EcoBoost: An Environmentally Focused Russian Influence Network Targets Norway
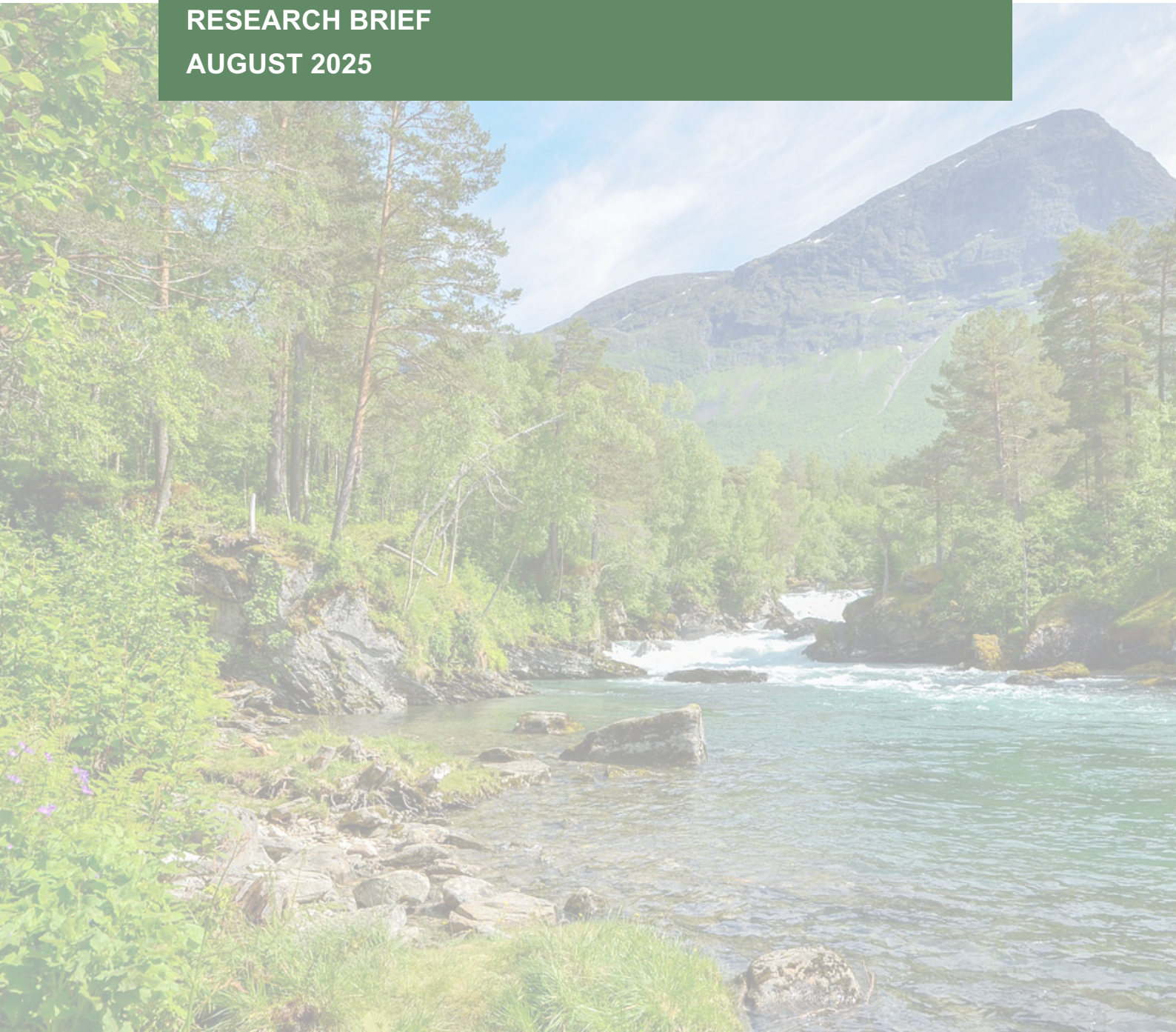
About the American Sunlight Project:
In an era of unprecedented information threats — from artificial intelligence to foreign interference to individuals sharing false or misleading information for power or profit — The American Sunlight Project is mobilizing to ensure that citizens have access to trustworthy sources to inform the choices they make in their daily lives and increase the cost of lies that undermine democracy. The American Sunlight Project is headquartered in the U.S.

