EU sanctions Russia over 2015 German Parliament hack

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Germany had been asking and pushing EU officials for an official statement and sanctions against Russia since earlier this year.

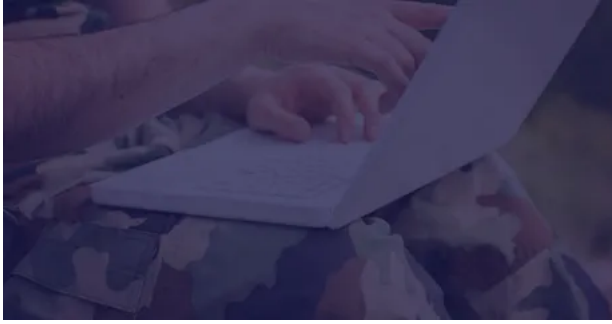Written by Catalin Cimpanu, Contributor on Oct. 22, 2020

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Image: Guillaume Périgois

The European Union has imposed [sanctions](#) today against Russia for its involvement in the 2015 German Parliament (Bundestag) hack.

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Sanctions were levied against the GRU (Russian Main Intelligence Directorate), a military intelligence agency part of the Russian Army, and two of its officers.

The two GRU officers were identified as Dmitry Badin and Igor Kostyukov.

EU officials said Badin was part of a team of Russian military intelligence officers who hacked the Bundestag IT network between April and May 2015.

"This cyber-attack targeted the parliament's information system and affected its operation for several days," the EU said today. "A significant amount of data was stolen and the email accounts of several MPs as well as of Chancellor Angela Merkel were affected."

Kostyukov was sanctioned for his role as First Deputy Head of the GRU.

EU officials said Kostyukov commands the 85th Main Centre for Special Services (GTsSS), also known as Military Unit 26165, but more commonly known in the cyber-security industry under the hacker codenames of APT28, Fancy Bear, Sofacy, or Strontium.

German authorities have been pushing for official EU sanctions against Russia for the 2015 hack since earlier this year when they filed official charges against Badin.

Russian authorities said Germany never provided any evidence in regards to the 2015 Bundestag hack and the Badin charges, accusing the Berlin government of chasing sanctions rather than actually wanting to get the GRU officer in a court of law.

Badin was also charged in the US for a long string of hacks while part of APT28, such as cyber-attacks against the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and involvement in US political disinformation efforts.

Today's announcement is the second wave of sanctions imposed against Russian hackers by the EU this year.

Brussels officials sanctioned four GRU officers at the end of July for the attempted hack of the OPCW WiFi network. Sanctions were also levied against Chinese and North Korean hackers as well.

The sanctions consist of a travel ban and an asset freeze. EU citizens and businesses are prohibited from engaging in transactions with any sanctioned entities.

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