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*Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (INGE 2)*

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**2022/2075(INI)**

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## **DRAFT REPORT**

on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union,  
including disinformation  
(2022/2075(INI))

Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the  
European Union, including disinformation (INGE 2)

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### **on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (2022/2075(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission's follow-up to Parliament's recommendations in its resolution of 9 March 2022<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 July 2022 entitled '2022 Rule of Law Report – The rule of law situation in the European Union' (COM(2022)0500),
- having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2022 on the shrinking space for civil society in Europe<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 27 April 2022 for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation') (COM(2022)0177),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2020 on the European democracy action plan (COM(2020)0790),
- having regard to the proposal of 16 September 2022 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market (European Media Freedom Act) and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (COM(2022)0457),
- having regard to the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe, and in particular proposals 27 and 37 thereof,
- having regard to the strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation 2022,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted: P9\_TA(2022)0064.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1.

- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a single market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act)<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission proposal of 16 December 2020 for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the resilience of critical entities (CER) (COM(2020)0829) and the Commission proposal of 18 October 2022 for a Council recommendation on a coordinated approach by the Union to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure (COM(2022)0551),
  - having regard to the Commission proposal of 25 November 2021 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transparency and targeting of political advertising (COM(2021)0731),
  - having regard to the Commission proposal of 25 November 2021 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations (COM(2021)0734),
  - having regard to the Commission proposal of 16 December 2020 for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (COM(2020)0823),(NIS2 Directive),
  - having regard to European Court of Auditors (ECA) special report 05/2022 of 29 March 2022 entitled ‘Cybersecurity of EU institutions, bodies and agencies – Level of preparedness overall not commensurate with the threats’,
  - having regard to the Commission proposal of 22 March 2022 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down measures for a high common level of cybersecurity at the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union (COM(2022)0122),
  - having regard to the interinstitutional agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on a mandatory transparency register<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to the US-EU Joint Statement of the Trade and Technology Council of 5 December 2022,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European Parliament adopted a resolution on 9 March 2022 laying down its recommendations based on the report of the first special committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation; whereas the services of the Commission produced a document following up on these recommendations;

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<sup>5</sup> OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1.

- B. whereas Parliament has a special role in fighting foreign interference and information manipulations, as Parliament always includes and communicates on a large spectrum of opinions;
- C. whereas the President of the Commission announced in her State of the Union address that a Defence of Democracy package will be presented by the Commission;
- D. whereas the Council of the European Union, the Commission and the European External Action Service co-led a joint exercise called 'EU Integrated Resolve 2022' aimed at testing the EU's response to hybrid campaigns;
- E. whereas there were effective 'pre-bunking' communication campaigns by the United States and of the United Kingdom prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine;
- F. whereas the European Parliament's services are making significant efforts to follow up on the recommendations adopted on 9 March 2022, in particular when preparing the 2024 European elections; whereas the European Parliament's task force on disinformation has been tasked with coordinating the work of different European Parliament Directorates-General and cooperating with other EU institutions on a number of actions undertaken in particular in the following fields: situational awareness, resilience building, pre-bunking and contribution to a healthy information space, and mitigation;
- G. whereas Parliament's services have taken initiatives of great value in supporting parliamentary democracy in non-EU countries;
- H. whereas initiatives such as the EU-funded RADAR project, from the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA, a pan-European consortium of leading research institutes and universities), aims to raise citizens' awareness of disinformation and providing a public platform for debate, and the project has a special focus on youth in order to empower their voices, strengthen their engagement in civil society and improve their education on critical thinking and media literacy;
- I. whereas a strategy of 'inoculating' internet users against lies and conspiracy theories, by pre-emptively showing them videos on the tactics behind misinformation should make them more aware and resilient in the face of prospective disinformation operations, by cultivating 'mental antibodies' against fake news;
- J. whereas civil society organisations (CSOs) play an essential role as watchdogs against breaches of the rule of law and actively contribute to fostering the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights on the ground; whereas, specifically, CSOs are essential actors in detecting and countering foreign interference;
- K. whereas the EU support of CSOs through the Citizens Equality Rights and Values programme (CERV), stepped up efforts to support civil society organisations, in particular the smaller, local ones facing particular constraints;
- L. whereas, in spite of certain available financial resources, including successful projects from EU funds and programmes, overall the funding is fragmented, project-based and often comes from non-EU countries;

- M. whereas journalists play an important role in a democratic society and freedom of information is a fundamental right recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU;
- N. whereas journalists and human rights defenders are increasingly facing intimidation, harassment and threats, including legal threats and abusive litigation; whereas strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) are a serious threat to democracy and fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression and information, as journalists and activists can be prevented or penalised for speaking up on issues of public interest;
- O. whereas activities to fight disinformation are considered a matter of public interest;
- P. whereas the promotion of media independence and pluralism is one of the citizens' proposals contained in the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe, published on 9 May 2022, where citizens called specifically for the EU to address threats to media independence through the establishment of EU-wide minimum standards, as well as to defend and support free, pluralistic and independent media, to step up the fight against disinformation and foreign interference, and to ensure the protection of journalists;
- Q. whereas the integrity of the internal market for media services may be compromised by media providers that systematically engage in disinformation, including information manipulation and interference; some of those are state-controlled media service providers financed by certain non-EU countries;
- R. whereas China has invested almost EUR 3 billion in European media firms over the last 10 years and without adequate measures from EU side China's example could be followed by other states with similar authoritarian political ideologies, and the European Union risks other countries getting involved in its domestic affairs;
- S. whereas only some EU Member States have screening mechanisms for foreign media investments in place;
- T. whereas important structural problems facilitating information manipulation through online platforms still remain; whereas online platforms business model is based on advertising, whereby more engagement means more advertising revenue, and engagement rewards polarised and extreme opinions at the expense of fact-based information;
- U. whereas platforms have developed several initiatives to counter online disinformation, for example Google's Jigsaw, which designs 'pre-bunking' campaigns to inform users about the dangers of disinformation, by pre-emptively warning and exposing them to weakened doses of misinformation;
- V. whereas non-English language content is still substantially left unchecked due to an insufficient number of reviewers and fact-checkers able to perform their respective tasks in other languages, especially in smaller languages in countries gravely affected by pro-Kremlin disinformation;

