

Defence of Democracy

#EUDemocracy

12 December 2023

“We will not allow any autocracy to attack our democracies from within. Today we all see that we must fight for our democracies. Every single day.”

President von der Leyen, State of the Union address 2022

This is why, the Commission has adopted the Defence of Democracy package. It will:



Ensure transparency of interest representation on behalf of third countries and shed light on **foreign influence**.



Strengthen **electoral processes**.



Encourage **inclusive participation** of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making.

Taking the European Democracy Action Plan forward

The Defence of Democracy package builds on the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP), which was designed to promote free and fair elections, strengthen media freedom and counter disinformation.



Ensuring transparency of foreign interest representation

A recent Eurobarometer survey shows that [81% of Europeans](#) agree that foreign interference in our democratic systems is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. 81% also agree that entities representing foreign governments should be registered to prevent interference.

The Commission is proposing rules for more transparency and democratic accountability by shedding light on covert foreign influence.



Legal or natural persons representing interests of third country governments in the EU will be required to do so in a fully transparent manner.



Member States will have to establish dedicated and easily accessible **transparency registries**.



There will be **strong and comprehensive safeguards** to avoid that registration requirements lead to stigmatisation.

Strengthening electoral processes in the EU

To ensure that elections in the EU will follow the highest democratic standards, the Commission adopted a **Recommendation on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament**.

The Recommendation:

- promotes high democratic standards for elections in the EU;
- supports high voter turnouts and inclusive participation;
- makes it easier to exercise one's electoral rights.

It also addresses the cybersecurity of election-related infrastructure and promotes measures minimising the risk of interference from third countries.

Participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making

Engaged, informed, and empowered citizens and civil society organisations are essential for the resilience of our democracies.

The **Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes** prompts accessible, inclusive and transparent participation in policy-making at the local, regional and national level.

It aims to create a safe environment for civil society organisations and human rights defenders, allowing them to effectively participate in democratic policy-making.

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PDF ISBN 978-92-68-10247-3 doi:10.2792/520660 KA-02-23-375-EN-N

