(English version)

Question for written answer E-000447/25
to the Commission

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(30 January 2025)

Subject: Legitimacy of the European Democracy Shield

On 18 December 2024, the European Parliament voted in favour of setting up a 'Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield'.

This special committee follows on from the Commission's work on the European Democracy Shield, an initiative announced by Ursula von der Leyen on 14 May 2024 during her campaign for the presidency. The special committee's tasks will include tackling 'malicious interference' by state or non-state actors and ensuring the 'resilience of the Union' in democratic processes ([1]).

Parliament therefore endorses the Commission's desire to regulate the contours of democracy and to impede the sovereignty of the Member States.

1. Does the unelected Commission have the legitimacy to submit such legislative proposals, in disregard of the Treaties and national competences?

2. What legal bases allow it to intervene in the internal affairs of Member States or third countries?

3. What legal definition underpins the nebulous concepts of 'malicious actors' and 'like-minded partners'?

Supporters ([2])

Submitted: 30.1.2025

Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(31 March 2025)

The Commission is preparing the European Democracy Shield, announced in the Political Guidelines 2024-2029 ([1]). The Shield will better protect and promote democracy in the European Union (EU) with several initiatives.

As provided under Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) the Commission is appointed by the European Council with the consent of the European Parliament and has the competence to propose initiatives to promote the general interest of the Union.

Democracy is among the founding values of the EU, as provided by Article 2 TEU, which all Member States committed to respect and promote when joining the EU (Article 49 TEU).

The Democracy Shield will address foreign information manipulation and interference and disinformation, strengthen the fairness and integrity of elections and of democratic frameworks and checks and balances, increase situational awareness and reinforce citizens' participation and engagement.

The Commission will consult broadly on the shield, including Member States, civil society, academia, the private sector and citizens directly.

The Commission welcomes the decision taken by the European Parliament to set up a special committee on the European Democracy Shield, which includes members across the political spectrum.

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1 [1]European Parliament decision of 18 December 2024 on setting up a special committee on the European Democracy Shield, and defining its responsibilities, numerical strength and term of office.

2 [2]This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Julien Leonardelli (PfE), Pál Szekeres (PfE)

([1]) https://commission.europa.eu/document/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en

The Commission will work closely with this committee. The concepts used to frame the committee's mandate are a matter for the European Parliament to decide.