



Plenary sitting

B9-0127/2024

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))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

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 its resolution of 13 July 2023 on Recommendations for reform of the European Parliament’s rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2023 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation²,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation³,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on EU-Russia relations, in particular its resolution of 23 November 2022 on recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine⁵,
- having regard to its Rules of Procedure and the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas there is evidence of Russian interference and manipulation in many Western liberal democracies, as well as of its practical support for extremist forces and radical-minded entities to promote the destabilisation of the Union;
- B. whereas Russia seeks to establish contacts with parties, personalities and movements in order to rely on actors within the Union’s institutions to legitimise Russian positions and proxy governments and to press for the easing of sanctions and mitigate the consequences of international isolation;
- C. whereas thorough investigative work conducted by Russian, Latvian, Estonian and Swedish media outlets published on 29 January 2024 reported that a Latvian non-attached Member of the European Parliament could have provided far-ranging assistance to Russian intelligence services from at least 2004 to 2017;

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0292.

² OJ C, C/2023/1226, 21.12.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1226/oj>.

³ OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 61.

⁴ OJ C 167, 11.5.2023, p. 18.

⁵ OJ C 125, 18.3.2022, p. 2.

- D. whereas said assistance was described as including political advocacy on behalf of the Russian Federation, through the organisation of events, as well as the provision of information on the inner workings of Parliament; whereas the investigative report suggests that the MEP concerned at least once requested payment from her counterparts to cover expenses incurred in relation to services rendered;
- E. whereas these allegations rely, among other things on what are described as leaked email conversations between the Member concerned and two case-handlers at the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) Fifth Service, dating from 3 October 2005 and onwards;
- F. whereas the Member concerned repeatedly expressed views which can be considered as pro-Russian, including opposing the existence of Latvia as a sovereign country and the refusal to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine; whereas the MEP is further known to engage in highly questionable political conduct, among other things through the participation in a referendum observation visit in Russian-occupied Crimea in 2014 and a visit to Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad in 2016; whereas the MEP deliberately gave the impression that these trips were made on behalf of the European Parliament or the EU;
- G. whereas the MEP concerned has close relations with members of the Catalan pro-independence party ERC, including its president;
- H. whereas representatives of a group of Catalan secessionists in Spain who maintained relations with personalities close to the Kremlin – including the MEP concerned – are demanding that the Spanish prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, grant them an amnesty from all responsibility for their alleged crimes;
- I. whereas recent inquiries suggest that a sitting Catalan MEP had a close personal relationship with Russia and engaged in actions aimed at building political and economic influence to destabilise democracy in the European Union;
- J. whereas the MEP concerned is not the only Member of the European Parliament to have engaged in activities including taking part in fake electoral observation missions in various countries and fostering confusion with official European Parliament missions; whereas several MEPs were sanctioned for this breach under the Democracy Support and Election Coordination group procedure; whereas these visits took place systematically in Russia and countries allied to Russia;
- K. whereas the MEP concerned was excluded from her political group and now sits as a non-affiliated member; whereas the Member concerned gathered support from some other MEPs whose public positions on international issues are similar to hers; whereas, for instance, on several occasions, other MEPs travelled to Lithuania as did the MEP concerned to demonstrate in favour of Algirdas Paleckis, a former diplomat and politician who was convicted of spying for Russia;
- L. whereas in the wake of the revelations the President of the European Parliament immediately announced the launch of an internal investigation, including a referral to the Advisory Committee on the Code of Conduct; whereas the Latvian security service announced it will investigate the allegations;

- M. whereas in 2016, Russia's ruling party, *Edinaia Rossiia* (United Russia), signed a cooperation agreement with the Austrian far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), calling for increased cooperation between the two parties and stronger political and economic ties between Vienna and Moscow; whereas this agreement was signed in the presence of an MEP from the FPÖ, who, since then, has repeatedly called for easing EU sanctions against Russia and disseminated pro-Kremlin disinformation;
- N. whereas for a number of years, some MEPs have recruited and employed Russian nationals as interns, accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs) and group advisors and have not stopped doing so even after the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
- O. whereas Parliament's Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation (INGE) has exposed in detail the Russian-led efforts and operations to infiltrate, influence and interfere with European democracies and the European institutions;
- P. whereas some political groups unsuccessfully tried to deny the extension of the ING2 special committee mandate to address all forms of corruption and foreign interference in the European Parliament, advocating instead for an investigation committee focusing only on Qatargate;
- Q. whereas the Russian Federation has long been engaged in a hybrid war against the EU and its Member States, deploying a wide array of different methods of interference, embedded within a larger strategy to undermine the proper functioning of Europe's democratic processes; whereas these methods include but are not limited to cyberattacks, including on the European Parliament, elite capture of European decision-makers, election meddling including through the use of foreign information manipulation and interference; whereas this hybrid war was the precursor of and continues to support Russia's illegal war of aggression in Ukraine;
- R. whereas Russia has provided practical support for extremist forces and radical-minded entities to destabilise the EU and its Member States; whereas it has established contacts with parties, personalities and movements in order to rely on actors within the Union's institutions to legitimise Russian positions, support independence movements and proxy governments and to press for the easing of sanctions and mitigate the consequences of international isolation;
- S. whereas following the Qatargate revelations, in September 2023 Parliament updated and significantly strengthened its internal integrity framework, among other things through an in-depth revision of its Rules of Procedure, the Code of Conduct for MEPs and the relevant Bureau Decisions;
1. Is appalled by and expresses serious concern about the allegations of spying involving a non-attached member of Parliament; denounces, in the strongest possible terms, Russia's alleged attempts to influence Members, which constitute serious foreign interference in the EU's democratic processes;
 2. Stresses that the MEP concerned has been excluded from her political group for reasons related to her positions on Russia and Ukraine and is now unaffiliated; underlines that

