



Brussels, 18 July 2022
(OR. en)

11429/22

HYBRID 81	DATAPROTECT 225
DISINFO 65	JAI 1049
CSDP/PSDC 482	CYBER 273
COPS 363	FREMP 159
POLMIL 179	JAIEX 80
IPCR 85	AUDIO 71
RELEX 1032	DIGIT 144
INST 278	INF 130
AG 92	COSI 203
PE 85	PROCIV 102

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 11173/22

Subject: Council conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council Conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 18 July 2022.

Council conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Recalls the relevant conclusions of the European Council¹ and the Council.² Recalls that Member States have expressed their determination in the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence to substantially enhance their resilience and ability to prevent, detect, mitigate and counter hybrid threats, cyberattacks and FIMI, also in support of partner countries. Recalls the need to create an EU Hybrid Toolbox that brings together different instruments to detect and respond to a broad range of hybrid threats and campaigns and, in this context, will develop a dedicated toolbox to address FIMI.³ Recalls the Council conclusions of 21 June 2022, which reiterated that the FIMI Toolbox will strengthen our ability to detect, analyse and respond to the threat, including by imposing costs on perpetrators.⁴
2. Underlines that FIMI is often used as part of broader hybrid campaigns and, among others, aims at misleading, deceiving and destabilizing our democratic societies, creating and exploiting cultural and societal frictions, as well as negatively affecting our ability to conduct foreign and security policy. Emphasises that the strategic and coordinated use of information manipulation and interference by Russia that preceded and accompanies the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine illustrates this multifaceted threat with its concrete impact on various internal and external policy areas. Most notably, we have seen the effects of FIMI, how it affects our CFSP/CSDP goals and impedes our objectives and interests, inter alia global food security. Reiterates that the European Union and Member States will step up their efforts to reach out to third countries in order to support Ukraine in agreed dimensions and to counter the false Russian narrative and manipulation of information⁵.

¹ In particular, the European Council conclusions of May 2022, December 2021, October 2021, June 2019.

² In particular, the Council conclusions on a Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns June 2022 (ST 10016/22), the conclusions on strengthening resilience and countering hybrid threats, including disinformation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (ST 13626/20), the conclusions on complementary efforts to enhance resilience and counter hybrid threats (ST 14972/19), and the conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 09/2021: Disinformation affecting the EU: tackled but not tamed (ST 10968/21).

³ Strategic Compass.

⁴ Council conclusions on a Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns June 2022 (ST 10016/22).

⁵ European Council conclusions on Ukraine, 30 May 2022.

Stresses that FIMI tactics, techniques and procedures also undermine trust in the media and risk to compromise the vital role of free public debate for democracy and a healthy functioning of civil society. Underlines that such behaviour can be observed in the activities of persistent as well as emerging foreign state and non-state actors trying to undermine democracies, distort civic discourse and weaken criticism.

3. Welcomes the ongoing efforts by the High Representative and the European Commission in the development of an EU FIMI Toolbox. It should put forward a more systematic use of the full range of available tools, such as situational awareness, among others through the Rapid Alert System, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, in particular its Hybrid Fusion Cell, resilience and capacity building, regulatory and diplomatic responses. These further include enhanced cooperation both within the EU and in support of partner countries, as well as in our Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations. Reiterates that the Framework for a coordinated response to hybrid campaigns, as outlined in the Council conclusions of 21 June 2022,⁶ should be also used to address FIMI. Notes that primary responsibility for countering FIMI, including in the context of broader hybrid campaigns, lies with Member States.

⁶ Council conclusions on a Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns June 2022 (ST 10016/22).

4. Invites the High Representative and the Commission, with the full involvement of Member States to elaborate tailored approaches to increase the EU's engagement at the multilateral level with and within the United Nations and other international and regional organisations, in line with the Strategic Compass, with respect to the EU institutional framework, and to work towards the development of international principles on disinformation and FIMI in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and with continued strong emphasis on promoting freedom of expression, independent media, and the protection and safety of journalists and human rights defenders. These efforts should take place, when and where appropriate, in cooperation with like-minded partners, civil society and the private sector, including online platforms, also taking into account the principles foreseen in the Digital Services Act and the revised Code of Practice on Disinformation.

5. Stresses the need to increase our resilience capacities and cooperation both within the EU as well as of our CSDP missions and operations and in support of partner countries; reiterates that, by 2024, all CSDP mission and operations will be fully equipped with capabilities and resources to deploy relevant instruments of the FIMI toolbox; emphasises the importance of enhancing cooperation with like-minded partners, such as NATO, the G7 as well as civil society and private sector and of increasing efforts within the UN framework.

6. Calls for a strengthened engagement of EU Delegations and the diplomatic network of Member States across the EU neighbourhood and beyond, in sharing insights on FIMI activities as well as responses to the threat, including through strategic communications. Welcomes the work done by the EEAS StratCom and its task forces in this respect.

Reiterates the call for the High Representative and the Commission to present options, in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, for well-defined measures that could be taken against FIMI actors when this is necessary to protect EU public order and security.⁷

⁷ Ibid.