



Brussels, 9 September 2024

**EEAS COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024  
REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**1.) Background**

In the preparation for the 2024 elections, the European Parliament<sup>1</sup> and the European Commission<sup>2</sup> stressed the importance of effective protection of the elections against foreign interference and called for a stronger outreach towards European citizens living in third countries.

In its Resolution on the 2024 European elections, adopted on 12 December 2023, the European Parliament focused also on the external dimension of the elections and highlighted “*the need for more robust safeguards and measures against disinformation and internal and external interference in the electoral process*”.

The Parliament invited “*the Member States to work hand in hand with the European Parliament and the European External Action Service to inform citizens of the Union in third countries about the European elections and to facilitate their participation in these elections;*”.

It called “*on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to encourage the foreign ministers of the Member States to exchange best practices for information campaigns and to facilitate arrangements for voting from abroad, (...).*”

**2.) Objectives set by the HRVP**

Responding to the call of the European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCD) of October 2023, endorsed by the Parliament’s Plenary in December 2023, High Representative Borrell decided to mobilise the European External Action Service and its 145 EU Delegations to support the EP communication campaign on the European elections 2024.

This support included:

- Taking active part in communication activities and campaigns to promote the European elections worldwide concerning EU citizens living abroad and showing the progress of the EU’s political integration
- Protecting integrity of the elections from hybrid threats, namely foreign information manipulation and interference

In implementing these objectives the EEAS followed a ‘Team Europe’ approach, working closely with the European Parliament and the European Commission, while at the same time steering the coordination and involvement of the communication departments of the 27 EU Member States in its campaign outside the EU.

---

<sup>1</sup> Resolution on the European Elections 2024(2023/2016(INI))

<sup>2</sup> European Commission Communication on “Defending European democracy” (COM/2023/630 final)

### 3.) **Operational action**

#### *a) Reinforced inter-institutional cooperation*

The EEAS actively participated in all relevant inter-institutional processes on communication and on the protection of the European elections and pro-actively informed the other EU institutions on its European elections campaign outside the EU.

*Concrete actions/impact:*

- Participation in the **inter-institutional Working Group on the European elections 2024** led by the European Commission DG COM
- Participation in the **Council-led Working Party on Information** (Communication)
- Close coordination with European Commission **DG JUST-led European Cooperation Network on Elections**
- **Working Group** between the European Parliament, the European Commission and the EEAS **on the integrity of the electoral process and on fighting FIMI** related to the European elections 2024
- Information on EEAS activities on the European elections at the **inter-institutional meeting of Directors of Communication** organised by the European Committee of the Regions

#### *b) EEAS Working Group on European elections*

In December 2023, the EEAS Working Group on European Elections 2024 was established. The group brought together Directors of all communication departments of the Foreign Affairs Ministries of the 27 EU Member States as well as representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the EEAS.

The group met six times and coordinated actions in order to enhance the outreach to European citizens living in third countries and to mobilise them for the European elections.

*Concrete actions/impact:*

- Survey to establish an approximate **number of EU citizens living outside the European Union (25-30 million)**
- Verification of national voting conditions and registration deadlines for EU citizens living outside the EU and continuous contributions to **updates of the European Parliament's elections website** (<https://elections.europa.eu>)
- Joint campaign slogan adapting the European Parliament slogan: **"European elections: use your vote! Because Europe is all of us, wherever we live!"**
- **Joint message of all communication directors to all EU Delegations and Member State embassies/consulates in the world** asking them to become active in the mobilisation of EU citizens for the European elections
- **Sharing of best practices and campaign material** among EU institutions and EU Member States.

#### *c) Communication via EU Delegations and cooperation with European Parliament Local Offices (EPLO) and Member States' embassies and consulates on the ground*

The EEAS has put into place a “Team Europe” approach which helped to use synergies of EU institutions and national Ministries in creating information material and in using various communication channels to reach out to EU citizens living in third countries.