- W. whereas Twitter introduced a crisis misinformation policy in May 2022, according to which the company would take action against tweets that contain false and misleading allegations regarding use of force and weapons; and that it would respond by prioritising tweets from state-affiliated media accounts and place a warning notice that a tweet has violated the company's crisis misinformation policy, but this approach has been partially cancelled on 23 November 2022;
- X. whereas health misinformation is a serious threat to public health because it creates public confusion;
- Y. whereas Meta removed two networks originating in China and in Russia for violating its policy against coordinated inauthentic behaviour; whereas the network originating in Russia and composed of over 60 websites impersonated legitimate websites of news organisations in Europe and posted original articles that criticised Ukraine, supported Russia and argued that Western sanctions on Russia would backfire; whereas similar findings were made by EU DisinfoLab in its Doppelgänger investigation;
- Z. whereas the Digital Services Act (DSA)<sup>7</sup> entered into force on 16 November 2022; whereas it fully harmonises the rules applicable to intermediary services in the internal market, and contains specific provisions applicable to very large online platforms (VLOPs) and very large online search engines (VLOSEs) when it comes to systemic issues such as disinformation and manipulation;
- AA. whereas the DSA creates obligations for VLOPs and VLOSEs to perform annual risk assessments and take measures to mitigate the risks stemming from the design and use of their service;
- AB. whereas the DSA classifies disinformation or election manipulation as systemic risks;
- AC. whereas algorithms play a crucial role in the amplification of false narratives;
- AD. whereas the Commission set up a European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency, which is part of the Commission's Joint Research Centre, and is composed mainly of engineers and data scientists dedicated to the study of algorithms;
- AE. whereas Digital Services Coordinators, which are independent authorities appointed by each Member State, have an important role and function and are responsible for supervising and enforcing the DSA in the Member States;
- AF. whereas there is a risk of economic dependence, but also espionage and sabotage, with foreign companies acquiring influence over EU critical infrastructure; whereas the Chinese shipping company COSCO has acquired majority interests in over 20 European ports, including Rotterdam and Hamburg; whereas around 80 % of critical infrastructure in Germany is owned by the private sector; whereas the INGE I report called for a stronger regulatory and enforcement framework to ensure foreign direct investment (FDI) with a detrimental effect on the EU's security is blocked;

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<sup>7</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) (OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1).

- AG. whereas foreign actors, predominantly China and Russia, but also Iran, are actively trying to infiltrate European critical infrastructure and supply chains to steal information and/or know-how through espionage or to sabotage parts of these infrastructures to impair their functioning;
- AH. whereas the EU's energy dependence on Russia has created enormous issues for its energy security after the outbreak of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas 'corrosive capital' projects by foreign actors in Member States, such as the Paks Nuclear Power plant in Hungary, risk influencing political decisions; whereas after the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2014, Germany continued to increase its dependency on Russian oil to more than 50 %;
- AI. whereas the investment programmes for 5G deployment such as CEF2 Digital, as well as the 6G Programme of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking, will support technological sovereignty and reduce dependencies on foreign suppliers in this field by building secure 5G infrastructure as well as 6G technology capacities;
- AJ. whereas national authorities of Member States have strengthened their approach to countering foreign threats to critical infrastructure, such as espionage and sabotage;
- AK. whereas disinformation and other information manipulation vitiates the public debate around elections and other democratic processes and can prevent citizens from making informed choices;
- AL. whereas the European elections of 2024 will be the focal point of the functioning of the democratic processes of the European Union, and, therefore the democratic integrity of the Union must be defended, including by preventing undue foreign influence over European elections;
- AM. whereas the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations contributes to the protection of the integrity of the European elections;
- AN. whereas the European cooperation network on elections plays a crucial role in ensuring the integrity of the elections within the European Union; whereas this network has been set up by the Commission's services with the relevant Member States' services;
- AO. whereas Russian funding of political activities and politicians inside the European Union continue to be revealed by journalists and experts and to put at risk the integrity of the democratic functioning of the EU Member States;
- AP. whereas the proposal on political advertising is currently being negotiated by legislators;
- AQ. whereas in the first half of 2021 alone, there were as many cyberattacks on EU institutions as in the whole of 2020<sup>8</sup>;

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<sup>8</sup> Commission staff working document of 22 March 2022 entitled 'Impact analysis report' (SWD(2022)0066), accompanying COM(2022)0119.



- AR. whereas the EU has significantly increased its efforts and investments in cybersecurity capacities through the EU programmes Horizon Europe and Digital Europe;
- AS. whereas the Council has recently adopted NIS2 Directive to ensure a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union; whereas the NIS2 Directive has established the EU Cyber Crises Liaison Organisation Network (EU CyCLONe), which will strengthen the resilience of information systems;
- AT. whereas the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking was established in 2021 to enable European actors to shape global 6G standards; whereas collaboration between Commission and Member State authorities on the implementation of the 5G cyber toolbox is ongoing in the framework of the Network and Information Systems (NIS) cooperation group;
- AU. whereas the instrumentalisation of migrants and minorities is increasingly used by foreign actors as part of their foreign interference strategies, such as in the autumn of 2021 by Belarus, using the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes; whereas this instrumentalisation takes the form of sending migrants to European borders, but also of spreading disinformation, which has detrimental effects on European democracies by polarising its societies;
- AV. whereas migrants, minorities and diasporas are frequently targeted by foreign actors orchestrated disinformation campaigns to exploit and build up tensions within European societies, such as with the Ukrainian diaspora in Europe being targeted by Russian disinformation campaigns depicting them as ‘ungrateful refugees’;
- AW. whereas the Belgian federal prosecutor’s office has opened an investigation regarding suspicions of money laundering, corruption and participation in a criminal organisation originating from a foreign country; whereas several arrests and searches took place from 9 December 2022 onwards, affecting both current and former Members of the European Parliament, as well as staff;
- AX. whereas the capture of elites by foreign interests continues to represent a significant form of foreign interference in the democratic functioning of the European Union and can be considered as an issue related to corruption;
- AY. whereas more clarity is needed regarding foreign influence through interest representatives at the EU level;
- AZ. whereas there have been several cases of hostile intimidation and harassment campaigns against Members of the European Parliament orchestrated and coordinated by foreign countries;
- BA. whereas in March 2022 the EU imposed sanctions on the Russian propaganda outlets Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik, suspending their broadcasting activity; whereas satellite operators, such as France’s Eutelsat and Luxembourg’s SES have continued to provide broadcasting services in the EU, Russia, Africa and Ukraine;
- BB. whereas there is a need to impose costs on perpetrators of foreign interference;