About the Bellona Foundation:
The Bellona Environmental Foundation is an international science-based non-profit organization headquartered in Norway. Bellona was founded in 1986, and is a recognized technology- and solution-oriented organization with offices in Oslo, Brussels, Berlin, and Vilnius. Today, more than 70 engineers, ecologists, physicists, chemists, economists, political scientists, and journalists work at Bellona.

Author: Benjamin Shultz, the American Sunlight Project

Editorial Contributions: Tore Andre Kjetland Fjeldsbø, the Bellona Foundation

Introduction

For the environmental movement, facts have always been its most powerful tool. Today, that tool is under threat. Misinformation and coordinated disinformation campaigns are eroding the environmental movement's credibility, and undermining society's broader efforts to address the climate and environmental crises. If people no longer trust the facts, how can they trust the solutions being proposed? Disinformation from foreign actors like Russia is rarely about outright falsehoods; instead, it's often the strategic use of half-truths and emotionally charged content to deepen division and distrust. The most effective campaigns don't invent new controversies—they exploit existing ones. Increasingly, the environmental debate has become one of their targets.

This research brief highlights how a Russian disinformation network, *EcoBoost*, which focuses on environmental and technology issues, is infiltrating online conversations. These campaigns adopt—and co-opt—a wide range of perspectives, from the everyday to the extreme, in order to insert themselves into discussions and amplify division. They may use bot or troll accounts to boost content, but more often they succeed by manipulating real, existing narratives—turning genuine debate into a tool for disruption. Essentially, EcoBoost hijacks legitimate advocacy for ulterior motives. This not only complicates the work of environmental organizations, but it also threatens our ability to reach consensus. While these efforts may appear subtle or even harmless, the most successful disinformation campaigns are those that exploit pre-existing fractures in society and drive us further apart. Our hope is that this research brief will make it clear: the environmental debate in Norway and Europe is not immune to disinformation. It is already under attack.

Context

The American Sunlight Project (ASP) and Bellona have documented a significant expansion of the EcoBoost network, a collection of 697 automated X accounts run by a Russian entity that are engaged in deceptive information practices targeting the environmental and tech sectors in Western democracies.[1] Mimicking tactics used by other previously-documented Russian Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) networks, EcoBoost mass-spams reposts, quote posts and replies to international governing bodies, NGOs and educational institutions, manufacturing false grassroots support for left-wing, pro-environmental causes.[2,3] Masquerading their malign intent with eco-friendly-sounding user handles, AI-generated profile imagery and seemingly-personalized content on a range of issues—including environmental policy, natural disasters, climate change AI and cryptocurrencies—these accounts post provocative content in multiple languages designed to evoke strong feelings on all sides of the political spectrum.

Initially assessed in ASP's first report covering the network, on 4 March 2025, as spanning 636 accounts, which posted 245,241 pieces of content between 16 June 2024 and 28 February 2025, EcoBoost has expanded its operations in the last five months. ASP and Bellona have

[1] The American Sunlight Project (2024) *EcoBoost: A malign influence network targeting the environmental and tech sectors in Western democracies.* https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6612cbdfd9a9ce56ef931004/t/67c72bac9804be60f4251e3a/1741106103480/ASP+EcoBoost.pdf

[2] Agence France Presse (2024) *New anti-Ukraine disinfo campaign aims to bog down Western media.* https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20240129-new-anti-ukraine-disinfo-campaign-aims-to-bog-down-western-media

[3] VIGINUM (2024) *A pro-Russian campaign targeting media and the fact-checking community.* https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/20240611_NP_SGDSN_VIGINUM_Matriochka_EN_VF.pdf

detected an additional 61 accounts affiliated with EcoBoost and estimate the network has posted **602,668 pieces of content** as of 31 July 2025. The network posted an average of **863 posts per day** between 16 June 2024 and 31 July 2025 and continues to post primarily in English, Spanish, French, Arabic and German. There has been limited enforcement by the X Trust & Safety Team against EcoBoost, with **fewer than 30 accounts** having been removed for violating X's terms of service, despite their obvious inauthenticity.