*Concrete actions/impact:*

- The **European elections 2024** were a top communication priority for all EU Delegations. This included close cooperation with EEAS headquarters on messaging and timing as well as intense cooperation with Member States’ embassies/consulates in third countries
- **Exchange of views between EU Ambassadors and EP First Vice-President Othmar Karas** during the annual EU Ambassadors’ Conference 2023
- Organisation of **common videoconferences** and sharing of campaign material between **EU Delegations, EPLOs, and Ministries of Foreign Affairs** for the 10 EU nationalities most represented outside the EU and eligible to vote in the European elections (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden)
- Use of the regular **Heads of Mission meetings** bringing together EU Delegations and EU Member States Ambassadors in a third country to mobilise for the EU elections and for designing common actions
- **Joint events** of EU Delegations and EU Member States’ embassies/consulates on the European elections and in particular on the occasion of the **9 May 2024** celebrations
- **Mutual use of social media** channels to disseminate “Go to vote” campaign videos.

*d) Webpages and social media campaign*

The EEAS worked hand in hand with the European Parliament, the European Commission and EU Member States to coordinate its European elections 2024 social media campaign as regards narratives and outreach.

*Concrete actions/impact:*

- Creation of an **EEAS European elections 2024 website** as well as a dedicated **European elections 2024 page on every EU Delegation website** bringing together information, links and contacts.
- The EEAS launched a **worldwide joint social media initiative of EU Delegations and EU Member States embassies/consulates** on the European elections using the social media products of the European Parliament and **additional 26 campaign videos**.

These videos - whose narratives were coordinated with the European Commission and the European Parliament - featured the HRVP, the EP President, EU Member States’ Foreign Ministers and EP Chairs of Interparliamentary Delegations. They focused on the “Go to vote” campaign and achievements of the European Union in the area of foreign policy relevant for citizens living outside the European Union.

- The **EEAS and EU delegations posted more than 2000 posts** on the European elections which we estimate have reached **more than 11 million recipients**. We have also had high levels of **engagement with over 600,000 views**, reactions and comments across channels.
- As regards the EU Member States, all of them have engaged in communication campaigns to inform citizens about their rights to vote. The EEAS has only approximate

and partial information on the number and outreach of these campaigns. Sometimes the campaign targeting EU citizens living outside the Member State did not distinguish between those citizens living inside or outside the EU.

As regards numbers, we can share the following ones. For example, the **Romanian social media campaign for citizens living outside the country reached more than 350.000 people**, the **Portuguese campaign reached more than 110.000 people** and the **German campaign “Europe. The best place on Earth”** aiming to encourage people to celebrate, improve and defend the achievements and principles Europe / the EU stand for, was launched during the European elections campaign period and **reached 1 Mio** people until June 2024.

*e) Identifying and responding to foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)*

Elections interference is not only taking place right before elections – it is a comprehensive, long-term process of interference, taking place before, during and after elections. EEAS preparation for the 2024 elections already started in 2019, building on lessons learned from previous European elections. Most of the activities addressing FIMI (e.g. Rapid Alert System, EUvsDisinfo campaigns, strengthening FIMI Toolbox, capacity building, FIMI Threats Report publication, ISAC) have been **taking place continuously** ever since.

The EU **FIMI Toolbox** provides different areas and instruments that together constitute a robust and comprehensive framework for tackling FIMI, including during elections. As put forth in the [Council Conclusions](#) on democratic resilience, the Toolbox contributes significantly to a comprehensive approach by ensuring coordinated responses and strengthening the overall resilience.

*Concrete actions/impact:*

The EEAS work in the context of the European elections rested on **four pillars**: increased **situational awareness**, increased **awareness raising and resilience building**, stronger **inter-institutional cooperation and preparedness** and increased **cooperation with EU Member States**.

Increasing **situational awareness**: the EEAS published its second annual report on [FIMI threats](#) in January, which also contains a dedicated section on FIMI activities during electoral processes. In April, together with the Spanish authorities the EEAS published a technical report on [Operation False Façade](#), presenting Russia’s FIMI Information Laundering Scheme. Closer to the elections, the EEAS has published a dedicated report on the [Doppelgänger](#) FIMI operations in the context of the European elections.

As part of the increased efforts to **raise awareness and build resilience**, the [EUvsDisinfo](#) website and social media continued to provide regular public reporting on elections interference by Russia and its proxies. For example with a dedicated [database](#), of FIMI cases, with more than 17,000 cases of pro-Kremlin disinformation, which also featured a specific section on the elections. Additionally, in a series of articles on EUvsDisinfo, the EEAS showed examples of key tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by the pro-Kremlin actors targeting the European Parliament elections. The EEAS published analytical articles on the Kremlin’s attempts to [go after leaders](#) with smear campaigns, [sow distrust and discontent](#), [flood the information space](#), [drag everyone down into the mud](#) with them and [dismiss the results and drive new wedges](#) after the elections.