- BC. whereas the Commission proposed to harmonise criminal offences and penalties for the violation of EU sanctions; whereas a number of Member States considered extending the competences of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in order to cover these violations;
- BD. whereas the EU has already developed several important pieces of legislation to counter malign foreign information manipulation and interference; whereas there is a risk that successful EU regulatory frameworks to combat disinformation are being used by other (authoritarian) countries as a pretext for curbing media freedom and freedom of expression;
- BE. whereas the EU is taking a leading role in the work of the UN Ad Hoc Committee to draw up a comprehensive international convention on cybercrime under the UN Third Committee;
- BF. whereas the overall awareness of the dangers of information manipulation and interference in other countries in the world has grown since the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas the United Nations has proposed several initiatives to enhance governance in the digital sphere and create more coherence among UN member states, such as the 'Global Code of Conduct to promote the integrity of public information' and the Global Digital Compact;
- BG. whereas in discussions with the ING2 Special Committee, platforms and other stakeholders have reacted positively to the establishment of global standards, and in particular transatlantic standards, in countering FIMI;
- BH. whereas successful Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) / Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations are among the best strategic communication campaigns by the EU in non-EU countries;
- BI. whereas the Strategic Compass outlines that by 2024 all CSDP/CFSP missions and operations should be equipped with sufficient strategic communications tools and resources to counter FIMI;

### ***EU coordinated strategy against foreign interference***

1. Underlines that the Russian invasion of Ukraine clearly exposes the link between foreign attempts to manipulate information and threats to the EU as well as to global security and stability;
2. Takes note of the follow-up of the Commission to the first recommendations adopted by the European Parliament on 9 March 2022; reiterates, however, its call for an EU coordinated strategy against foreign interference and welcomes in this regard the announcement by the President of the Commission of a Defence of Democracy package;
3. Reiterates its call to ensure that all measures taken to protect the EU against foreign interference and information manipulation should include strong and resolute commitments to fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression;

4. Is of the opinion that efforts to move from a country-agnostic approach, to a high-risk states approach based on objective criteria should be considered, in a similarly way to the Directive 2015/849<sup>9</sup>, which identifies ‘high-risk third countries’ that have deficiencies in their anti-money laundering regimes;
5. Considers that the EU should step up its strategic communication on information manipulations by widely reporting ongoing operations as they happen (de-bunking); calls for strengthening of and further investment in EU pre-bunking capabilities;
6. Calls for the establishment of an EU structure tasked with analysing data, coordinating research projects and producing reports to increase situational awareness on foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), and which serves as a reference point to facilitate and foster exchange between Member States’ authorities and the structure; considers that this structure should take the form of a Centre for Information Integrity that collaborates with all EU institutions and is financed from the EU budget;
7. Calls for the national parliaments of the European Union to consider establishing their own parliamentary bodies tasked with overseeing actions related to the protection of their democracy against foreign interference and information manipulation, and to set up regular exchanges on these topics;
8. Notes with interest the conclusion of the EU Integrated Resolve 2022 joint exercise aimed to help to enhance the EU’s ability to respond to a complex, hybrid crisis with both an internal and an external dimension; regrets however that Parliament was not involved in such an exercise and calls on the other EU Institutions to structurally involve Parliament in all exercises of this kind;
9. Encourages all types of cooperation between the services of the different EU Institutions in charge of operational activities concerning monitoring and counteracting disinformation, such as the one existing between the EP Disinformation task force, Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) StratCom division with its Rapid Alert System;

### ***Resilience***

10. Calls for a collective effort to raise awareness about foreign interference and how to counteract it;
11. Underlines that the EU must learn lessons from Ukraine’s experience and expertise in countering foreign interference and aggression and continue close cooperation with Ukraine in this field;
12. Welcomes the fact that the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), an independent network for fact-checkers, academic researchers and other stakeholders, will soon have hubs covering all EU Member States, thus reinforcing its mission in

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<sup>9</sup> Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing (OJ L 141, 5.6.2015, p. 73).

detecting and analysing disinformation campaigns, organising media literacy activities and other activities supporting the fight against disinformation;

