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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0125/2024**

5.2.2024

## **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 Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes  
of the European Union  
(2024/2548(RSP))

**Pedro Marques, Gabriele Bischoff, Andreas Schieder, Raphaël  
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on behalf of the S&D Group

**B9-0125/2024**

**European Parliament resolution on Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes of the European Union (2024/2548(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, notably Articles 7, 8, 11, 12, 39, 40, 47 and 52 thereof, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, notably Articles 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17 thereof, and the Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, notably Article 3 thereof,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 24 February 2022 and 30-31 May 2022,
- having regard to Council Decision of 3 June 2022 amending Decision (CFSP) 2014/512 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 12 December 2023 on Defence of Democracy,
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a directive establishing harmonised requirements in the internal market on transparency of interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 (COM(2023)0637),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2020 on the European democracy action plan (COM(2020)0790),
- having regard to its resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third countries<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2023 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its oral question to the Commission of 31 May 2023 on Election integrity and resilience build-up in the run-up to the 2024 European elections (O-

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 153, 3.6.2022, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C, C/2023/1226, 21.12.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1226/oj>.

000018/2023),

- having regard to its resolution of 13 July 2023 on Recommendations for reform of the European Parliament’s rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of ~~8-13~~ September 2023 on amendments to Parliament’s Rules of Procedure with a view to strengthening integrity, independence and accountability<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas foreign interference constitutes a serious violation of the universal values and principles on which the Union is founded, such as human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law;
  - B. whereas the spread of disinformation, hacking of candidates’ electronic devices and cyberattacks on election infrastructure, notably from Russia, have risen to an unprecedented level;
  - C. whereas Russia has used several methods of interference, including trying to weaken and divide the EU’s Member States, trying to influence European political parties, mostly on the far right, and trying to destabilise the EU’s neighbouring countries;
  - D. whereas Russia has for several years been carrying out disinformation campaigns across both traditional media outlets and social media platforms, cyberattacks, elite capture and attacks, which also sought to prepare the ground for its aggression against Ukraine;
  - E. whereas several investigations have revealed that electoral rules have been breached or circumvented, in particular the existing provisions on the transparency of election campaign financing with allegations of covert funding from third country sources, notably from Russia;
  - F. whereas the European Parliament is the only directly elected body among the EU institutions and is at the forefront of EU political discussions on fighting foreign interference, information manipulation and hybrid threats in our democracies, including in the EU institutions; whereas recent events have highlighted that Parliament is a target of diverse and aggressive foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) campaigns;
  - G. whereas recent press sources have unveiled allegations that a Member of the European Parliament was working on behalf of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB); whereas there are other claims and suspicions about more Russian agents in the European Parliament;
  - H. whereas 2024 is a crucial electoral year and several presidential, national, local and

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<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2023)0292.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2023)0316.

regional elections are due to be held in Member States, in addition to the European elections scheduled on 6-9 June;

- I. whereas according to the Eurobarometer survey of March 2023, citizens consider false and misleading information circulating online, propaganda from non-democratic foreign sources and covert foreign interference – including through financing of domestic actors – to be among the main challenges to our democratic systems;
  - J. whereas Russia still has considerable influence in the Western Balkans, notably in Serbia and Republica Srpska, one of the entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where it has the power to interfere in regional attempts at reconciliation, integration and reform towards democratisation;
  - K. whereas funding from outside the EU of political activities and politicians within the European Union before and after 24 February 2022, in particular from Russia, continues to be revealed and poses a risk for the integrity of democratic processes in the EU Member States and requires thorough investigation;
  - L. whereas instances of FIMI attacks on EU and national institutions have increased following the start of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine;
  - M. whereas civil society organisations (CSOs) play an essential role as watchdogs, are key to building democratic resilience from within and protecting democracy, and support the fight against breaches of the rule of law while actively contributing to fostering the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights on the ground;
1. Expresses deep concern over the press allegations resulting from investigations conducted by the Latvian newspaper ‘The Insider’, revealing that a Member of the European Parliament was working on behalf of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB);
  2. Recalls the continual unveiling of evidence of Russian interference in the run-up to all major national and European elections, as highlighted in the final reports of its special committees on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE and INGE2);
  3. Considers it imperative to immediately conduct a thorough internal investigation in order to assess all possible cases of foreign interference from Russia and misbehaviours from its own Members;
  4. Calls for the highest level of political and administrative attention to be given to the Recommendations for reform of the European Parliament’s rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption adopted on 13 July 2023 and the full implementation of its new rules on transparency and integrity adopted in September 2023, as well as the monitoring of all its internal codes of conduct and decisions approved by its Bureau, in particular concerning the interaction with third countries;
  5. Calls for all European institutions to raise their ambitions regarding the implementation of the European ethics body;