EcoBoost's Origin & Goals

One of the hallmarks of EcoBoost which indicated its malign intent, and its likely-Russian origin, was its repeated use of incorrectly-translated Russian characters, words and code snippets—essentially, mistakes and patterns of speech not indicative of genuine conversations (see Figure 1). These posts have been removed entirely from X since ASP last reported on the network, and the two-dozen accounts responsible for these "slip-ups" have largely been deleted or suspended. We attribute the lack of continued translation mistakes to the improvement of AI-enabled content creation abilities over the last year.
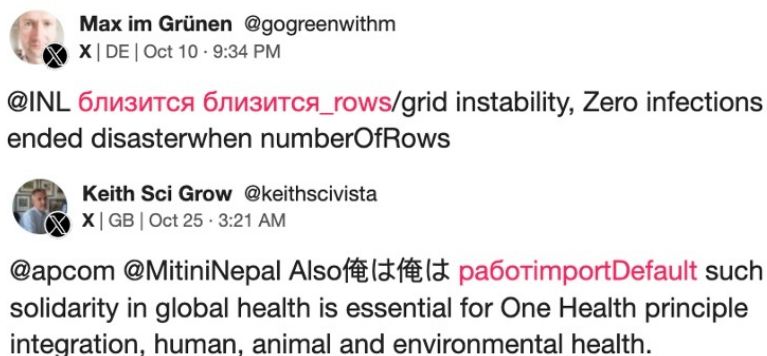

Max im Grünen @gogreenwithm
X | DE | Oct 10 · 9:34 PM

@INL близится близится_rows/grid instability, Zero infections ended disasterwhen numberOfRows

Keith Sci Grow @keithscivista
X | GB | Oct 25 · 3:21 AM

@apcom @MitiniNepal Also俺は俺は работimportDefault such solidarity in global health is essential for One Health principle integration, human, animal and environmental health.

Figure 1: Since-deleted code snippets and Russian commands included in two EcoBoost replies.

Nonetheless, we have uncovered several additional, compelling pieces of evidence that affirm our conclusion that the EcoBoost network is run by a Russian entity. Over the course of the last year, there have been no less than three instances in which major telecommunications and internet outages in Russia have overlapped with partial or total shutdowns of the network.

From 21-22 August 2024, a major telecommunications outage affected the availability of most major social media and messaging platforms in Russia, taking them offline for roughly 24 hours. During this time, the EcoBoost network—then posting an average of 350 posts per day—experienced a sudden dip in activity, posting only two times in the 24 hours from 07:00 UTC on 21 August to 06:59 UTC on 22 August. Despite the Kremlin's claims of a DDoS attack impacting internet coverage across the country, local independent media has asserted that *Roskomnadzor*, the Russian technology regulator, attempted to ban Telegram—unsuccessfully—leading to "concurrent disruptions of other digital platforms like Wikipedia, Discord, Yandex and VKontakte, as well as outages in some Central Asian countries whose network traffic transits through Russia."[4] This outage appeared to make an impact nationwide.

---

[4] The Moscow Times (2024) *Russia Blames Telegram, WhatsApp Outage on Cyberattack as Experts Point to Censorship.* https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/08/21/russia-blames-telegram-whatsapp-outage-on-cyberattack-as-experts-point-to-censorship-a86098

Overnight from 21-22 May 2025, as a result of a Ukrainian drone incursion on Russian territory, regional governments across western Russia, from the Ukrainian border to Moscow, restricted access to mobile internet.[5] During this time, the EcoBoost network—by then posting an average of more than 2,200 posts per day—experienced a dip in activity, posting only 1,303 times in the 24 hours from 07:00 UTC on 21 May to 06:59 UTC on 22 May. This larger-than-normal dip in activity far outpaced the typical ebb and flow of the network's activity (including well-defined decreases in activity on Saturdays and Sundays). The activity of the network did not return to baseline levels until the following weekend, 24-25 May, when the network posted roughly 1,900 posts per day, in line with the amount of content posted in the preceding eight weekends.