13. Reiterates its call for Member States to include media and digital literacy, civic education, respect for fundamental rights, critical thinking and promotion of public participation on school and university curricula, in parallel with efforts to raise awareness among adults;
14. Underlines the need for public administrations, at all levels, to have specific training aimed at identifying and countering act of information manipulation and interference; reiterates the call on EUIBAs and on national authorities, to continue and strengthen similar training and situational awareness actions as hybrid threats are persistent and widespread and increasingly aimed at influencing EU policies and legislation; calls on EUIBAs to set up interinstitutional training to promote the overall resilience of EUIBAs as a whole;
15. Calls on EUIBAs and national authorities to adopt a dedicated communications framework containing measures to rapidly detect foreign interference attacks and attempts to manipulate the information sphere in order to prevent and counter them; welcomes the role of NATO StratCom CoE and Hybrid CoE as important partners in developing increased situational awareness and additional responses to counter FIMI;
16. Reiterates its call on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to enhance its expertise on strategic communication and in public diplomacy, which requires a strengthened mandate and more resources allocated in particular to its Strategic Communication division and its task forces, following the risk-based approach and taking into account the ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine and hybrid warfare coming from Russia and its impact to EU candidate countries in the Western Balkans, as well as Moldova;
17. Calls for CSO efforts in this regard to be actively supported, as they have proven effective in raising awareness of the risks associated with information transmitted via social media, in particular, and many CSOs operate at local level, closer to the targets of disinformation, so know best how to communicate with them;
18. Calls for funding to be made available to CSOs commensurate with their mission to raise awareness, expose foreign interference and neutralise its impact;
19. Calls for the earmarking, boosting and leveraging of public and private funding sources for the relevant CSOs in the format of a joint initiative of the EU funds and programmes, financial organisations, bilateral donors and beneficiaries, so as to enhance harmonisation and cooperation in investments for democratic resilience, and that this investment framework should provide grants for independent fact checkers, academics, think tanks and CSOs engaged in increasing situational awareness (such as researching and investigating information manipulation and interference, developing cooperation in the field as well as developing methodologies and tools to tackle the challenge) and include measures to promote media, digital and information literacy, as well as other resilience building activities and support for human rights defenders through annual or bi-annual calls for proposals;

20. Emphasises that it is essential that journalists are guaranteed the necessary conditions to contribute to an open, free and fair public debate, which is a key aspect of helping society counter disinformation, information manipulation and interference;
21. Welcomes the SLAPP proposal, composed of a proposal for a Directive and a recommendation, to improve the protection of journalists and human rights defenders from abusive court proceedings; welcomes furthermore the analysis made by the Commission in its 2022 Rule of Law Report of existing threats against the safety of journalists in the EU and legal threats and abusive court proceedings against public participation;
22. Recalls that quality media services are a powerful antidote against FIMI;
23. Welcomes the proposal for a European Media Freedom Act (COM(2022)0457) (EMFA), which aims to promote pluralism and independence in the internal market for media services by laying down specific provisions against political interference in editorial decisions and against surveillance, as well as preserving the funding of public media outlets, and the transparency of media ownership;
24. Welcomes the proposed creation, within the framework of the EMFA, of a new European Board for Media Services composed of national media authorities, which will play a significant role in the fight against disinformation, including foreign interference and information manipulation; in particular, one of the proposed tasks of the Board is the coordination of national measures related to the provision of media services by providers established outside of the EU that target audiences in the EU and that may present a risk to public security and defence;
25. Welcomes, within the framework of the EMFA proposal for independent monitoring of the internal market for media services, which includes detailed data and qualitative analysis of the resilience of the Member States' media markets, in particular as regards risks of FIMI;
26. Encourages the Commission to develop an EU-wide regulatory system to prevent media companies that are under the editorial control of foreign governments or owned by foreign non-democratic countries from acquiring European media companies; this should apply predominantly to non-democratic countries in which European media organisations are not allowed to operate freely, or are pressured to tilt their coverage in favour of national governments; these efforts should be based on a common database to facilitate harmonised prevention and/or prosecution across the European Union;
27. Underlines that the increase in climate denialism can be linked to a wider embrace of conspiracy theories that includes false ideas about everything from Russia's war in Ukraine to the COVID-19 vaccines;
28. Supports the call made at COP 27 by leading climate experts on tech companies to tackle the growing problem of disinformation, and in particular to accept a universal definition of climate mis/disinformation that encompasses the misrepresentation of scientific evidence and the promotion of false solutions; to commit not to publish any advertising that include climate mis/disinformation; and to share internal research on the spread of climate mis/disinformation on their platforms;

29. Calls on platforms to take measures to prevent the placement of advertising promoting climate change denial;
30. Regrets that several climate change deniers bought Twitter 'blue check marks', thereby acquiring 'verified status', and spreading disinformation under that 'privileged' status;

#### *Interference using online platforms*

31. Recalls that the business model of online platforms is still data fuelled, and that the ability of online platforms to collect large amounts of personal data and the loosely regulated data market still pose significant risks of data manipulation;
32. Regrets that larger platforms, such as Meta, Google, YouTube or TikTok, are still lagging behind in terms of actively countering disinformation, notwithstanding constant calls from regulators, civil society and even internally from company staff responsible for integrity;
33. Regrets that social media companies often only respond when citizens, researchers or the media flag certain content, and are underperforming when it comes to proactively identifying and taking down misinformation and disinformation on their platforms;
34. Calls on platforms to allocate more resources and capacity to monitor and moderate harmful content and behaviour in all EU official languages as well as in local languages and dialects;
35. Notes that it is also highly regrettable that big tech platforms do not offer human-to-human customer service in most EU Member States;
36. Deplores recent events at Twitter that have significantly reduced the number of staff responsible for disrupting disinformation; deplores the recent reinstatement of suspended accounts without a proper assessment; strongly repudiates Twitter's decision to stop enforcing its policy against COVID-19 disinformation;
37. Finds it worrying that health disinformation groups and far-right extremists have now obtained 'verified' status with a check mark by subscribing to 'Twitter Blue';
38. Recalls that Twitter is a signatory to the strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation, and that a change of ownership should not have an impact on the platform's commitments under the Code;
39. Calls on platforms to facilitate access to the data underpinning the findings and to keep a repository of take-downs to help researchers in future investigations, as well as to help other tech companies, governments and law enforcement authorities in taking appropriate action; calls on the Commission to ensure this occurs in the framework of the DSA and the Code of Practice on Disinformation;
40. Welcomes the DSA provisions that require VLOPs and VLOSEs to provide information on algorithms, to allow access to them, to explain how they work, to assess their impact on democratic and electoral processes, and to take risk mitigation measures; welcomes



the strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation, and strongly supports its new commitments;

