become clear that the entire campaign around the Kulevi port and sanctions was complete falsehood and manipulation. We have heard gossip on this topic from more than one ambassador." — **Levan Makhashvili**, Chair of the Parliament's European Integration Committee, 10 March 2026

These statements create the impression that the discussion about possible EU sanctions targeting the **Kulevi oil terminal** was an invented political narrative or diplomatic manipulation.

These statements create the impression that the discussion about possible EU sanctions targeting the Kulevi oil terminal was an invented political narrative or diplomatic manipulation.

However, the documented timeline of events and official statements from the European Union tell a different story.

Facts

What the Evidence Shows

Contrary to the claims made by Georgian officials, the discussion about sanctions targeting the Kulevi oil terminal was not fabricated.

The European Union had proposed expanding its sanctions regime against Russia to include two third-country oil ports, one of which was **Kulevi in Georgia** and the other **Karimun in Indonesia,** for facilitating the transportation of Russian oil. According to a proposal document, the measure would have barred EU companies and individuals from conducting transactions with the ports as part of the EU's planned 20th sanctions package against Russia. (Reuters 9 February 2026). The draft sanctions package was prepared jointly by the European **External Action Service (EEAS)** and the **European Commission** and presented to the EU member states for discussion. It cited that the Kulevi port had been used for the maritime transportation of crude oil or petroleum products produced in Russia, raising concerns about potential sanctions circumvention.

Statements from European diplomats confirmed this fact. **German Ambassador to Georgia Peter Fischer** stated that the draft sanctions package included the Kulevi port and was accompanied by an evidence package, as is standard practice when the EU prepares restrictive measures (IPN 24 February 2026)

At the same time, **EU Ambassador to Georgia Paweł Herczyński** confirmed that the European Union had raised these questions during the meeting with the Georgian authorities (BM 24 February 2026).

The Key Manipulation

The statements made by Georgian officials rely on a misleading narrative. They present the fact that Kulevi was not included in the final sanctions package as proof that the earlier discussion about sanctions was fabricated or false.

The most damaging piece of evidence against the Georgian Dream narrative is the **letter of David O'Sullivan,** the EU Special Representative for Sanctions Issues, addressed to Foreign Minister Maka Bochorishvili. According to the published text, O'Sullivan states that Kulevi was "initially proposed for possible inclusion" in the 20th sanctions package because of its role in the maritime transportation of Russian oil and the entry of shadow fleet tankers into the port. He then stated that this initial position was reassessed after **commitments from the Georgian authorities and SOCAR**, and that these commitments were critical in the ultimate decision not to include Kulevi in the package.

Conclusion

The analyses clearly show that the statements of Georgian Dream Government Representatives were false and manipulative. Conversely, the evidence indicates that:

- Kulevi port was initially proposed for inclusion in the EU's 20th sanctions package, and it was treated as a formal legislative matter, not a rumour, and was accompanied by an evidence package (Reuters 9 February 2026).
- The EU later reassessed the case after receiving information and commitments from the Georgian authorities and the port operator (IPN 10 March 2026).

Taken together, the documented timeline leaves no doubt: the claims that European ambassadors "lied" or spread "gossip" about Kulevi sanctions are false and politically manipulative.