



**MALTA EU 2017**  
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## Background Note Workshop 2

Inter-Parliamentary Conference for  
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## **Workshop 2: Fighting Propaganda and Information Warfare**

Recent conflicts have generated much debate about the use and effectiveness of hybrid warfare: a type of warfare widely understood to blend conventional and unconventional, regular and irregular, and information and cyber warfare. Information warfare or propaganda can take the form of sending contradictory messages, biased interpretations of historical events and attempts to destabilise political stability by way of tapping into certain political forces on a daily basis. Such a definition predicts that hybrid warfare is difficult to deter with conventional means especially since it is perceived as an approach whereby less resourceful and powerful actors have a chance to prevail against more powerful ones.

How can countries protect themselves from such methods? Deterrence is better than confrontation and investing in cyber security defences is mandatory in the twenty-first century. Political parties and major newspapers are now targets as much as government premises and officials. EU Member States need to strengthen their capacities to counter the misinformation and propaganda campaigns reaching people in the EU and its neighbours. The European values have to be given more visibility to combat this threat. EU institutions need to recognise that strategic communication and information warfare is not only an external EU issue but also an internal one.

A strategy of anti-EU propaganda and disinformation by third countries may take various forms and involve, in particular, traditional media, social networks, school programmes and political parties, both within and beyond the European Union. Strategic communication efforts should be considered as a priority and therefore the EU needs to put out its positive messages about its successes, values and principles with determination. In this regard the EU Action Plan on Strategic Communication calls for the endorsement and implementation of its recommendations urgently. Competent EU

institutions and authorities need to monitor the sources of financing of anti-European propaganda and emphasize that more funding is necessary to support freedom of the media in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries within the scope of EU democracy instruments.

It is essentially for the EU to continue to actively promote through its external actions the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, including the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, the right to access information and the independence of the media.