

Dear Mrs. Virkkunen, Dear Mr. McGrath,

The trust in electoral processes is the cornerstone of our democracies. The escalating threats of foreign interference and disruptive interventions in public debates during key electoral events represent a direct challenge to our stability and sovereignty. Recent incidents demand urgent and united action to defend forthcoming elections in the EU and EU candidate countries.

In this context, we, as Ministers for European Affairs, are reaching out to urge the Commission to take decisive action to protect the integrity of European electoral processes. Member States, united by shared values of democracy and the rule of law, have entrusted the Commission with a singular responsibility of safeguarding these principles. We therefore call on the Commission to uphold this mandate with unwavering determination.

We urge the Commission to lead by fully leveraging the powers granted under the Digital Services Act (DSA) to mitigate any risks and by accelerating ongoing investigations. These mechanisms must be employed without hesitation to enhance the EU's hybrid response capabilities and consolidate its standing as a bulwark of democratic stability and maintain citizens' trust.

Looking ahead, it is imperative to enhance our collective resilience against such threats. In the scope of its competence and in support of Member States, we call on the Commission to present robust proposals aimed at strengthening our frameworks and developing our hybrid toolbox, including the development of a *European Democratic Shield*, new individual sanctions, in cooperation with the EEAS, to send a firm signal to those involved in destabilising activities and hybrid rapid response teams to address emerging challenges swiftly and effectively; we also commend the ongoing efforts to reinforce the Strategic Intelligence and Analysis Capacity (SIAC). Such measures are essential to ensure the long-term protection of our democracies.

We stand ready to collaborate with the Commission and Member States to advance these priorities and reinforce the democratic foundations upon which the European Union is built.

Yours sincerely,

[*Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain*]