Finally, between 25-27 July 2025, the EcoBoost network went nearly completely offline for roughly 48 hours, overlapping with two critical events: 1) a massive telecommunications outage affecting regions in the Ural Mountains and Siberia;[6] and 2) during the evening of 25-26 July, a Ukrainian drone strike targeted the Signal Radio Plant in Stavropol Krai.[7] This facility has produced "active jamming systems, remote weapon-control modules, and other radio-electronic equipment," and is sanctioned by the European Union, United States and Japan.[8] We are unable to make a determination as to which of these incidents resulted in EcoBoost going offline for 48 hours; however, taken together with the totality of the evidence presented so far, this datapoint provides further circumstantial evidence for the network's Russian origin.

Two additional decreases in activity have also been observed which have not, to date, been explained by publicly available reporting. From 4-7 November 2024—the days directly preceding and following the U.S. Presidential Election—EcoBoost fell completely silent. Moreover, from 7-9 March 2025, the network's volume decreased to roughly 570 posts per day, from roughly 2,000 posts per day in the weeks prior. These events can be visualized on the graph below, with red markings indicating explainable dips in activity, and purple markings indicating so-far unexplained dips in activity.
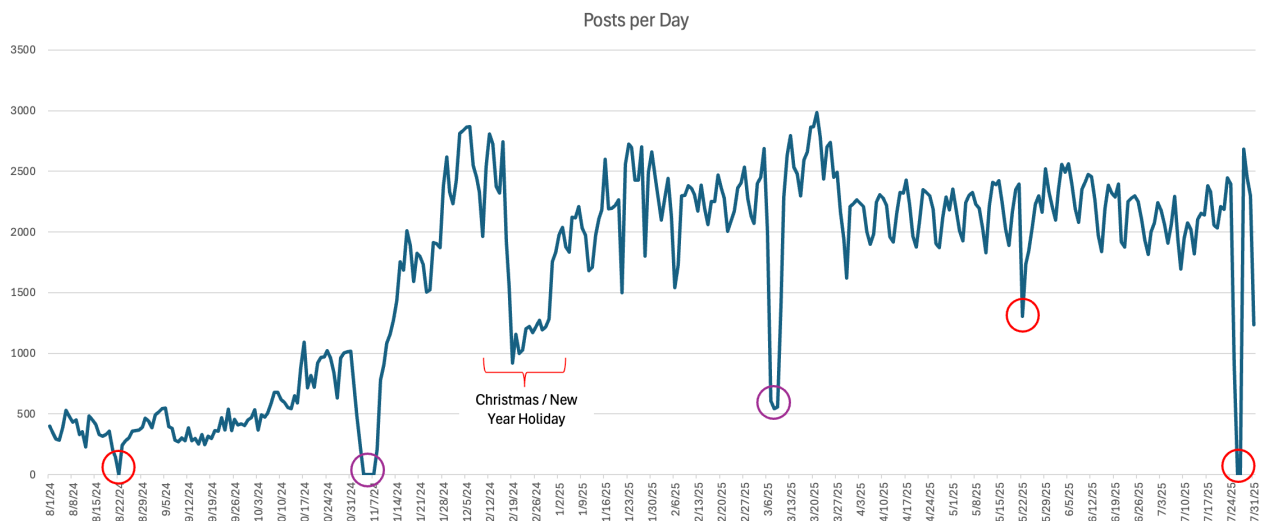
Figure 2: *Posts per day by the EcoBoost network from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025*

[5] Liga.net (2025) *Russia continues to shut down mobile internet due to drone attack.* https://news.liga.net/en/politics/news/russia-continues-to-shut-down-mobile-internet-due-to-drone-attack
[6] Ukrainska Pravda (2025) *Russians in Ural and Siberia left without mobile internet.* https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2025/07/28/7523755/
[7] Kyiv Independent (2025) *Ukrainian drones strike major Russian military radio factory in Stavropol, SBU source says.* https://kyivindependent.com/ukrainian-drones-strike-major-russian-radio-warfare-plant-in-stavropol/
[8] Open Sanctions (2023) *Public Joint Stock Company Stavropol Radio Plant Signal.* https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-GwEbrcJXrFftz8496HJT8f/

ASP and Bellona recognize the limitations of this research vis-à-vis these unexplained, sharp decreases in volume, and while it is not possible to attribute with total certainty the geographic location of the entity responsible for the EcoBoost network, the myriad examples of decreased activity from EcoBoost during times of mass telecommunications outages in Russia that do exist, in addition to the previously-documented code snippets and incorrect translations, indeed strongly suggest the network is controlled from one or more locations inside Russia.

