



Plenary sitting

B9-0111/2019

2.10.2019

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European
democratic processes
(2019/2810(RSP))

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on behalf of the ID Group

**European Parliament resolution on foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European democratic processes
(2019/2810(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 April 2018 entitled ‘Tackling online disinformation: A European Approach’ (COM(2018)0236),
- having regard to the Commission report on the implementation of the Action Plan against Disinformation of 14 June 2019 (JOIN(2019)0012),
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 18 October 2018,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘Automated tackling of disinformation’ published by the European Parliament’s Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services on 15 March 2019¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2019 on security threats connected with the rising Chinese technological presence in the EU and possible action on the EU level to reduce them²,
- having regard to its recommendation of 13 March 2019 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning taking stock of the follow-up taken by the EEAS two years after the European Parliament report on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties³,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2018 on the use of Facebook users’ data by Cambridge Analytica and the impact on data protection⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2018 on the annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy⁵,
- having regard to the Nineteenth Progress Report towards an effective and genuine Security Union of the Commission of 24 July 2019 (COM(2019)0353),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing

¹ Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services, Scientific Foresight Unit, 15 March 2019.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0156.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0187.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0433.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0514.

Directive 95/46/EC (the General Data Protection Regulation)⁶,

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 6 June 2018 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Digital Europe programme for the period 2021-2027 (COM(2018)0434),
- having regard to the statements by the Council and the Commission of 17 September 2019 on foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European democratic processes,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas attempts by international actors, including the European Union and EU-backed non-state actors, to exert influence on decision-making by means of interference are part of a wider trend experienced by democracies worldwide;
- B. whereas interference may take a myriad of forms, including disinformation campaigns on social media to shape public opinion, cyber-attacks targeting critical infrastructure and industrial espionage;
- C. whereas EU electoral interference overseas constitutes a major challenge as it poses serious risks for European democratic societies and institutions, fundamental rights and freedoms, rule of law, security, economic wealth and, ultimately, sovereignty;
- D. whereas the global interconnection of people and economies by digital means and new technologies has increased the tools at the disposal of international actors, including the EU engaging in foreign interference; whereas media platforms can easily be exploited to spread disinformation and fake news;
- E. whereas awareness needs to be raised about the EU's disinformation campaigns, as this constitutes one of the main sources of disinformation in Europe;
- 1. Stresses that freedom of speech and expression as well as media pluralism are at the heart of resilient democratic societies and provide the best safeguards against disinformation campaigns and hostile propaganda;
- 2. Emphasises the individual right of all citizens of the Member States to source their information however they choose, without being controlled or manipulated by any government or EU institution;
- 3. Reiterates that EU-sponsored propaganda in elections, such as the UK Brexit referendum, undermines the right of people to have their say in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- 4. Strongly condemns the persistent use of EU propaganda in infant and junior schools in EU Member States;

⁶ OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1.

5. Strongly condemns the expenditure on EU propaganda in Member States;
6. Notes that there is no irrefutable evidence of Russian interference in European elections and that, after a lengthy investigation, the Mueller Report on Russian activity in the US elections is inconclusive; further notes that the international press has raised doubts about the possible interference of some Member State governments during the last US presidential election campaign;
7. Notes that it is unclear whether the so-called climate movement constitutes a hybrid threat, as it is funded by private and possibly state actors in order to influence political decision-making within and by the EU to the detriment of its citizens; calls on the Commission to examine the financial background of the climate movement for any foreign interference;
8. Calls on the Commission to beware of the EU creating a 'Ministry of Truth' in its efforts to combat disinformation, and thereby limiting freedom of expression and the right to impart information and ideas without interference from public authorities;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to prevent the EU from becoming a (counter)propaganda machine silencing all forms of opposition against its narrative;
10. Calls on the Commission to avoid imposing self-censorship on citizens of the Member States by creating the fear that any form of criticism of the EU will be silenced and/or sanctioned;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the strategies against disinformation and propaganda are not used as a tool to prevent or stifle criticism being levelled at the EU;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.