



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2024)0380

New allegations of Russian interference in the European Parliament, in the upcoming EU elections and the impact on the European Union

European Parliament resolution of 25 April 2024 on new allegations of Russian interference in the European Parliament, in the upcoming EU elections and the impact on the European Union (2024/2696(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 8 February 2024 entitled ‘Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes of the European Union’¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 July 2023 on recommendations for reform of European Parliament’s rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption²,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2023 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation³,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation⁴,
- 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 terrorism⁵,
- having regard to the European External Action Service (EEAS) report of 23 January 2024 entitled ‘2nd EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats – A Framework for Networked Defence’,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 12 December 2023 on Defence of Democracy (COM(2023)0630), and the proposals for the Defence of Democracy package therein,

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2024)0079.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0292.

³ OJ C, C/2023/1226, 21.12.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1226/oj>.

⁴ OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 61.

⁵ OJ C 167, 11.5.2023, p. 18.

- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 17 April 2024,
 - having regard to its resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine¹,
 - having regard to its Rules of Procedure and the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament,
 - having regard to Rules 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas increasing attempts by state and non-state actors from third countries to directly or indirectly interfere with democratic decision-making and electoral processes in the Union and its Member States are being reported; whereas there is clear evidence of such attempts by Russia to interfere in electoral processes and policymaking worldwide and especially against the EU and its Member States, through a wide array of different hybrid warfare methods, embedded within a broader strategy to undermine the proper functioning of European democratic processes and legislative procedures; whereas these methods include but are not limited to cyberattacks, including on the European Parliament, elite capture of European decision-makers, election meddling, as well as by funding movements and lobbies;
- B. whereas new studies and reports shows that, in recent months, well-known disinformation networks have scaled up operations aimed at disseminating pro-Kremlin narratives on social media, especially on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) and TikTok; whereas there is proof that Russian influence networks have used AI and bots in social media and relied on the large-scale publishing of political advertisements purchased through fake accounts; whereas traditional media outlets have also been used to push their interests in the political agenda; whereas this hybrid war was the precursor for and continues to support Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas this foreign interference constitutes a form of external pressure that can effectively undermine the exercise of EU and Member States’ sovereignty;
- C. whereas Russia has systematically maintained contacts with far-right and far-left parties, and other personalities and movements to gain support from institutional actors within the Union in order to legitimise its illegal and criminal actions; whereas analysis of voting patterns and speeches in the European Parliament has shown these parties to have been the most sympathetic to Russia, including calls as extreme as those made in public in January 2024 by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Miroslav Radačovský – who was also paid by Russian sources to observe the parliamentary elections in Russia in 2021 – for the destruction of Europe; whereas the Hungarian Fidesz party has been spreading pro-Kremlin messages and propaganda;
- D. whereas there are also ‘Russlandverstehers’ (Russia understanding) politicians within mainstream political parties; whereas several public figures from EU Member States, including former heads of government and cabinet members, most notably Gerhard Schröder, have held well-paid positions in Kremlin-controlled energy companies; whereas, even after the full-scale aggression against Ukraine, some of these people decided not to step down and continued to receive the Kremlin’s blood money, with the

¹ OJ C 125, 18.3.2022, p. 2.

silent complicity of their political parties; whereas they continue to use their pro-Russian influence in both their domestic and the European political scenes;