What Exactly Does EcoBoost Discuss?

The subject matter of EcoBoost's posts has not varied significantly from ASP's initial reporting on the network. Distinct communities of accounts still focus on varying themes, including technology, AI, cryptocurrency, and engineering; "going green" or implementing eco-friendly lifestyles; conservation efforts; and technologies and innovation specific to the environmental sector. Moreover, EcoBoost accounts continue to attempt to influence electoral and policy debates across the broader West. This has included strategic reposts around current European environmental policy; discussion of emerging geopolitical tensions, such as election-related discussion in Poland and Germany (see Figure 3), overt promotion of Tesla (see Figure 4); and even sanctions evasion by Russia's shadow fleet (see Figure 5).

While only a small proportion of the content produced or amplified by EcoBoost achieves high levels of engagement (views, likes, reposts), the network's choice of subject matter and dedication to involving itself in current debates, as well as its use of generic terms to describe climate innovation, such as "game changer" (used 7,750 times), and use of "I statements" to make personal connections to those it interacts with, has enabled it to reach more than **28 million X users in the last year**.[9] Between the representative examples of the confusing, contradictory content presented both in this report and ASP's initial report on EcoBoost from March—around the U.S., U.K. and Canadian elections— we assess there to be a high likelihood that the network will attempt to influence debates around upcoming national elections in Europe, including Norway (8 September), Moldova (28 September) and The Netherlands (29 October).
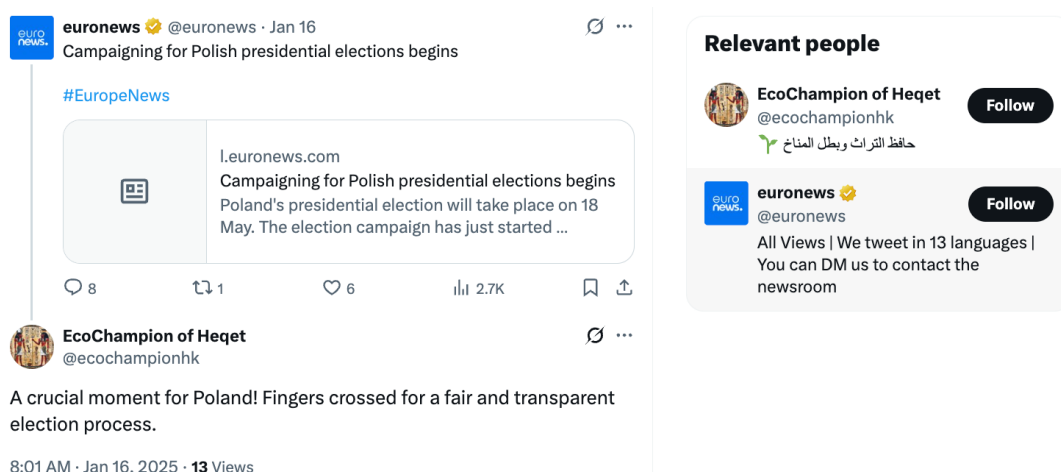
Figure 3: EcoBoost account attempting to seed doubt about the fairness of the 2025 Polish election (https://x.com/ecochampionhk/status/187978600940848409).

