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Russian Media Pick Up Fake 'Belgian Grandma Orgy' Story

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Seven of the 200 participants died of heart problems at or after the event, which saw one female pensioner take on 35 sexual partners.

The rigorous West-bashing embraced by many Russian media outlets backfired this week when more than 100 outlets picked up a made-up satirical story about a sex orgy among elderly Belgians that had supposedly resulted in seven deaths.

The story, which originated from the website Nordpresse.be, reported the "biggest orgy of the year" in the Belgian city of Charleroi, with admission closed to people under age 65.

Seven of the 200 participants died of heart problems at or after the event, which saw one female pensioner take on 35 sexual partners, the website said Sunday.

Russian news aggregator Yandex listed 130 pickups of the story, with only a few of them indicating that the story was fake.

Among those that believed in the Belgian orgy were the government's official newspaper,

Rossiiskaya Gazeta, and Lenta.ru, once a leading independent news site that has taken on a moderately pro-Kremlin slant after the original team quit in March over alleged political censorship.

Both those publications subsequently issued apologies to readers, acknowledging that the story had been made up by satirist Vincent Flibustier, Nordpresse's sole author.

The Kremlin's relations with the West soured after Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in March and alleged Russian meddling in the Ukrainian civil war.

Pro-Kremlin media have been generating a steady stream of reports critical of the West and Ukraine in recent months. This has already led to embarrassment over fakes and misreporting, the most notorious case being a story about Ukrainian forces crucifying children in a town square, which turned out to be a fake based on a scene from the hit TV series "Game of Thrones."

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