- E. whereas under President Putin, Russia has identified democracy, human rights and the European way of life as a threat to its dictatorial government and hence for years has been pursuing a strategy of systematically trying to weaken and ultimately destroy democracies both in the EU and in candidate countries such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, the Western Balkans and other neighbouring countries such as Armenia;
- F. whereas according to media reports confirmed by Polish, Czech and Belgian security services, as well as by the Prime Ministers of Belgium and Czechia, certain MEPs and candidates in the upcoming European elections have received payment from the Russian Government or its proxies to spread propaganda and disinformation and to influence the elections to the European Parliament in various European countries;
- G. whereas on 27 March 2024, after having uncovered a pro-Russian network attempting to conduct influence operations with implications for Czechia and the EU, via the Prague-based 'Voice of Europe' news site, the Czech foreign ministry announced that it had sanctioned Ukrainian oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, for running a Russian influence operation from Czech territory using this news site, along with a middleman called Artem Marchevskiy, for his activities conducted with the aim of undermining European support for Ukraine and influencing the 2024 European Parliament elections by portraying the EU as a belligerent entity, and describing Ukraine as an irremediably corrupt country; whereas shortly after this revelation, the website was taken offline by the authorities but was back online on 11 April 2024, operating from a website hosted by a cloud services and website service provider based in Kazakhstan;
- H. whereas on 28 March 2024, Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo stated, during a debate in the Belgian Parliament, that based on investigations conducted by Belgian intelligence services in collaboration with their Czech counterparts, it was evident that Russia had approached European parliamentarians and paid some of them to promote Russian propaganda; whereas, on 12 April 2024, Prime Minister De Croo further announced the opening of criminal prosecution and requested an urgent meeting of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and called for the broadening of the mandate for the European Anti-Fraud Office and the European Public Prosecutor's Office;
- I. whereas on 28 March 2024, Poland's Internal Security Agency announced that it had conducted searches as part of a collaborative investigation with other European security services into alleged Russian espionage linked to 'Voice of Europe', recovering large sums of cash and leading to charges against a Polish citizen suspected of Russian espionage; whereas according to the Internal Security Agency, this individual is believed to have been embedded within Polish and EU parliamentary circles, carrying out tasks commissioned and financed by counterparts from Russian intelligence;
- J. whereas on 29 March 2024, Austrian authorities arrested a former Austrian intelligence officer on multiple charges, including allegedly providing mobile phone data of former high-ranking Austrian officials to Russian intelligence, involvement in planning a burglary at a prominent journalist's apartment, and drafting 'suggestions for improvement' following a Russian-ordered killing in Germany; whereas the arrested

former Austrian intelligence officer was in close contact with far-right politicians from the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) in the country's parliament and government;

- K. whereas on 16 April 2024 media reports circulated that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had questioned German MEP Maximilian Krah, the lead candidate of Alternative for Germany (AfD) for the European elections and member of Parliament's Committee on International Trade and Subcommittee on Security and Defence, last December in New York over suspicions that he was receiving money from Kremlin agents; whereas, on 23 April 2024, press reports indicated that an assistant to MEP Maximilian Krah had been arrested on suspicions of spying for China, showing a pattern of cooperation with malign foreign actors seeking to undermine European democratic values and processes;
- L. whereas on 18 April 2024, the German authorities arrested two suspected saboteurs in the German state of Bavaria who were allegedly spying on military installations for possible bomb or arson attacks on behalf of a Russian intelligence service, allegedly to sabotage German support for Ukraine in the war against Russia; whereas the arrests indicate that Russia's secret services are evidently entering new dimensions, which include attacks on military facilities, in addition to disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks;
- M. whereas a Czech media outlet claims that the Czech secret services have audio recordings confirming the payment of money of Russian origin to Petr Bystron, a candidate for the European elections, member of the German Bundestag and foreign policy officer for AfD; whereas according to German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, the money was handed over either in cash at covert meetings in Prague or via cryptocurrency; whereas reputable German media outlets have also recently revealed that an employee of an AfD member in the German Bundestag was identified as a contact person for the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB); whereas, according to media reports, the same person had been checked twice by German authorities when entering Germany from Russia and was carrying cash sums of EUR 9 000;
- N. whereas, on 12 February 2024, VIGINUM, the French Government agency responsible for identifying foreign digital interference, published a report detailing a vast Russian disinformation campaign dubbed 'Portal Kombat', consisting of 193 websites tasked with disseminating pro-Russian narratives among Russian-speaking and European populations across Europe and the United States; whereas, in late 2023, the French authorities indicated that the Stars of David found painted in several locations in Paris were part of a destabilisation operation tied to a pro-Russian businessman from Moldova;
- O. whereas, according to media analyses, since August 2023, 16 far-right MEPs from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Slovakia, Estonia, Spain, Croatia, Denmark and Belgium participated in debates and interviews organised by 'Voice of Europe'; whereas the vast majority of these politicians tend to normalise manifestations of hatred and intolerance based on race, national origin or sexual orientation and to project a vision of Russia as the authentic keeper of traditional family values; whereas the public discourse of those politicians is leading to dangerous divisions in society as a whole, and is a threat to democracy;

