

Strengthening the EU's democratic resilience to combat foreign interference

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Brussels on 24-25 October 2025:

Notes that:

- Democracy is under attack worldwide. Following the US's retreat, the EU bears responsibility for defending liberal-democratic values; alongside other longstanding democracies such as the UK and Canada;
- Within the Western world, trust in democratic institutions, including the justice system, science and the media, is on the wane, and people believe less and less in the ability of liberal democracy to solve the major challenges and crises we are facing;
- Democratic norms are being eroded as increasing numbers of citizens look to authoritarian leadership as a model to provide simple answers to the complexity of the modern world, with culture wars fuelling uncertainty caused by the pandemic, global wars, economic instability and rapid societal transformations;
- Malign actors such as Russia, China and Iran have been actively trying to erode European democracy for years, sowing discord and division. In recent years, the EU has become a direct target in an ideological campaign by a global authoritarian front to delegitimise our liberal-democratic institutions as well as our digital regulations and to foster doubt and distrust among European citizens, spreading a narrative that the EU is undemocratic and oppressive;
- These actors continue actively to spread their anti-Western narratives not only within Europe, but across the world, including within European development cooperation partners, particularly in the so-called Global South;
- Populist sentiment increasingly attacks the EU as an elitist, undemocratic organisation, with anti-EU parties gaining ever more seats in parliaments;
- Disinformation remains the main form of foreign interference, including through dark financing of extremist parties, fake think tanks, the promotion of self-proclaimed experts promulgating fabricated alternative narratives and the manipulation of communication platforms via secret algorithms;
- Developments in generative AI will create deeper, existential challenges for many traditional media, threatening their revenue sources and accelerating the spread of fake news;
- The EU is dependent on foreign infrastructure in the field of new information, strangling EU innovation in technology and AI as technological power becomes increasingly concentrated amongst very few large corporations;
- The radicalisation of European youth, both in the direction of extremist political parties but also by extremist religious hate preachers, poses a significant threat to the stability of our democratic institutions;
- High reliance on US and East Asian tech companies undermines the EU's sovereignty.

Believes that:

- Freedom of speech is a fundamental right for all humans which deserves special protection;
- Liberal democracy thrives on a culture of pluralistic debate, fostering innovation and progress;
- Respect for democracy, pluralism and human dignity are non-negotiable European values;
- Maximal transparency and adherence to the basic principles of good governance are vital building blocks to rebuilding citizens' trust in institutions;
- Fighting disinformation sponsored by foreign powers and other malign actors and the noise it creates is essential for strengthening the freedom of speech and debate;
- A mix of community moderation and independent fact-checking creates an environment that sustains trusted democratic discourse;
- Facing the new challenges caused by a global campaign designed to destroy the EU, the Union needs a broader catalogue of measures and instruments to defend itself, including improved strategic communication, protection of independent media, and financing of science and research;
- Legislation passed through our democratic institutions to protect our values must not be put up for negotiation with our trading partners.

Regrets that:

- Very Large Online Platforms continue to use a business model that incentivises polarisation, disinformation and illegal content;
- Fact-based, quality media cannot compete with clickbait, anger-inciting and AI-generated content on online platforms, and is struggling financially;
- Some online platforms have decided to cut down on using independent fact-checkers;
- There is a lack of transparency surrounding the financing of some political parties;
- Continued election interference from Russia and China;
- Growing foreign influence from the US, where recent actions under the Trump administration have signaled a turn away from democratic values and thereby threaten the integrity of our democratic processes.
- Members of governments of both our partners and systemic rivals spread malicious, false narratives about the state of freedom of speech in Europe;
- The EU lacks unity in fighting foreign interference, and the governments of several member states try to undermine the European joint effort, including by opening their critical infrastructure to systemic rivals.

Calls on the EU and national governments to:

- Resist external pressure and fully implement current legislation (DSA, DMA, EMFA, AI Act, etc.);
- Strengthen institutional transparency at all levels of governance;
- Increase institutional capacity and coherence to fight foreign interference more efficiently on the EU and Member State level, such as by increasing the funding for ENISA;
- Recognise the essential work of the European Parliament's Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield and make the committee permanent;
- Support Member States in exchanging best practices on media competence education, including modernised training and further education for teachers;
- Strengthen fact-based, quality media, while ensuring that both traditional and new media are held to the highest standards of accuracy, objectivity and ethical reporting;

- Insist that European citizens have access to Very Large Online Platforms without their data being stored on servers outside of the EU;
- Ensure that Very Large Online Platforms open the 'black box algorithms' and have a system of moderation to remove illegal content;
- Enforce clear labelling of AI-generated content online and introduce anonymised verification mechanisms to distinguish human users from bots;
- Support Member States in addressing violent extremist propaganda online;
- Uphold the right to online privacy and anonymity as essential to individual freedom, ensuring that any age or identity verification frameworks are strictly voluntary, minimally invasive, and fully transparent to protect user dignity.
- Guarantee the privacy of users online, including by ensuring the right to anonymity;
- Ensure that measures taken to protect users from illegal content do not stifle genuine debate and do not restrict access to information;
- Enhance the role of strengthening media competence in European development cooperation;
- Support technological sovereignty by fostering an open and competitive market for technology innovation in the EU, encouraging private sector leadership and voluntary adoption of EU-grown and open-source software without distorting competition through procurement preferences;
- Protect critical infrastructure from sabotage and financial takeover by systemic rivals.