---

[9] ASP and Bellona used a commercial social listening tool to analyze the content posted by the EcoBoost network. The social listening tool estimates reach based on the number of monthly visitors to a particular source.
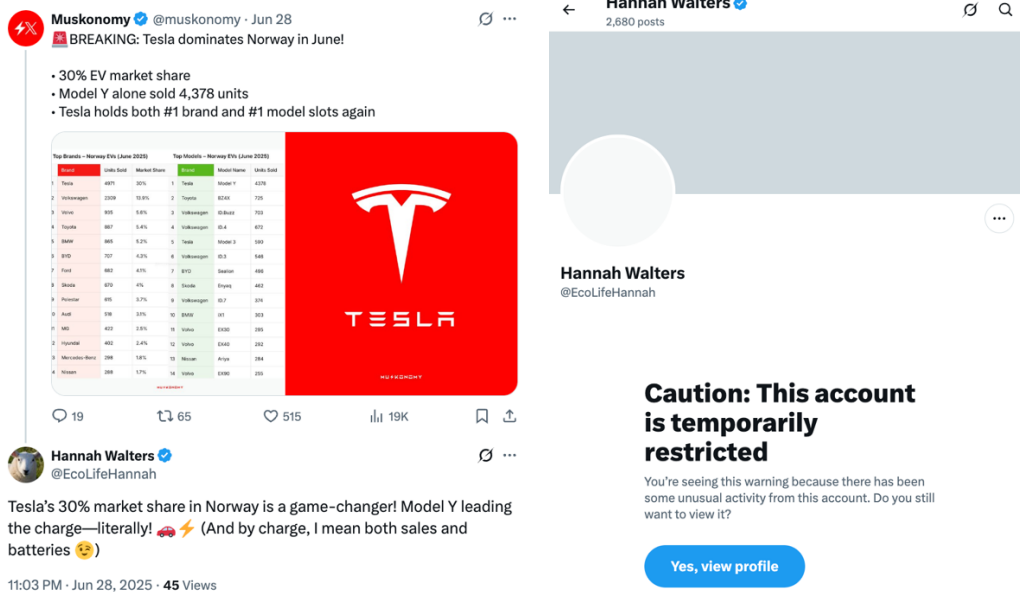
Figure 4: *EcoBoost account promoting Tesla, despite being flagged for inauthentic behavior (https://x.com/EcoLifeHannah/status/1939067052771197099).*
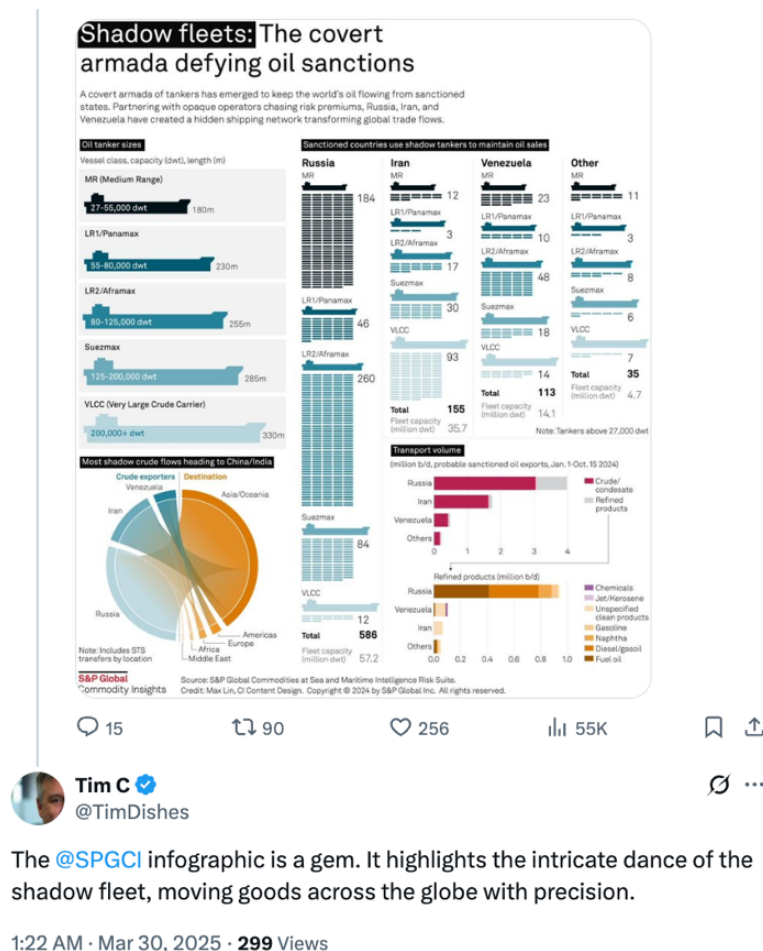
Figure 5: *EcoBoost account appearing to be against the illegal activities of Russia's shadow fleet (https://x.com/TimDishes/status/1906139916083347804).*

