

On behalf of **the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council**,
please accept our invitation to take part in the high-level conference on fighting disinformation, organised
with the support of the European Security and Defence College.

The conference will examine the disinformation phenomenon from a new angle:

“Greater resilience to ensure free and fair elections”

The event will take place in

Brussels in the Council press room JL, on 1 April 2019.

Please find enclosed the relevant draft conference program and concept.

Your experience and professional background would bring a high added-value to the ongoing debate on the
above-mentioned topic, in our endeavours to bring across one of the core messages of the Romanian
Presidency of the EU Council : the need to protect the democratic electoral processes, as well as to better
equip Europe in responding to the expectations of its citizens.

We look forward to a fruitful cooperation under the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council.

The event will be in English.

Registration is required for accreditation at the following link:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/events/2019-04-ro-presidence-conference/>

If you already have institutions badge or accreditation: RSVP by replying to this e-mail until 25 March.



GREATER RESILIENCE TO ENSURE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

1 APRIL 2019, PRESS ROOM - JLS



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The Presidency identified the fight against disinformation as one of its top priorities. In particular, it considered coordinated and timely actions essential in order to prevent the spread of deliberate and systematic disinformation campaigns, addressing both their internal and external dimension. In this respect, in line with the Commission's 'Securing Free and Fair European Elections' package released in September 2018, as well as with the publication of the Joint Action Plan against Disinformation by the Commission and the High Representative in December 2018, the Romanian Presidency has been determined to provide a comprehensive and decisive answer to the many challenges faced by the democratic process in 2019. The topic has been discussed at the level of the ministers in multiple formats of the Council.

The Council approved recently new rules to prevent the misuse by European political parties or foundations of personal data in EP elections. They will allow for financial sanctions to be imposed on European political parties and foundations that deliberately influence, or attempt to influence, the outcome of EP elections by taking advantage of breaches of data protection rules.

This half a day conference is a follow up of the Bucharest event of 28 February/ 1 March 2018 co-organised together with the EU Institute for Security Studies: "Hybrid Threats through Consolidated Resilience and Enhanced StratCom". While the Bucharest event reflected more on the complex interplay between hybrid threats, societal resilience and stratcom, with particular focus on the external dimension, the Brussels debate will focus in greater depth on building domestic resilience and overcoming vulnerabilities to disinformation and fake news, electoral interference and the impact of new technologies on societies – via:

- ✓ Regulation / self-regulation: Elections package; Code of Practice
- ✓ Media and digital literacy
- ✓ Developing positive narratives
- ✓ Developing effective early warning mechanisms and analysis (fact-checking) while preserving media freedom.

The conference is organized with the support of the European Security and Defence College, on the initiative of Professor Alina Bargaoanu, member of the High Level Group on fake news and online disinformation as convened by Commissioner for digital economy Mariya Gabriel. The debate is opened to media, civil society, experts, member states delegates, EU institutions and will be focusing on exchanging good practices and discussing the state of play of measures taken to protect European elections.