41. Is concerned that some actors whose services contribute significantly to the dissemination of disinformation are not signatories to the code of practice (CoP), such as Odysee, Patreon, GoFundMe, and Telegram; calls on the Commission, as the key body responsible for monitoring the CoP, to significantly increase its capacity and allocate additional resources to the monitoring of the CoP;
42. In particular as regards online advertising, welcomes the fact that all players in the online advertising ecosystem commit to control and limit the placement of advertising on accounts and websites disseminating disinformation or next to disinformation content, as well as to limit the dissemination of advertising containing disinformation;
43. Takes note that the DSA promotes co-regulatory initiatives (codes of conduct) such as the CoP; calls on the Commission to align the CoP with the DSA by harmonising commitments on over-moderation as well as under-moderation;

#### ***Critical infrastructure and strategic sectors***

44. Welcomes the recently agreed Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities (CER), the Council's recommendation to strengthen critical infrastructure, and the NIS2 Directive; believes that recent attacks, such as the sabotage of critical infrastructure and increased cyberattacks show the need to propose more ambitious legislation and calls on the Commission to come forward with additional strengthened proposals; in addition, calls on all Member States to rapidly update their national security strategies and undertake stress tests on their critical infrastructure to identify weak points; reiterates its recommendation to extend the list of critical entities to include digital election infrastructure and education systems;
45. Is concerned about the EU's dependence on foreign actors and foreign technologies in critical infrastructures and supply chains; points to vulnerabilities created by FDI being used as a geopolitical tool; reiterates its call on the Commission to develop a stronger regulatory framework to the FDI Screening Regulation<sup>10</sup>; believes that the stronger regulatory framework should include the prevention of takeover of critical companies in vital sectors or media companies by foreign parties that are under direct or indirect control of high-risk countries;
46. Calls on the Council and the Commission to exclude the use of equipment from manufacturers from high-risk countries, such as Huawei, ZTE, Kaspersky, Nuctech etc.; calls on vital sectors and other sensitive sectors to exclude the use of hardware and software from high-risk countries that can be used to threaten the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data and services;
47. Is concerned about the vulnerabilities and increasing attacks on undersea cables and pipelines, pointing in particular to the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipeline in September 2022; believes FDI in undersea cables and pipelines create an additional

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<sup>10</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/452 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 establishing a framework for the screening of foreign direct investments into the Union \(OJ L 79I , 21.3.2019, p. 1\).](#)

security risk; calls on the Commission to issue an update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EMSA) and include the setting-up of a cable resilience coordination group in the Commission; calls on the EEAS to develop initiatives and actions for coordination, surveillance and external action in protecting global digital connectivity of undersea cables;

48. Is concerned about the revelations of how political elites in the EU, for example in Germany, have advanced the agenda of Gazprom and favoured constant support for gas deliveries from Russia; welcomes the Commission's REPowerEU proposal to transform the EU's energy system, ending its dependence on Russian fossil fuels; believes more needs to be done to ensure open, strategic autonomy in the energy sector; calls for the deployment of renewable energy to be accelerated;
49. Welcomes the recently proposed European Chips Act<sup>11</sup>; believes the Act is essential to avoid EU dependence on raw materials coming from foreign actors and therefore should ensure the entire value chain, from chip design and manufacture to end users to be fostered within Europe; calls on the EU and its Member States to enforce diversification of supply chains of strategic raw materials, for example by setting a maximum limit on exports from high-risk countries;

#### ***Interference during electoral processes***

50. Welcomes the work done by the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations in this regard, especially in preventing and countering prohibited financial transactions from non-EU countries into the EU's political system;
51. Welcomes the initiatives taken within the European cooperation network on elections including the joint resilience plans; calls on the Commission to fully involve Parliament's services in the activities of the network as well as the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (the 'Authority'); considers that similar networks should be established with EU National Parliaments;
52. Notes that the European Parliament has laid down a strategy for the 2024 European elections, which includes a special part aiming at preventing and addressing information manipulation ahead of the elections without interfering in the political debates, with full respect for the independence of the mandate of the Members; underlines that this strategy should be based on an intensification of the actions already carried out by Parliament, including those undertaken within Parliament's task force on disinformation, and therefore calls for the allocation of additional resources to implement the various actions;

#### ***Covert funding of political activities by foreign actors and donors***

53. Reiterates its concerns about the regular revelations of massive Russian funding of political parties and politicians in a number of democratic countries in an attempt to

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<sup>11</sup> Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem (Chips Act) (COM(2022)0046).



interfere in their domestic processes; expresses its concern about Russia's wide-ranging interference with the separatist movement in Catalonia;

54. Takes note that the European cooperation network on elections undertakes a mapping of foreign funding in European countries and expresses interest in being informed about this exercise; calls on the network to identify common EU standards prohibiting foreign funding of political activities, in particular those standards closing the loopholes identified in the first set of recommendations adopted on 9 March 2022 that would apply to national electoral laws in all Member States, including enforcement mechanisms;
55. Takes note of the ongoing legislative negotiations on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations<sup>12</sup>; expects that these negotiations will expand the mandate of the Authority in particular in ensuring that financial transactions from non-EU countries into the EU's political system are limited, transparent and do not result in a stronger role for non-EU donors in the governance structures of parties in the EU;
56. Recalls that the Authority should be provided with the necessary resources, in particular human and IT resources, to enable it to fulfil its current tasks and any new tasks provided for by the legislation, which can only be effectively implemented with appropriate additional staff;
57. Takes note of the ongoing legislative work on the transparency and targeting of political advertising; in this regard, recalls its wish to prohibit advertisements bought by actors from outside the EU and the EEA and to guarantee transparency with regard to the purchasing of online political advertisements by actors from within the EU; underlines the need for the European Political Parties to be able to campaign online ahead of the European elections, while limiting the risk of foreign interference;

