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DRAFT REPORT

on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the foreign policy response to external interference in the EU's neighbourhood

(2026/2046(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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CONTENTS

	Page
DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	7

DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION

to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the foreign policy response to external interference in the EU's neighbourhood (2026/2046(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2026 on the findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield¹,
 - having regard to Rule 121 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10- 0000/2026),
- A. whereas foreign interference poses a serious challenge to the democratic stability, sovereignty, security and independence of the political decision-making of the European Union and its Member States;
- B. whereas contemporary foreign interference includes coordinated hybrid operations, information manipulation, cyberattacks, economic coercion, non-transparent financing, interference in democratic processes and the weaponisation of migratory flows and strategic dependencies;
- C. whereas effectively countering foreign interference requires a coherent approach combining detection, attribution, prevention, deterrence, a coordinated response, the imposition of proportionate consequences and the long-term strengthening of resilience;
- D. whereas education and media literacy are key to building resilient democratic societies exercising basic freedoms and anchored in the rule of law;
- E. whereas the absence of a timely, coherent and credible response to serious foreign interference may encourage its recurrence and weaken the credibility of the EU's external action;
1. Recommends that the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy:

Detection, identification and mapping of foreign interference

- (a) recognise hybrid threats and their fast-evolving nature in the EU's neighbourhood as strategic security threats to the EU and the Member States;
- (b) develop a comprehensive approach to identifying and countering foreign interference and build capabilities to detect combined hybrid operations, in order to ensure that the competent services can identify the links between them rather than treating each

¹ Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0286.

incident in isolation;

- (c) recognise that frozen or ongoing crises and conflicts that have a profound impact both within and outside the region have strategic implications for the potential and nature of hybrid threats posed by foreign actors; strengthen, in this context, the EU's role in building peace and stability;

Protection of democratic institutions and electoral processes

- (d) strengthen cooperation with the competent electoral authorities of countries in the EU's neighbourhood in order to identify and document foreign interference in elections;
- (e) encourage the adoption of effective transparency rules concerning the external financing of political parties, candidates, political campaigns and entities exercising political influence;
- (f) promote common principles for documenting and attributing responsibility for foreign interference, based on credible evidence and verifiable information, in order to avoid unsubstantiated accusations and politically motivated assessments which could be exploited by foreign actors to facilitate further interference;

Economic coercion, strategic dependencies and external pressure

- (g) systematically incorporate economic coercion into assessments of foreign interference, recognising that energy, trade, investment and strategic dependencies can be used to exert undue political pressure on states and institutions;
- (h) ensure the uninterrupted implementation of projects of common European interest, with the protection of critical infrastructure, energy facilities, electricity interconnections, natural gas pipelines, submarine cables, ports and telecommunications networks, with countries that respect the Member States of the EU, international law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- (i) promote the exchange of information and expertise concerning the screening of foreign investments in strategic sectors, without unjustifiably obstructing legitimate investments and international economic relations;
- (j) recognise the deliberate weaponisation of migratory flows by state actors as a potential form of hybrid interference when it is aimed at exerting political pressure and coercing, destabilising or undermining the security of states, and examine the suspension of EU funding where there is credible and documented evidence that state authorities are deliberately facilitating or orchestrating such practices, particularly where such actions constitute a breach of commitments undertaken in exchange for EU financial assistance;

Media, digital platforms, disinformation and artificial intelligence

- (k) strengthen cooperation with digital platforms and communication services to identify coordinated information manipulation operations, while maintaining respect for the protection of personal data and the privacy of communications;

- (l) strengthen international cooperation to counter misleading content generated through artificial intelligence with the aim of deceiving the public or undermining democratic processes;
- (m) support independent and investigative journalism as an essential tool for exposing foreign interference;
- (n) ensure that countering disinformation does not become a mechanism for restricting legitimate political views;

Education and social resilience

- (o) promote educational initiatives to develop critical thinking, digital literacy and the ability to identify manipulated content, with particular emphasis on young people;
- (p) encourage appropriate transparency mechanisms, with strict controls, for the funding of civil society organisations, research centres and think tanks;
- (q) address the systematic distortion of historical events and the instrumentalisation of religious institutions as potential components of broader manipulation operations;
- (r) ensure that any initiative to counter undue influence through cultural or religious institutions fully respects religious freedom, customs and practices;

Coordinated foreign policy and deterrence instruments

- (s) develop the capacity for timely prevention and ensure that deterrence is not limited to public statements of condemnation but is accompanied by concrete diplomatic initiatives, the use of available instruments and an assessment of the effectiveness of the measures taken, up to and including the imposition of substantive sanctions;
- (t) develop capabilities for a rapid and evidence-based communication response to serious Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) campaigns, ensuring coordination between the European External Action Service (EEAS), EU delegations and the competent national authorities, with respect for national sovereignty;
- (u) ensure that the EU's strategic communication is based on accuracy, transparency and verifiable information, and avoids manipulation practices that could undermine its credibility;
- (v) strengthen coordination between the Council, the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States, with a clear allocation and separation of competences, as well as procedures for exchanging information on serious incidents of foreign interference, with respect for national competences, thus avoiding the creation of parallel mechanisms that overlap with current competences;
- (w) consider, in cases of serious and documented foreign interference, the imposition of targeted restrictive measures against natural and legal persons, within the framework of the CFSP, as well as the adoption of the necessary implementing measures under the TFEU;

Resilience against foreign interference

- (x) strengthen the democratic, institutional, economic, energy and digital resilience of the EU and the countries in the EU's neighbourhood, recognising that the long-term prevention of foreign interference requires strong institutions and informed societies;
- (y) support the diversification of energy sources, the development of secure interconnections and the reduction of strategic dependencies that create economic coercion;
- (z) develop measurable indicators for assessing the effectiveness of policies to prevent and counter foreign interference;
- (aa) promote a European approach that combines the protection of sovereignty and democratic independence with respect for international law, fundamental rights and the principles of proportionality and accountability;

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2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT