

**Question for written answer E-003976/2026  
to the Commission**  
Rule 144  
**Stanisław Tyszką (ESN)**

**Subject:** European Democracy Shield and free speech

The European Centre for Democratic Resilience started work in February 2026. Its aims are to 'defend democracy' and to counter 'external interference' and 'disinformation' within the EU. The Centre was established not on the basis of a specific legal act but following a joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative as a voluntary hub for coordination and the exchange of information.

In September 2026, Parliament called for the Centre to be anchored in a binding legislative act and endowed with its own budget and operational capacities. What is more, the Commission President announced in her State of the Union address that the Centre would step up its work, pointing to 'foreign propaganda' and 'anti-democratic' and 'anti-European' forces as threats within the EU.

1. What criteria and safeguards does the Centre apply to distinguish foreign interference from the legitimate activity of national parties and candidates, and to prevent criticism of the EU from being identified as a threat solely on the basis of the opinion being expressed, particularly in the run-up to elections?
2. Is the Commission collecting or does it intend to collect and publish data on the number of lawful posts that have been deleted or had their reach restricted following the assessments of EU-funded fact-checkers?
3. Does it intend to present a proposal conferring the Centre a binding legal framework and its own budget; if so, on what Treaty basis, and how will it ensure the compatibility of its powers with Article 4(2) TEU, which reserves national security for Member States?

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