#### ***Cybersecurity and resilience in respect of cyberattacks related to democratic processes***

58. Is concerned about the serious increase in cyberattacks, in particular to the recent cyberattack on Parliament on 23 November 2022 by a pro-Kremlin hacker group;
59. Welcomes the agreement on the NIS2 Directive and believes it addresses issues on coordination between Member States; is concerned, however, that the NIS2 Directive does not cover digital election infrastructure; believes additional legislation is needed to effectively protect supply chains to intellectual property theft;
60. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for new rules to establish common cybersecurity and information security across the EUIBAs; welcomes, in accordance with the ECA special report of March 2022, the creation of a new interinstitutional cybersecurity board, the boosting of cybersecurity capabilities, and the promotion of regular maturity assessments and better cyber-hygiene; stresses the need for efficient, timely and close coordination between the EUIBAs through existing structures, such as the Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU Institutions, bodies and agencies (CERT-EU)

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<sup>12</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations (COM/2021/734).

and European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA); believes these structures should be reinforced and that more efficient coordination is needed; therefore recalls the need for a joint cyber unit;

61. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the EEAS to strengthen cyber-related controls on strategic communication channels (e.g. military channels in times of war and CSDP missions);
62. Acknowledges that, when it comes to cyberattacks, prevention is necessary but not sufficient; believes accurate responsiveness is key in countering cyberattacks; believes the EU should tackle cyberattacks by considering the following aspects:
  - a) the need for increased responsiveness to and resilience against cyberattacks;
  - b) the need for flexibility in critical situations;
  - c) the need for common regulations to ensure efficient coordination, therefore calls on Member States to speed up its implementation of the CER and NIS2 Directives;
  - d) the need to share information between and within Member States, while taking into account the need to hide the critical protection level from public information sharing;

#### ***The impact of interference on the rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups***

63. Calls to further enhance the EU external border security in order to strengthen resilience against hybrid attacks using migrants;
64. Is concerned about the situation of the LGBTIQ+ community in Poland and the disinformation spread by state-owned media and far-right organisations on the topic; is concerned about the role of Russian disinformation in building society's reluctance to accept Ukrainian refugees;
65. Calls on the Commission and Member States to strengthen partnerships with NGOs and international organisations working on the ground to monitor children's labour and slow down the spread of disinformation on the matter (e.g. children in armed conflicts);
66. Reiterates its call to set up a system for the easy sharing of material in minority languages; welcomes in this regard the Commission's support to the pilot action entitled 'European Language Equality (ELE)'; believes additional measures need to be taken to ensure an effective response to interference targeting minorities;
67. Reiterates the need for targeted action, through a harmonised EU legal framework, against the spread of disinformation and hate speech on issues related to gender, LGBTIQ+ people, minorities and refugees; reiterates its call on the Commission to develop and implement strategies to hinder the financing of individuals and groups that actively spread or participate in information manipulation frequently targeted on the LGBTIQ+ people, minorities and refugees and issues concerning them, in order to divide society;

***Interference through global actors via elite capture, national diasporas, universities and cultural events***

68. Denounces in the strongest terms the alleged attempts by Qatar to influence Members, former Members and staff of the European Parliament through acts of corruption, which constitute serious foreign interference in the EU's democratic processes; underlines the need to step up efforts aimed at combating corruption and influence campaigns; reiterates its call for updated transparency rules, mapping foreign funding for EU-related lobbying, including funding for non-profit organisations and proper regulation and monitoring of friendship groups;
69. Recalls the commitments made by the President of the Commission during her State of the Union address regarding the need to update the EU legislative framework for combating corruption; considers that such an update should target in particular the issue of the capture of elites by foreign interests, revolving doors and trafficking in influence in order to prevent foreign agents from influencing the EU political system; invites also the Commission to deal with the issue of elite capture in the annual rule of law reports; welcomes the commitment of the President of the Commission to include corruption in the EU human rights sanction regime;
70. Takes note of the judgment of 22 November 2022 of the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C-37/20<sup>13</sup>, invalidating a provision of the fifth Anti-Money Laundering Directive<sup>14</sup>, whereby Member States had to ensure that information on the beneficial ownership of companies be accessible in all cases to any member of the general public; such invalidation puts restraints on the work of a wide range of professionals fighting against corruption and money laundering;
71. Is of the opinion that the data on foreign influence through interest representatives at the EU level should be widely available and clearly presented; welcomes the changes introduced by the interinstitutional agreement of 20 May 2021 on a transparency register<sup>15</sup> in this regard; recommends, however, that a specific foreign influence section be inserted in the EU Transparency Register or that a foreign influence register be established; considers that the EU Transparency Register could include a list of high-risk countries;
72. 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 in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine<sup>16</sup>;
73. Reiterates its concerns about partnerships between universities with Chinese entities, including Confucius Institutes, and the threat against academic freedom and protection

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<sup>13</sup> Judgment of 22 November 2022, *Luxembourg Business Registers*, C-37/20, ECLI:EU:C:2022:912.

<sup>14</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/843 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive (EU) 2015/849 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, and amending Directives 2009/138/EC and 2013/36/EU (OJ L 156, 19.6.2018, p. 43).

<sup>15</sup> Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1).

<sup>16</sup> Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/884 of 3 June 2022 amending Decision 2014/512/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine (OJ L 153, 3.6.2022, p. 128).

of intellectual property; is alarmed at recent findings<sup>17</sup> that a considerable number of European researchers, especially in Austria and Czechia, but also in other European countries, are directly funded by the People's Republic of China with a focus on artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, integrated circuits, space research, research into new materials, neuroscience and biotechnology;

74. Welcomes the publication by the Commission of a toolkit on how to mitigate foreign interference in research and innovation in order to help European universities and research organisations to detect and prevent foreign interferences while maintaining the necessary opening of partnerships; calls however for the Commission and Members States to further coordinate actions in this field;
75. Expresses concerns about the latest reports about the establishment of Chinese overseas police stations within the EU; calls on national authorities to coordinate their responses to this issue;
76. Is concerned about the growing influence activities of foreign authoritarian state intelligence agencies within the EU, and especially in Brussels; reiterates its call on national authorities to review and update its anti-espionage frameworks; calls on immigration authorities to be more vigilant when screening the staff of foreign companies, such as TASS and COSCO, from high-risk countries, when they apply for work visas; furthermore calls on immigration authorities to develop stronger biometric checks to make travel by foreign intelligence officers using false identities more difficult;
77. Calls on EU political parties and governments to develop a strong response to intimidation campaigns against Members of the European Parliament; calls on Parliament's administration to develop an institutionalised procedure to be put in place when such campaigns against elected EU representatives occur;

#### ***Deterrence, attribution and collective countermeasures, including sanctions***

78. Welcomes the EU-wide sanctions and capacity of EU decision-makers to act quickly on restricting the broadcasting of certain propaganda channels following Russia's unjustified and illegal attack on Ukraine and underlines the need to pay attention to consistent implementation of those sanctions; calls on the Commission to cooperate more closely with Member States on imposing and implementing sanctions; welcomes the General Court's judgment of 27 July 2022 in case T-125/22 RT France<sup>18</sup>, in which the Court rejected RT's argument that the prohibition of broadcasting is illegal, and therefore upheld the prohibition of broadcasting content imposed on RT France; calls on the Commission and the Council to include satellite broadcasting in the sanctions packages against Russia;
79. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to harmonise criminal offences and penalties for the violation of EU sanctions; calls however to consider the extension of the competences of EPPO in order to cover these violations;

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<sup>17</sup> Study entitled 'How to Do Trusted Research: China-Specific Guidelines for European Stakeholders', published in September 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Judgment of 27 July 2022, *RT France v Council*, T-125/22, ECLI:EU:T:2022:483.

80. Reiterates its call to impose costs on perpetrators of foreign interference; takes notes of the ongoing reflection based on the Council Conclusions of June 2022 regarding the preparation of a toolbox, which should complement the EU Hybrid Toolbox and addresses specifically activities involving FIMI, i.e. activities that impact on the conduct and outcome of the democratic process; notes that the FIMI toolbox was expected to be introduced in the autumn of 2022; strongly believes this toolbox should include a specific sanctions regime on FIMI;

***Neighbourhood, global cooperation, multilateralism***

81. Is concerned about attempts by Russia, which have been echoed in Chinese communication channels, to manipulate the discourse around global food and energy security, blaming the West for the surge in food prices due to its sanctions on Russia; emphasises that these manipulated narratives have gained considerable traction, primarily in the Global South; recalls that Russia is solely responsible for the disruption of Ukraine's agricultural production and trade as a result of its war of aggression against the country; therefore, calls on the EEAS to take additional measures to counter the dissemination of manipulated narratives in the Global South, spread by Russia and China, including by strengthening the tools and resources of its CSDP/CFSP missions and operations, and through increased cooperation and coordination with the United States and other like-minded partners;
82. Calls on the Commission to ease General Data Protection Regulation<sup>19</sup> (GDPR) restrictions on data sharing to combat information manipulation in cooperation with like-minded partners;
83. Believes the Global Gateway strategy will be an important geopolitical tool in countering Chinese influence, through its Belt and Road Initiative, and of other non-EU countries such as Iran, and build trust with non-EU countries to strengthen the image of the EU vis-à-vis Russia and China; believes it is of the utmost importance to act as 'Team Europe' in implementing the strategy and ensure coordinated action between all EU institutions, EU Member States and also with the European private sector; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to closely cooperate and coordinate with other connectivity initiatives involving like-minded partners, such as the US, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, to ensure fundamental rights are safeguarded;
84. Strongly supports the work done by EEAS StratCom geographical task forces, and welcomes the Task Force South, which is tasked with outlining the threat landscape in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and developing tools and techniques to counter FIMI in this region; also supports the work of EEAS StratCom to enhance capabilities of EU CSDP/CFSP missions and operations and EU delegations to counter FIMI; believes, however, that more resources should be allocated to strengthening their work, both within the EEAS headquarters and in the field;
85. Welcomes the cooperation mechanisms in place with the US, such as the ongoing EU-US cooperation within the Trade and Technology Council (TTC); notes with interest the

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<sup>19</sup> 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 Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119 4.5.2016, p. 1).

joint statement following the TTC of 5 December 2022 stating in particular that working group 5 on Data Governance and Technology Platforms and working group 6 on the Misuse of Technology Threatening Security and Human Rights ‘are coordinating to understand and address the spread of Russian information manipulation and interference, particularly in the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, and its impact on non-EU countries, notably in Africa and Latin-America’; welcomes the Commission’s commitment to regularly inform Parliament on the work of the TTC and calls for continuing efforts to address common challenges in these areas; in addition, calls on the Commission and EEAS to further intensify the work with the US on sharing best practices and operational knowledge, as well as on the development of common definitions and approaches;

86. Considers initiatives such as the TTC and the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), to be important platforms of cooperation between like-minded partners in developing tools and sharing best practices to counter FIMI; calls on the EU to take the lead in these cooperation initiatives to ensure global standards are being developed in accordance with European values; calls on the Commission and EEAS to regularly include Parliament, through its administration, in discussions with like-minded partners and identify areas where Parliament’s support could added value to the process;
87. Welcomes the UN’s Global Code of Conduct; urges the EEAS to remain closely involved in the process and to appeal to other UN member states on the importance of common awareness of the global challenges and the need for intensive cooperation; believes the Code should not focus solely on platforms, but also look at other state and non-state actors; calls on platforms to allocate more resources and capacity to monitor harmful content in local languages or dialects; calls on platforms to include approaches to mitigate the risks from artificial intelligence and other technologies; reiterates the need to safeguard fundamental rights within the Code; believes a change in international law is extremely difficult and therefore suggests the EU work closely with like-minded partners to develop international responses to FIMI;
88. Is concerned about the safeguarding of fundamental rights in the UN process of drafting a Global Convention on Cybercrime; calls on the EEAS to participate actively in the discussion and ensure European norms and values are upheld in the process; recalls the danger of processes to fight against disinformation being used as a pretext to curb media freedom;
89. Is concerned about the attempts of private military companies (PMCs), such as the Wagner Group, to influence democratic processes in several countries across the world; calls on the Council and Member States to include Russian PMCs on the EU’s terrorist list; calls on the EEAS to create an initiative with like-minded partners to counter malign non-state actor groups, such as Wagner;
90. Highlights the importance of close and continuous cooperation with Ukraine in building resilience and tackling hybrid attacks;
91. Calls on the Commission and EEAS to increase cooperation with other like-minded partners on developing mechanisms to address election interference, for example with the electoral authorities of Taiwan, Canada, Australia and Brazil; calls for increased