- P. whereas investigative journalists exposed a classified addendum to Russia's official 'Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation', in which the Russian Foreign Ministry calls for an 'offensive information campaign' and other measures spanning 'the military-political, economic and trade and informational psychological spheres' against a 'coalition of unfriendly countries' led by the United States, noting that 'it is important to create a mechanism for finding the vulnerable points of their external and internal policies with the aim of developing practical steps to weaken Russia's opponents' and that the outcome of Russia's war in Ukraine will 'to a great degree determine the outlines of the future world order';
- Q. whereas a recent study by the Commission¹ found that, in the first year of Russia's war against Ukraine, online platforms 'enabled the Kremlin to run a large-scale disinformation campaign targeting the European Union and its allies, reaching an aggregate audience of at least 165 million and generating at least 16 billion views'; whereas Russian funding of political activities and politicians within the European Union also contributes to an increase in the reach of pro-Kremlin propaganda, contributing to a disproportionately negative impact on civic discourse online;
- R. whereas through its cultivation of contacts and relationships, Russia aims to build political and economic influence to destabilise democracy in the European Union; whereas press reports have highlighted contacts between some secessionists in Catalonia, going so far as to the holding of a meeting between the former Russian diplomat Nikolai Sadovnikov and the then-separatist leader and former President of Catalonia, now sitting MEP Carles Puigdemont, in Barcelona, on the eve of Catalonia's illegal referendum in October 2017; whereas some MEPs and members of national and regional parliaments have consistently voiced sentiments that can be considered pro-Russian, for example by attributing the start of the conflict to Ukraine, participating as unofficial election observers in Crimea, and expressing a wish for its defeat in the war, downplaying the possibility of Ukraine's accession to the EU, opposing further weapon shipments to Ukraine, and advocating for territorial concessions from the government in Kyiv; whereas in March, a delegation of AfD members of the Bavarian regional parliament was invited to observe the so-called presidential elections in Russia and subsequently assessed the elections as open, democratic and free in public statements;
- S. whereas the Kremlin has sponsored and supported a number of far-right parties in Europe, including by providing the party of Marine Le Pen with a loan of EUR 9.4 million in 2013; whereas since then, Le Pen and her party members have further bolstered their pro-Kremlin stance by attending political events in Russia, including their participation in sham election observation missions during regional or national elections;
- T. whereas several investigations have revealed that, due to Russian interference, 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 non-EU sources, notably from Russia;

¹ European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, 'Digital Services Act: – Application of the risk management framework to Russian disinformation campaigns', Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/764631>.

- U. whereas there is credible evidence that, in 2020, Peter Pellegrini, then Prime Minister of Slovakia, requested the help of the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to obtain support from the Kremlin ahead of Slovakia's 2020 parliamentary election; whereas this resulted in a visit by Prime Minister Pellegrini to Russia in February 2020, three days before the elections were held; whereas the 2023 parliamentary elections were targeted by further Russian interference and disinformation campaigns; whereas Peter Pellegrini is now President-elect of Slovakia and due to take office in June 2024;
- V. whereas following reports of a Latvian MEP providing extensive assistance to Russian intelligence services, Parliament launched its own administrative probe, resulting in President Metsola imposing sanctions on the MEP, including a five-day fine of her daily allowance amounting to EUR 1 750 and a ban from certain roles representing Parliament until the end of this parliamentary term in July;
- W. whereas the European Parliament Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (INGE and ING2), has exposed in detail the efforts and operations led by Russia in order to infiltrate, influence and interfere with European democracies and the European institutions;
- X. whereas some political groups unsuccessfully tried to deny the last extension of ING2's mandate to address all forms of corruption and foreign interferences in the European Parliament, advocating instead for an investigation committee focusing only on Qatargate;
- Y. whereas, while MEPs have been regularly targeted by spyware, as shown by the recent revelations on the past targeting of two MEPs and one staffer on Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence, there has been a surge in cyberattacks and foreign interference targeting the work of the European Parliament in the run-up to the European Parliament election;
- Z. whereas in September 2023, the European Parliament, following the Qatargate revelations, 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; whereas the reviewed Code of Conduct establishes that any elected MEP found to be in breach of transparency rules can be given a penalty by the President of the European Parliament;
- AA. whereas it is critically important to combat the proliferation of disinformation and foreign interference in European democracy, and to take further measures to safeguard the right of European citizens to accurate and trustworthy news sources, as well as to shield the European information landscape from manipulation by authoritarian regimes; whereas Reporters Without Borders recently put forward 12 proposals for a New Deal for the Right to Information;
- AB. whereas at its meeting on 17 April 2024, the European Council concluded that 'in the context of the upcoming European elections, the European Council underlines the Union and its Member States' determination to closely monitor and contain any risks stemming from disinformation, including through artificial intelligence, as well as foreign information manipulation and interference in electoral processes. The European

