

APRIL 2025

EUROCOP SUBMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CONSULTATION PROCESS ON THE DEMOCRACY SHIELD

EuroCOP welcomes the European Commission's initiative to establish a **European Democracy Shield** as a strategic response to the growing threats to democratic systems and societal resilience across the European Union. Representing law enforcement professionals from across the EU and beyond, EuroCOP is uniquely positioned to witness first-hand the societal effects of **foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)**, disinformation, and other hybrid threats that destabilize communities, erode public trust and threaten the security and democratic integrity of the EU.

1. Ensuring Stability and Public Trust through Security Sector Involvement

Foreign information manipulation and disinformation campaigns are not only a matter of public discourse but a tangible threat to **public order and democratic stability**. Law enforcement agencies are often at the frontline in responding to the social unrest and polarisation these campaigns may provoke.

EuroCOP strongly supports the European Democracy Shield's emphasis on:

- Enhancing **media literacy** and public awareness,
- Enabling **fact-checking networks** across all EU languages, and
- Enforcing frameworks such as the **Digital Services Act (DSA)** and the **AI Act** to ensure accountability from digital platforms.

We also welcome the **establishment of a Special Committee of the European Parliament** dedicated to the Democracy Shield.

2. The Role of Law Enforcement in Resilient Democracies

The proposed Shield rightly calls for a **whole-of-society approach**. In this regard, **police officers must be formally recognised as strategic partners** in efforts to safeguard democracy. Police officers across Europe are not only enforcers of the law but guardians of democratic freedoms, often acting as a stabilising presence during elections, demonstrations and in times of public crisis.

We also draw attention to the recent **proposal for a Union Act** submitted under Rule 47(2) of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure, which recognises the high-risk nature of policing and other security roles. This initiative emphasizes the need for **uniform recognition and protection of these professions** to ensure democratic security across borders. In the context of the Democracy Shield, this recognition must include the vital contribution of the police in resisting disinformation-induced threats and ensuring social cohesion.

3. Strengthening the Framework: Recommendations

- **Cross-sector coordination:** Ensure that police services, especially cybercrime and intelligence units, are involved in strategic discussions and operational frameworks of the Shield.
- **Training and tools:** Provide EU-funded training to law enforcement personnel on detecting and responding to online disinformation campaigns that threaten public security.
- **Crisis communication support:** Establish protocols to support law enforcement in countering online narratives during crises, including real-time collaboration with verified fact-checkers and online platforms.
- **Protection of democratic spaces:** Enhance support for police forces during elections or public gatherings where disinformation may seek to incite violence or unrest.

4. Final Remarks

EuroCOP commends the Commission's intention to consolidate and enhance Europe's democratic resilience through a strategic, adaptable and proactive initiative. Democracy must be defended not only through regulation and education but also through robust **on-the-ground protection** provided by trusted institutions like law enforcement.

As the European Democracy Shield develops, EuroCOP stands ready to contribute expertise, foster cross-border cooperation and uphold the rule of law in defending the democratic values that form the foundation of the European Union.