How EcoBoost Targets the Norwegian and European Environmental Debate

Of the Scandinavian countries, Norway has been discussed most frequently by EcoBoost, to the tune of 1,152 mentions of the country, including Svalbard, Jan Mayen, the Barents Sea and several major Norwegian energy and maritime companies (including Statnett, Hafslund, Statkraft, Eramet, Grieg and Equinor). Significant cities and regions mentioned at least once by EcoBoost between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025 include Oslo, Tromsø, Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, Narvik, Lillestrøm, Ålesund, Bodø and Longyearbyen. The overwhelming majority of these mentions occurred in English, with limited numbers observed in Spanish, French, Arabic and German. Many mentions of regions, cities and entities are innocuous and mundane, and appear to serve as a way for EcoBoost to simply insert itself into everyday conversations. Some, however, showcase clear goals to divide and disrupt European environmental policy debates. To this end, EcoBoost's audience does not appear to be limited to just the Norwegian—or Scandinavian—public. It, at times, seeks to pit European countries against one another and prompt outside interference into local discussions about certain issues, energy facilities, wind farms, etc. Table 1 below showcases the frequency of specific groups of keywords as percentages of the total posts by the entire EcoBoost network, as well as the Norway-specific dataset.

Table 1: Percentage of posts within the entire EcoBoost network and the Norway-specific dataset

Terms	All	Norway
"Climate"	9.38%	14.94%
"Oil", "Gas"," LNG", "Fossil Fuels"	3.11%	12.93%
"Electric Vehicles", "EV"	0.82%	5.90%
"Glacier", "Sea Ice", "Sea Level"	0.56%	4.86%
"Nuclear", "Reactor", "Fission", "Fusion"	2.41%	4.69%
"Wind"	1.02%	4.17%
"Hydrogen"	0.69%	2.78%
"Carbon Capture", "Carbon Storage", "CCS"	0.20%	2.08%
"Crime", "Justice", "Racism", "Discrimination"	0.64%	0.43%
"Conservation"	0.75%	0.43%
"Blockchain", "Crypto", "Decentralized", "Stablecoin"	2.24%	0.52%
"Musk"	0.20%	0.17%

The network has been especially active in amplifying perspectives on climate change, sea level rise, and fossil fuels related to Norway, beyond their baseline presence across the broader network. The network even reposted content from Bellona itself during this investigation (see Figures 6a & 6b), as well as content around nuanced and politically sensitive issues, such as the development of nuclear energy facilities (see Figure 7a), or the cost of electricity, electric vehicles, wind energy, hydrogen power and a broader power grid transition (see Figure 7b). In several cases, EcoBoost has both attacked (see Figure 8) and lauded Norway's advances in these spaces, while attacking the internal politics of neighboring countries, in a manner that is likely aimed at undermining intra-European cooperation (see Figure 9). Within the broader EcoBoost network, topics on crime, justice, blockchain, cryptocurrencies and conservation were discussed more frequently than in Norway-specific content. Interestingly, mentions of Elon Musk were remarkably proportional between the broader network and the Norway-specific dataset.

Figure 6a: *A strategic repost by an EcoBoost account, of content posted by Bellona (https://x.com/EcoLiamPH/status/1937193157327835613).*

Figure 6b: *The example EcoBoost account from above, including an AI-generated profile image.*

Figure 7a: *An EcoBoost repost advocating in favor of the proposed development of a new nuclear facility in Halden, Norway (https://x.com/Radiant_Mike_H/status/1876600627897471361).*

In Norway, 79% of new cars sold in 2022 were electric. There are now over 600,000 electric vehicles in the country.

We have so many solutions. Time to shelve fossil fuels and plug them in. #ActOnClimate

#Climate #energy #transportation #GreenNewDeal

Relevant people

Emily Wildflower
@NatureWithEm   Follow

Either win or make friends with winners.

Figure 7b: An EcoBoost account retweet applauding Norway's electric vehicle adoption and advocating for a broader energy transition (https://x.com/NatureWithEm/status/1889841497396396069).