Council invites the EU institutions and national authorities to cooperate on such matters’;

- AC. whereas MEPs have called on President Metsola to ask for an urgent investigation into Russian interference attempts ahead of the forthcoming European elections; whereas there has been no reply so far;
1. Is appalled by the credible allegations that MEPs were paid to disseminate Russian propaganda as well as to support Russian efforts to systematically create a network of dependencies through European political parties that then act as amplifiers of the Kremlin’s propaganda;
 2. Expresses its outrage at the participation of MEPs in a pro-Russian media outlet, ‘Voice of Europe’, while Russia is waging its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine; emphasises that most views propagated by MEPs on ‘Voice of Europe’ do not reflect the stance of the vast majority of MEPs, who overwhelmingly denounce Russia’s unlawful invasion of Ukraine, its employment of hybrid warfare tactics against European democracy, and its other aggressive and anti-democratic policy decisions in recent years;
 3. Firmly denounces all attempts, especially by the Russian Federation, to undermine the functioning of European democratic processes and stresses that these tactics must be met with consequences; calls on the political leadership of the EU and its Member States to finally address these Russian efforts with the necessary sense of urgency and resolve; reiterates its call on the Member States to further develop and fine-tune the sanctions packages adopted against the Russian Federation to more effectively limit its ability to wage its war of aggression and to close loopholes in the enforcement of the restrictive measures currently in force; reiterates its call to introduce a sanctions regime against perpetrators engaging in malign foreign information manipulation and interference;
 4. Is appalled by recent credible reports that Petr Bystron, a leading member of AfD (ID Group) and member in the German Bundestag, has accepted payments of up to EUR 25 000 to spread pro-Russian propaganda;
 5. Furthermore, expresses its concern about the recent FBI questioning of AfD MEP Maximilian Krah and calls upon the AfD to publicly declare its financial relations with the Kremlin without delay and to publicly disclose the purpose and exact amount of all payments originating from Kremlin-linked sources; further expresses its utmost concern regarding the arrest of MEP Krah’s assistant on 23 April 2024 following serious charges of espionage for China;
 6. Is extremely worried by recent reports, dated 17 April 2024, of two alleged Russian spies with dual German-Russian nationality who were arrested in Bavaria after being accused of scouting targets for potential attacks and sabotage operations, including the targeting of military facilities; reiterates its high concern about the extent of Russian espionage activities in Germany and other countries, such as Poland where similar activities were discovered in March 2023, and reiterates its strong call for a decisive response to the threat posed by Russian agents operating in Germany and beyond;

7. Strongly condemns the Russian practice of instrumentalising illegal immigrants by pushing them into EU territory to destabilise neighbouring Member States, in particular Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland;
8. Is equally concerned by the arrest on 22 April 2024 of three Germans detained on suspicion of working with the Chinese Ministry of State Security to hand over technology that could be used for military purposes; reiterates its previous calls on Member States to more effectively combat all elements of spying in the EU, which must also include better protection of critical infrastructure as well as a frank and clear confrontation of the originating states of espionage; underlines that these espionage revelations are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg and are a serious threat to our security and democracy;
9. Strongly condemns the alarming revelation brought to light by reputable German media outlets in February, revealing that an employee affiliated with the AfD and associated with a member of the German federal parliament was identified as a contact person for Russia's FSB, raising serious concerns about potential foreign influence within the German political landscape; moreover, strongly condemns the fact that the same individual, upon entry into Germany from Russia, was repeatedly intercepted by German authorities carrying cash sums of EUR 9 000;
10. Calls for the EU and the Member States to mirror the sanctions adopted by the Czech Government against 'Voice of Europe', as well as Viktor Medvedchuk and Artem Marchevskiy; deplores the fact that 'Voice of Europe' has been able to restart its operations from Kazakhstan as of 11 April 2024; calls on the Member States to ensure that 'Voice of Europe' cannot be accessed across the European Union; furthermore, notes that badges allowing 'Voice of Europe' to access the European Parliament's premises have been suspended;
11. Commits to providing its full support and collaboration to national authorities in their investigations into the conduct of the MEPs concerned; welcomes the opening of an investigation into the suspected cases of Russian interference in EU elections by the Belgian authorities, calls upon relevant Member States to determine whether the involved MEPs are liable for prosecution under their respective criminal law; calls for judicial and law enforcement cooperation with international partners to be strengthened to facilitate the uncovering, investigation and prosecution of transnational criminal activities and networks of malign foreign actors promoting corrupt practices aimed at interfering with the European elections and at undermining democracy in the EU; commits to providing its full support and cooperation therefor; calls upon the relevant Parliament bodies to do everything possible to ensure a timely decision on the request to lift MEPs' immunity whenever such a request is received by the relevant authorities; calls upon these bodies to convene as soon as possible after their constitutive meetings following the forthcoming European elections in order to immediately start their proceedings if such requests have been received; remains ready to further improve its internal rules on ethics, based on the highest standards, and its oversight and accountability framework, as well as the sanctioning mechanisms available for ascertained breaches of Parliament's integrity framework; calls for the highest level of 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;

