

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001169/25
to the Commission
Petr Bystron (ESN)
(19 March 2025)**

Subject: Influence of foreign organisations on democratic processes in the EU

WikiLeaks has disclosed that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Department of State channelled approximately USD 472.6 million through the Internews Network, a global media organisation and 'NGO'.

Internews claims to have collaborated with 4 291 media outlets reaching up to 778 million people globally and reportedly 'trained' over 9 000 journalists in 2023.

Considering the US Government's financial involvement, Internews' documented support for the censorship of alleged 'disinformation' on social media and its ties to George Soros' globalist Open Society Foundations, concerns arise regarding the independence of European media and democratic political processes.

Given these findings, we would like to know:

1. To what extent is the Commission aware of financial support given to European media by the Internews Network, USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy and the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and did the OCCRP receive financial support from the EU?
2. What steps are being taken to prevent EU democratic processes and Member States from being unlawfully influenced by these organisations?
3. Will the Commission consider reviewing and potentially terminating the EU's cooperation with USAID and other US-backed organisations to protect the EU's sovereignty?

Submitted: 19.3.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(16 May 2025)**

The Commission does not maintain an overview of media that were supported by United States organisations. The Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project is part of the Next-level Data and Tools for Investigative Journalism project, supported by the Creative Europe programme ⁽¹⁾.

In 2023, the Commission presented the Defence of Democracy package ⁽²⁾ which includes a legislative proposal that aims to enhance transparency and democratic accountability around interest representation activities on behalf of third countries. The co-legislators are currently discussing this proposal.

The new Regulation on transparency and targeting of political advertising ⁽³⁾, which will become fully applicable in October 2025, will limit political advertising coming from sponsors from outside the EU in the three months leading up to an election or referendum in the EU.

The EU has also taken specific measures to safeguard media independence and prevent undue influence from third countries. The provisions of the European Media Freedom Act ⁽⁴⁾, generally applicable from 8 August 2025, establish transparency requirements for media ownership and state advertising revenues, including those received from third-country public authorities or entities.

The EU's strategic objectives are exercised independently of those of the United States Agency for International Development or United States backed organisations.

In order to address the most pressing threats to democracy in the EU, the Commission will also propose the European Democracy Shield in 2025 that will aim to improve our overall situational awareness, our capacity to respond to crisis situations, foster societal resilience against disinformation and information manipulation, and support election integrity in the Member States.

⁽¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251814/101180015/CREA2027>.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6453.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/900/oj/eng>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1083>.