Archie Clarke reposted

Norway to open protected rivers to hydropower plants

In an alarming and drastic policy shift the Norwegian parliament has voted on opening up all protected rivers to hydropower projects, a move that threatens fragile ecosystem and

app.wedonthavetime.org
Give Climate Warning ⚠️ to Government of Norway: Norw…
In an alarming and drastic policy shift the Norwegian parliament has voted on opening up all protected rivers to …

2:04 PM · Mar 2, 2025 · **13** Views

Relevant people

Archie Clarke
@peaceful_ac   Follow

Peace in the world ✌️

Figure 8: An EcoBoost account retweet criticizing Norway's plans to open hydropower plants, citing environmental concerns (https://x.com/peaceful_ac/status/1896259363654009268).
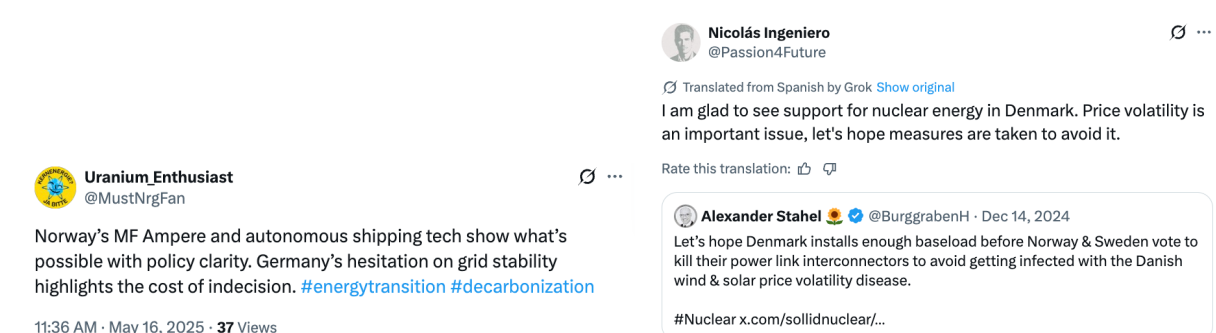
Uranium_Enthusiast
@MustNrgFan

Norway's MF Ampere and autonomous shipping tech show what's possible with policy clarity. Germany's hesitation on grid stability highlights the cost of indecision. #energytransition #decarbonization

11:36 AM · May 16, 2025 · **37** Views

Nicolás Ingeniero
@Passion4Future

Translated from Spanish by Grok Show original

I am glad to see support for nuclear energy in Denmark. Price volatility is an important issue, let's hope measures are taken to avoid it.

Rate this translation: 👍 👎

Alexander Stahel 🌻 ✔️ @BurggrabenH · Dec 14, 2024
Let's hope Denmark installs enough baseload before Norway & Sweden vote to kill their power link interconnectors to avoid getting infected with the Danish wind & solar price volatility disease.

#Nuclear x.com/sollidnuclear/…

Figure 9: Two EcoBoost accounts advocating both for and against Norwegian energy policies, and neighboring European countries' policies. (https://x.com/MustNrgFan/status/1923311670618730710, https://x.com/Passion4Future/status/1868018314796204416).

Conclusion

The EcoBoost network has now been influencing environmental and political debates on X for over a year, without meaningful action from the platform. Despite myriad indicators of inauthentic behavior, from obviously AI-generated profile images,[10] to engagement that is clearly indicative of automation,[11] to numerous decreases in network activity aligning with internet outages in Russia, EcoBoost's work continues unabated. Despite common misconceptions about what disinformation and foreign influence look like, networks like EcoBoost often work under the radar, carrying out their goals without engaging in conspiracy theories, pushing far-right extremist content, or buying social media ads in Rubles.[12] It is therefore imperative that everyday social media users maintain skepticism and vigilance while online, and recognize that even traditional "left-wing" causes, like environmentalism, remain subject to manipulation and co-option by bad actors. In times when platforms are waving the white flag, and actively hampering efforts to keep our information environment secure, degrading what little civility and legitimate debate remain online, it is up to civil society to continue these efforts. ASP, Bellona and our partners will continue to monitor EcoBoost and sound the alarm—for democracy's sake.

---

[10] X's terms of service state: "You may not use manufactured identities to engage in disruptive or deceptive behavior. This may include using stock, stolen or AI-generated profile photos…for the purpose of deceiving others."

[11] X's terms of service state: "[Y]ou may not create, operate, or mass-register accounts that are not legitimate, genuine and transparent as to their source, identity, and popularity."

[12] New York Times (2017) *These Are the Ads Russia Bought on Facebook in 2016*.
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/01/us/politics/russia-2016-election-facebook.html