For increased **capacity and resilience building**, the EEAS has developed trainings and workshops for diverse audiences. One of these is the Table Top Exercise “Elections in Euphoria”, a dynamic, scenario-based simulation designed for youth, in which participants take on a role of the activists from an NGO promoting elections integrity and run a pro-turnout campaign. This workshop was facilitated in collaboration with the European Parliament at the [European Youth Event](#) in Vilnius and with DG.COMM during the [European Youth Week](#).

A reinforced **cooperation and joint preparedness with the European Parliament and the Commission** on FIMI was put in place ahead of the elections, working on a tripartite cooperation format since summer 2023. The EEAS relied on daily trilateral cooperation between the three institutions, which involved close coordination between teams who worked on media monitoring and situational awareness, tracking and analysing FIMI incidents, strategic communications and awareness raising about FIMI and disinformation. During the election days, [excellent inter-institutional cooperation](#) between the EEAS, EP, and Commission services allowed for a continuously monitored information environment, shared information and systems in place in case of need for coordinated action against any larger scale interference attempts.

The EEAS also strengthened its **cooperation with EU Member States**, mostly via the Rapid Alert System (RAS) and, when relevant, also with other networks such as the European Cooperation Network for Elections (ECNE). The EEAS-managed RAS aims to increase joint situational awareness, sharing of information and best practices, and discuss effective responses to the FIMI threat between the EU and MS. A dedicated working group focusing on the European Parliament Elections 2024 was also set up in the RAS, to enhance informal and quick information sharing, in addition to regular calls.

Throughout the European elections period, the EEAS together with the EC and EP detected **no major information manipulation attempt capable of disrupting or posing a significant threat** to the elections in the days leading up to elections, the key voting days 6-9 June or the immediate post-elections phase. Nevertheless, as expected and prepared for, analysts observed an increase in information manipulation incidents during this period.

Disinformation actors and networks invest in long-term efforts to erode trust in institutions and democratic processes and distort the public debate. The EEAS will therefore continue to counter and prevent information manipulation, in close collaboration with the EU institutions, Member States, and partners, as well as the wider community of FIMI-defenders in the civil society, including the [FIMI-ISAC](#).

#### *f) Information of Foreign Affairs Council and Diplomatic Corps in Brussels*

To inform the diplomatic corps accredited with the European Union on the upcoming European elections and the work done for EU citizens living in third countries, the EEAS and the European Parliament organised an **information session for diplomats of third countries** which was held at the European Parliament on 13 May 2024.

Following the intense work between the EEAS and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States on the European elections 2024, HRVP Josep Borell informed the Ministers of the ongoing work at the **Foreign Affairs Council** on 25 May 2024 and thanked them for the excellent cooperation of their Ministries, embassies and consulates with the EEAS and the EU Delegations.

#### **4.) Conclusions and outlook**

The communication and outreach work done for the European elections 2024 has been an excellent opportunity for the European Union to further build on the “European identity” of the EU citizens living abroad. EU citizens are the best relays and multipliers for the EU’s image abroad. EU citizens living and working abroad are among those well aware of the EU’s benefit as a provider of stability, prosperity and social justice and respect of human rights.

The work with these Diasporas will now continue via the EU Delegations in partnership with EU Member States’ embassies and consulates. This would also benefit from a closer cooperation with the European Parliament with a view to increasing our joint commitment and outreach.

In third countries, the European Union is not always perceived as a political entity but sometimes as a purely economic organisation. The European elections are the most visible feature of democracy at European Union level and have been a good occasion to highlight the European Union as a political project. By organising citizens’ dialogues, events and exchange of views in the future, joined by delegations of Members of the European Parliament, we can keep informing about the legislative progress in Europe, share our experiences and get a better sense of how partners and EU citizens see the European Union in the world.

The EEAS is playing a central role in building a common understanding of FIMI with EU Member States. The EEAS has supported EU Member States and the European Parliament in the months before and during the European elections in monitoring FIMI threats and will continue to help reinforce their capacity to detect, analyse, mitigate and counter such threats. This monitoring and analysis activity is already ongoing in close coordination with the European Parliament and the European Commission.

---