her opinions do not represent the opinion of the vast majority of the Members of the European Parliament, which overwhelmingly condemns Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, its use of hybrid warfare tactics against European democracy and other aggressive and anti-democratic policy choices in recent years; notes nevertheless that a small number of MEPs have participated in actions jointly with the MEP concerned, expressing similar viewpoints and siding overtly with Russia;

3. Commits to provide its full support to and cooperation with the Latvian authorities in their investigation into the conduct of the MEP concerned; calls on the competent Belgian authorities to investigate whether the Member concerned is liable for prosecution under Belgian criminal law and remains ready to provide its full support and cooperation therefor;
4. Welcomes the referral of the Member concerned to the Advisory Committee on the Code of Conduct; commits to enforce its applicable internal sanction framework in full; notes that the alleged facts pre-date the recent adoption of the reform of Parliament's integrity framework; considers that rules by themselves would not have prevented the MEP's alleged reprehensible conduct; remains nevertheless ready to further evaluate and fine-tune the functioning and sanctioning of Parliament's integrity framework, which was reinforced in the wake of Qatargate;
5. Considers that the allegations regarding the MEP concerned underline the need for an enhanced security culture within the European Parliament; reiterates, therefore, its call for the full implementation of the recommendations contained in its resolution of 13 July 2023 on recommendations for reform of European Parliament's rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption⁶, including mandatory security training for MEPs and staffers, appropriate security clearance and reinforced screening of staffers, in particular those attending in camera meetings;
6. Expresses deep concern over the links the MEP concerned may have entertained with other MEPs and firmly denounces any internal coordinated attempts to advance the Kremlin's political agenda within the Parliament; instructs its services to investigate whether the conduct of these MEPs constitutes sanctionable behaviour under its Code of Conduct;
7. Calls for the cases of the Catalan MEPs concerned to be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Code of Conduct; calls on Spain to effectively investigate the connections of the MEPs associated with the Kremlin and the attempts at destabilisation and interference by Russia in the European Union and its Member States; also calls for the full implementation of relevant legislation regarding illegal relations with governments of third countries;
8. Recalls that foreign interference is a systemic threat that must be countered vigorously; recalls further that, while Russia remains the main origin of foreign interference and disinformation in the European Union, other countries have also conducted such campaigns; underlines that the EU's response to these threats can only be effective if it is based on a transversal, holistic and long term policy approach jointly carried out by both the EU and its Member States; remains determined to follow through in its efforts

⁶ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0292.

to combat foreign interference in the EU in the years to come, among other things through a dedicated Parliamentary body; stresses that vigilance and protection against foreign interference are particularly necessary in the run-up to the European elections this year;

9. Firmly denounces the Russian Federation's continued attempts to undermine the functioning of European democratic processes and stresses that these tactics must be met with consequences; reiterates its call on the Member States to further develop and fine-tune the sanction packages adopted against the Russian Federation and to close loopholes in the enforcement of the restrictive measures currently in force;
10. Stresses the seriousness of Russia's connections with parties and politicians in the Union and its extensive interference in secessionist movements in European territories, such as in Catalonia;
11. States that the close and regular contacts between Russian officials and representatives of a group of Catalan secessionists in Spain are part of Russia's broader strategy to seize any and every opportunity to manipulate political practice in Europe in order to promote its destabilisation;
12. Expresses the commitment of EU institutions and Member States to conduct thorough investigations into the connections between European politicians and the Kremlin, as well as into Russia's efforts to disrupt, influence and intervene in the affairs of the European Union and its Member States;
13. Stresses that the Russian Federation's hybrid tactics do not in the least advance Russia's political agenda within the EU, but in contrast generate further momentum for the EU's unwavering support to Ukraine in its defence against the illegal occupier;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.