12. Welcomes the referral of the MEPs concerned to the Advisory Committee on the Code of Conduct; commits to enforcing its applicable internal sanction framework in full and calls for any sitting MEPs or candidates in the upcoming European elections that have taken money from or been corrupted by the Russian Government or its proxies to be exposed; 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 MEPs' 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;
13. Welcomes the call for an urgent meeting of Eurojust requested by Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo; welcomes further the request to examine, and when necessary broaden, the mandate for the European Anti-Fraud Office and the European Public Prosecutor's Office to be able to prosecute such cases; welcomes also the agreement announced by the Belgian Presidency to launch a temporary crisis task force to counter Russia's attempts to interfere in the forthcoming European elections and stresses that in the context of the upcoming European elections, all national and EU authorities must intensify their efforts to combat foreign interference to ensure the full integrity of these important elections; stresses, in this regard, that freedom of speech, freedom of the media, and compliance with the law are equally important in all democratic processes and cannot be unduly restricted;
14. Reiterates its previous condemnation of past cases of political partnerships between far-right parties in Europe and the Russian leadership, such as the bank loan for Le Pen's party in France, the partnership agreement between Austria's FPÖ party and Putin's United Russia party, as well as numerous meetings and exchanges between various elected MEPs, including the leadership of Germany's AfD party;
15. Expresses its concern about the Austrian espionage case, in which a former Austrian intelligence officer, Egisto Ott, who is said to be closely tied to FPÖ politician Hans-Jörg Jenewein, is accused of spying for Russia and illegally retrieving personal data from police databases, including handing over mobile phone data of former high-ranking Austrian officials to Russian intelligence;
16. Expresses its concern about credible reports of increased Russian attempts to interfere in the upcoming elections for the Bulgarian national parliament on 9 June 2024; raises strong concerns about the existence and Russian control of a network of disinformation agents active on social media platforms, in traditional media, academia, non-governmental organisations and political parties; is extremely concerned about the numerous properties currently owned by Russian authorities in the territory of Bulgaria, some of them of strategic importance, and which serve as centres of Russian influence and leverage over the democratic processes in the country;
17. Expresses its serious concern about a number of policies and positions of the Hungarian Government, which under the leadership of Prime Minister Orbán has on numerous critical occasions assumed a pro-Russian, as well as pro-Chinese, stance;

