

Recommendations from the July 16 Inter-Parliamentary Meeting at the Atlantic Council

- Foreign interference in elections is an attack on citizens' fundamental right to freely select their representatives and to determine the path forward for their countries.
- Democracies in the United States (US), Europe and elsewhere have experienced foreign interference in their elections through the spread of fake information, the amplification of divisive news, the leaking of sensitive information, the covert funding of candidates, and the targeting of voting systems.
- Governments, legislatures, social media companies, and civil society should raise public awareness of the challenge -- reaching out in a non-partisan fashion about the dangers of malicious foreign interference and ways to minimize the threat. Public resilience to malign foreign influence starts with clear communication. Further, governments should evaluate the appropriate role for government in educating the public about recognizing Russian and other propaganda.
- We urge the executive branches in the US, Canada, and European countries to develop whole-of-government strategies to increase election security and combat electoral interference. Efforts in the US should focus on the mid-term and 2020 elections. This should involve a collaborative, end-to-end evaluation of the security of election systems including federal, state, and local officials and election vendors; the development of a strong, coherent deterrence strategy to prevent an adversary from considering interfering; punitive options should that interference occur; and contingency plans for ensuring resiliency and bolstering public confidence in elections.
- As legislators, we welcome non-partisan legislative initiatives to build resilience of electoral systems and to counter foreign interference and urge that they be debated and voted on.
- Governments and legislatures on both sides of the Atlantic should allocate funds to counter election interference and disinformation. This should include empowering civil society groups to monitor and report foreign and malicious interference in elections.
- We encourage technology companies to cooperate with governments and civil society organizations to develop tools and procedures to fight interference, dramatically increase transparency, promote accountability, reduce vulnerabilities on social media platforms, including in relation to online political advertising, and raise public awareness about ways messages and news can be manipulated.
- We support greater and sustained Transatlantic cooperation, including between national governments, NATO, and the European Union, to share information on risks, vulnerabilities, and best practices to counter interference. Coordination between parliamentarians and open, regular dialogue with social media, technology companies, and civil society can strengthen these efforts.
- If Kremlin interference in upcoming elections continues, governments on both sides of the Atlantic should impose heavy costs, including sanctions, preferably coordinated between the US and Europe.

Convened by the Atlantic Council and Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity

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