

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000752/25
to the Commission
Oihane Agirregoitia Martínez (Renew)
(19 February 2025)**

Subject: New European Democracy Shield

On 12 December 2023, the Commission adopted the Defence of Democracy package, which includes legislative and non-legislative measures to address the threat that covert foreign influence poses to democracy.

The package will also help make democracy more resilient by promoting the participation of citizens and civil society organisations in democracies.

Commissioner McGrath's mission letter asks him to oversee work on a new European Democracy Shield, as included in the Commission's 2025 work programme. The Shield, which will tackle the most serious risks to democracy in the EU — such as rising extremism and disinformation — will build on the work already done on the European Democracy Action Plan and the Defence of Democracy Package. I therefore ask the following:

1. What progress has been made in the Defence of Democracy package in the year since it was adopted?
2. What is the Commission's approach to the new Shield?
3. How is this Shield different from the previous one?

Submitted: 19.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(4 April 2025)**

As part of the Defence of Democracy Package ⁽¹⁾, the Commission presented a proposal for a directive on transparency of third country interest representation ⁽²⁾, which is being discussed by the co-legislators.

The package also includes a recommendation on promoting civic engagement ⁽³⁾ and a recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission is preparing a report on the elections to the European Parliament assessing, among others, the follow-up to the latter Recommendation.

Recent elections in the EU show that the threat landscape is increasingly complex, notably marked by foreign interference, information manipulation and disinformation, covert political campaign financing, and direct attacks on electoral processes and institutions, including cyber-attacks, attempting to lower trust in democratic processes.

The Commission is preparing the European Democracy Shield, as announced in the Political Guidelines ⁽⁵⁾. It will better protect and promote democracy, addressing the most severe risks to democracy in the EU, building on the Democracy Action Plan ⁽⁶⁾ and the Defence of Democracy Package.

The Shield will take a whole of society approach and address several issues, including foreign information manipulation and interference and disinformation, the fairness and integrity of elections and the strengthening of democratic checks and balances, including the role of civil society and free, independent and pluralistic media, societal resilience and preparedness and citizens' participation and engagement.

Putting citizens at the heart of democracy is outlined in the Political Guidelines.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2023) 630 final.

⁽²⁾ COM/2023/637 final.

⁽³⁾ C(2023) 8627 final.

⁽⁴⁾ C(2023) 8626 final.

⁽⁵⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

⁽⁶⁾ COM/2020/790 final.