18. Condemns Russia's participation in disinformation campaigns, as well as the alleged intense contacts and number of meetings between the agents responsible for Russian interference with a Catalan secessionist group; suggests that the European Centre of Excellence for Combating Hybrid Threats in Helsinki carry out a study; calls on the competent judicial authorities to effectively investigate the connections of the MEPs allegedly associated with the Kremlin and Russia's attempts at destabilisation and interference in the EU and its Member States; deplores all attacks on judges investigating any interference activities;
19. Believes that the recent allegations might constitute sanctionable behaviour under its Code of Conduct and if confirmed must be met with the firmest response; underlines the importance of immediately conducting a thorough internal investigation in order to assess all possible cases of foreign interference from Russia and other countries in the European Parliament; highlights that these revelations are part of a larger pattern of Russian interference, as highlighted in the final reports of INGE and ING2;
20. Considers that the allegations regarding the MEPs concerned underline the need for an enhanced security culture in 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-corruption, including mandatory security training for MEPs and staffers, appropriate security clearance and reinforced screening of staffers, in particular those attending in camera meetings; underlines that many national parliaments and international organisations have legitimate and well-functioning systems in this domain and calls for best practices to be assessed;
21. Calls for Parliament to introduce mandatory, effective and regular training on security, interference, ethical standards, compliance and integrity for all MEPs and their offices and for all Parliament staff, raising awareness that they are potential targets of foreign state and non-state actors; calls for Parliament's services to put in place effective monitoring and surveillance systems to detect foreign interference while respecting MEPs' freedom of mandate;
22. 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 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;
23. Highlights the key legislation on media freedom and digital rights adopted by the European Union in recent years, such as the European Media Freedom Act, the Artificial Intelligence Act or the Digital Services Act; highlights, nevertheless, that further action is needed to stop the spread of malign disinformation online and to protect the right of European citizens to reliable news;

24. Welcomes the adoption of the legislative package on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, which includes new EU-level rules aimed at addressing money laundering risks related to politically exposed persons;
25. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to include in the forthcoming 14th sanction package new Kremlin-backed media outlets and other broadcasting and media organisations and individuals responsible for propaganda and disinformation campaigns in the EU;
26. Underlines the key role of investigative journalism in revealing the attempts at foreign interference and covert activities; reiterates its call for the EU institutions and the Member States to ensure sufficient and sustainable funding for investigative journalism; strongly condemns the large-scale disinformation campaign exposed by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January, purportedly orchestrated by Russia on X (formerly Twitter), with the intention of manipulating public opinion;
27. Strongly condemns ongoing Russian efforts to abuse and falsify the historical recollection of Europe's most tragic periods, such as the terror of the Nazi regime, in order to try to justify its current brutal, illegal and inhumane aggression and its expansionist policy, as well as its attempts to systematically spread false historical narratives;
28. Insists on the need to do more to protect the European information environment and EU citizens' right to access reliable information; recalls the need to establish, as stated in Parliament's previous reports, 'mirror clauses' whereby the openness of the European information space to third countries would be proportionate to the access European media outlets have in these countries; underlines that the media outlets working for hostile and authoritarian regimes should not have access to European Parliament premises; insists that labelling on platforms should go beyond identifying deep fakes to also establish positive labelling using tools created by the media sector, such as the Journalism Trust Initiative; expresses, in this context, its general support for the New Deal for the Right to Information proposed by Reporters Without Borders;
29. Believes that more efforts are needed to properly protect European democracy and strongly calls upon national authorities to fully inform citizens of the Member States concerned in the 'Voice of Europe' case;
30. Notes that the ultimate goal of Russian interference is to undermine, divide and weaken the EU and to erode support for Ukraine; Stresses that the Russian Federation's hybrid tactics do not advance Russia's political agenda within the EU in the least, but, on the contrary, generate further momentum for the EU's unwavering support to Ukraine in its defence against the illegal occupier;
31. Underlines that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has exposed the massive extent of foreign manipulation of information in the EU and its immediate neighbourhood, namely the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries; calls for the EU and its neighbouring countries to increase their cooperation in the fight against disinformation, hybrid threats and cyber security;
32. Calls for the European Union to be vigilant with regard to attempts by any third country, including Russia, to unduly influence its democratic processes; warns the

Russian Federation that hybrid disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks and influence operations already constitute serious attacks on European democracy and any physical action on European soil would constitute a dramatic escalation; calls on the Member States to expose and investigate Russian attempts to sabotage critical infrastructure; stresses the need to strengthen safeguards to protect election infrastructure, which is particularly vulnerable to physical attacks and cyberattacks before and during elections;

33. 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; recalls in particular the evidence of loans from foreign banks (such as in the case of the National Front party in France 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 *Buzzfeed* and *L'Espresso* on 10 July 2019 about Lega per Salvini Premier in Italy), and facilitation of financial activities (as reported by the British press in relation to the Leave.eu campaign);
34. Condemns the fact that foreign interference 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;
35. 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.