6. Believes that free and fair elections are at the heart of the democratic process and therefore urges EU institutions and Member States to take decisive action to ensure that solely the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, without foreign interference by malign actors, with a particular focus on the preparations for the European elections of 6-9 June 2024;
7. Highlights that hybrid warfare and FIMI are not just foreign policy issues but in fact threaten the very basis of our democracies; urges the European institutions to adopt a permanent cross-cutting approach to combating FIMI more effectively; considers that electoral interference in one Member State affects the EU as a whole insofar as it can have an impact on the composition of the EU institutions; believes that national authorities cannot address these threats by working in isolation, nor can private sector self-regulation solve it all; welcomes the work done by the European External Action Service (EEAS) in its second Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats published on 23 January 2024;
8. Underlines that Russia's aggression against Ukraine has exposed the extent of foreign manipulation of information and information threats to the EU and its immediate neighbourhood, namely the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries, and therefore calls for the EU and its neighbouring countries to increase their cooperation on the fight against disinformation;
9. Acknowledges that the overwhelming majority of Member States have full or partial bans on foreign donations to political parties and candidates; expresses its concern about Russia's connections with several political parties and politicians in the EU; recalls that even in the case where the law limits the sources of political funding, Russian actors have found ways to circumvent them and offered support to their allies by taking out loans with foreign banks (such as in the case of the *National Front* party in 2016), purchase and commercial agreements (such as in the allegations reported by *Der Spiegel* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 17 May 2019 about the *FPÖ* party and by *Buzzfeeds* and *L'Espresso* on 10 July 2019 about *Lega per Salvini premier*), and facilitation of financial activities (as reported by the British press about the *Leave.eu* campaign);
10. Is deeply concerned by the evidence that much Russian interference favoured anti-EU, extremist and populist candidates; deplors the fact that FIMI campaigns are often directed against specific minorities and vulnerable groups and notes that the targeting of those minorities serves the larger purpose of undermining the appeal of democratic and equal societies;
11. Insists on its commitment to continuing to undertake serious and concrete reforms in the European Parliament in order to enhance its integrity and transparency, to show zero tolerance for corruption and corrupting political interference and to protect European democracy;
12. Calls on the Secretariat of the EU Transparency Register to ban any entities with direct or indirect relations with the Government of Russia, pursuant to the Council decision of

3 June 2022 concerning restrictive measures <sup>7</sup>;

13. Expects the Commission and the Council to deliver on the Defence of Democracy Package in order to urgently take action and close the numerous loopholes in EU party financing legislation, find a compulsory regulatory scheme for the big platforms, and step up the EU's cyber defence against possible attacks on our electoral system;
14. Considers it urgent to enhance and update the tools for the protection of the integrity of the elections for the digital age, in order to protect democratic processes from new forms of manipulation by third countries or private interests; invites the Commission to address the harmful potential of new AI-powered techniques on the electoral process and calls for an update to its existing commitments on the transparency of political advertising and cooperation among stakeholders;
15. Calls for Parliament to reinforce the security culture within the institution; calls therefore for mandatory, effective and regular training on security, interference, ethical standards, compliance and integrity for all MEPs and their offices and for all Parliament staff, making them aware that they are potential targets of foreign state and non-state actors; recommends appropriate security clearance for Parliament officials and political group staff, and evaluation of when security clearance is needed for accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs) when dealing with foreign affairs, security and defence or trade issues; calls on national authorities to follow procedures and a common timeframe whenever they are asked to give security clearance to MEPs and Parliament staff, as well as for any security screening related to the EU institutions; calls for Parliament's services to put in place effective monitoring and surveillance systems to detect foreign interference while respecting MEP's freedom of mandate;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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<sup>7</sup> OJ L 153, 3.6.2022, p. 128.