cooperation with NATO in building resilience among EU and NATO Member States; reiterates its recommendation to create regional strategic communication hubs outside the EU, initiated by the EEAS;

92. Calls on the EEAS to keep working closely with like-minded partners in establishing common norms and definitions, and developing tools and legislation to counter foreign information manipulation and interference; calls on the EEAS to strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries on countering FIMI through existing structures such as the UN, while ensuring the safeguarding of fundamental rights in developing tools to counter FIMI;
93. Underlines the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and missions to amplify the EU's message and help push the EU narrative in non-EU countries, especially in Africa and the MENA region; underlines the great value of the initiatives taken by Parliament's services in supporting parliamentary democracy in non-EU countries by reinforcing the parliamentary dialogue, observing elections and engaging in debates with civil society;
94. Welcomes the support channelled through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), but believes more action needs to be taken to support independent journalism in areas influenced by malign foreign actors, such as Russia and China; therefore, reiterates its call to establish a specific European Democratic Media Fund to support journalism in enlargement and European neighbourhood and candidate countries; calls on the EEAS to include a parliamentary dimension in its outreach and capacity-building initiatives in EU neighbourhood countries to support CSOs and the independent media;
95. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to move away from a country-agnostic approach towards a risk-based approach and to not shy away from identifying and naming at international forums, such as the UN, those countries that have attempted to conduct foreign interference, in order to make other countries aware of the risks posed by the issue;
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96. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

### ***Background***

Malicious foreign actors use information manipulation and other tactics to interfere in democratic processes and they aim to weaken the democratic governance of the targeted countries.

Foreign interference, disinformation, and numerous attacks on and threats against democracy are expected to continue in ever-greater numbers and more sophisticated ways in the run-up to the European Parliament elections in 2024.

### ***Special Committee INGE 1***

Therefore, the European Parliament stepped up in its role against foreign interference and disinformation: Following the European Parliament's Decision of 18 June 2020, the first Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE 1), was established. The Special Committee was tasked to draw up a report containing factual findings and recommendations concerning the measures and initiatives to be taken in countering foreign interference and disinformation.

After eighteen months of work – characterised by 50 hearings with over 130 invitees, including 5 Commissioners (Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the Commission, Values and Transparency; Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the Commission, Promoting our European Way of Life; Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market; Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; and with Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age and Competition), experts, journalists, representatives from think tanks, as well as representatives from Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, two Facebook whistle-blowers and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate – the Resolution of the first Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes of the European Union, including Disinformation was adopted on 9 March 2022, only a few days after the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine began.

The Resolution identified and mapped the threat of foreign interference in all of its forms, including disinformation, manipulation of social media platforms and advertising systems, cyberattacks, threats against and the harassment of journalists, covert political funding as well as elite capture and co-optation. It provided both, the diagnosis of the EU's vulnerabilities and recommendations for strengthening the EU's resilience.

### ***Special Committee INGE 2***

Following the European Parliament's Decision of 10 March 2022, it set up INGE 2, a new Special Committee with a revised mandate. The new Special Committee INGE 2 was vested with the responsibilities to follow up on the implementation of the INGE 1 Resolution, and to engage in a dialogue with policy makers on the national, the European and the international level in order to contribute to the overall institutional resilience against foreign interference,



hybrid threats and disinformation in the run-up to European elections in 2024. Since its constitutive meeting on 12 May 2022, ING2 focused particularly on Russian and Chinese interference, for instance in Ukraine, and in the distinct cases of Hungary and Spain (Catalonia); on the African continent or in enlargement countries, including Western Balkans. It looked as well into elite capture and revolving doors politics, and into intimidation attempts against Members of the European Parliament by foreign actors. It held an exchange of views with Intelligence Services of EU Member States and with parliamentary bodies deputed to survey and oversee the activities of these services.

All committee meetings were organised in cooperation with standing parliamentary committees and delegations, for instance with the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE), the Committee on Development (DEVE) and the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (DACP), the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (D-RU), the Delegation for Relations with the People's Republic of China (D-CN).

Since May 2022, ING2 invited as many as two dozen experts and policy makers including Věra Jourová, Vice-President for the Values and Transparency, Commission; Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; Audrey Tang, Minister of Digital Affairs of Taiwan; or Liubov Tsybulska, Founder of the Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security under the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine.

Finally, in order to best focus on institutional and legislative resilience building in the run-up to European elections in 2024, ING2 established a close cooperation with NATO StratCom in Riga (Latvia), the Hybrid CoE in Helsinki (Finland), with the Australian government and authorities and respective bodies at the UN in New York.

Hence, the work of the second Special Committee follows seamlessly from the first, and the present INGE 2 Resolution is to be complementary to the INGE 1. It therefore includes recommendations and updates on the EU's coordinated strategy against foreign interference; on EU resilience building; on interference using online platforms; on the critical infrastructure and strategic sectors; on interference during electoral processes; on covert funding of political activities by foreign actors and donors; on cybersecurity and resilience of democratic processes; on the impact of interference on the rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups; on deterrence, attribution and collective countermeasures, including sanctions; and on neighbourhood policy, global cooperation, and multilateralism.