



# 2025 Report on **EEAS Activities** to Counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)

European External Action Service (EEAS)

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### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Report on FIMI threats

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/uploads/2024/05/EEAS-TechnicalReport-False-Facade.pdf>

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> Report on FIMI threats

[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/3rd-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats-0\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/3rd-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats-0_en)

### 2024 Report on EEAS Activities to Counter FIMI

<https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025/documents/2024%20Report%20on%20EEAS%20Activities%20to%20Counter%20FIMI.pdf>

### The 4<sup>th</sup> Report on FIMI threats

[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026/documents/EEAS%204th%20Threat%20Report\\_web%20version\\_1.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026/documents/EEAS%204th%20Threat%20Report_web%20version_1.pdf)

**Disclaimer** This paper aims to illustrate, in a non-exhaustive manner, actions that the EEAS has pursued in order to tackle the threat of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), including disinformation. It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a complete list of all events and activities taken by the EEAS in 2025, but rather to provide key highlights and best practices in the response to FIMI. It is important to underline that, in its daily operations, the EEAS often conducts its activities in cooperation with partners within the EEAS structure, other EU Institutions, EU Member States, international partners, civil society and private sector. This report serves for informative purposes only.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the European External Action Service (EEAS) advanced the EU's capacity to counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), consolidating the EU's position as a global leader in this domain. Moving decisively from analysis to action, the EEAS operationalised a more integrated, proactive and results-oriented approach, strengthening the EU's ability to anticipate, expose and respond to increasingly complex and transnational FIMI threat environment. A key achievement was the establishment of the **FIMI Situational Awareness Hub**, an internal mechanism which seeks to translate insight on FIMI into action, by converting data analysis and open-source investigation into early warning capabilities and coordinated responses. This marked a structural shift from a focus on analysis towards operational readiness, enabling faster and more targeted action across the EU system and with partners.

The EEAS further reinforced its analytical capabilities through developing a **FIMI Exposure Matrix**, presented in third EEAS report on FIMI threats, setting a new benchmark for understanding and attributing complex FIMI networks. Combined with continuous monitoring and public exposure efforts, including through the **EUvsDisinfo platform** which in 2025 reached over 40 million users and by the end of the year had documented more than 19,500 cases, the EEAS continues to shape the global knowledge and understanding on FIMI and drive evidence-based responses.

Through its work, **the EEAS contributed to concrete impact** on the ground. In geopolitically tense contexts such as the Moldovan parliamentary elections, it deployed a comprehensive, whole-of-EU approach combining threat monitoring, public communication, capacity building and coordination with the European Commission, EU Member States and international partners.

Beyond the EU's neighbourhood, **the EEAS expanded the global footprint of its FIMI work**, supporting partners across Africa, Latin America, the Western Balkans, as well as in the Middle East and Asia. Through targeted trainings, strategic communication campaigns and support to local media ecosystems, the EEAS strengthened local resilience while positioning the EU as a trusted and capable security partner in the information domain.

At the multilateral level, the EEAS played a central role in operationalising the **G7 Rapid Response Mechanism Collective Response Framework**, enhanced cooperation with NATO, and embedded FIMI as a security priority in Security and Defence Partnerships with key partners.

The EEAS also contributed to strengthening the EU's policy and regulatory toolbox, including through the development of the European **Democracy Shield** and the **expansion of sanctions** targeting FIMI actors and infrastructure.

## 1\_STRENGTHENING SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

**Situational awareness** continues to be a core element of the EU's toolbox to counter FIMI: sound analysis is crucial in making the decisions that lead to proactive responses, and to further develop the EU's capacity to anticipate FIMI threats that increasingly challenge its security and information integrity. With the continued support of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, the EEAS has kept developing its tracking, analysis and exposure capacity and methodology, while sharing and cooperating with EU Member States and like-minded partners.

As a result, the **FIMI Situational Awareness Hub** was launched. The Hub is an action-oriented internal mechanism that helps the EEAS understand the FIMI threat better by aggregating internal and external insights and activating protocols for action. This entity comes with a new catalogue of analytical products and tailored responses.

In March 2025, the EEAS also held its **third annual flagship conference**, entitled "United in Response", bringing together once again major stakeholders from the EU institutions, the civil society and private sector, and international partners. Participants debated and brainstormed over EU internal defence against FIMI and took stock of the fight against FIMI in priority regions among other things. HR/VP Kaja Kallas used this opportunity to unveil the third **EEAS Report on FIMI Threats**<sup>i</sup> which has become a landmark work for FIMI defenders across all sectors of society. The 2025 report notably presented the **FIMI Exposure Matrix**, an analytical tool built on years of analysis to reveal the complexity of the architecture behind FIMI operations, with practical applications for the community of FIMI defenders. With that tool, the EEAS proposed a model that helps connect and attribute channels to the FIMI state-outlet apparatus. The report also drew from key events and elections, including the 2024 EU parliamentary elections, to further hone its understanding of the threat actors behind FIMI, and empower practitioners with tools to counter FIMI threats.

The EEAS, together with the French Service for Vigilance and Protection against Foreign Digital Interference (VIGINUM) and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, also published a **joint technical report**<sup>ii</sup> exposing the FIMI activities of the African Initiative, a Russian news agency that operates on the African continent. The EEAS also contributed to European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA)'s Threat Landscape 2025 report,<sup>iii</sup> ensuring the inclusion of FIMI as a key threat to the EU and its institutions, particularly when conducted by Russia-aligned Information Manipulation Sets.

Cooperation on situational awareness also brought **improvement on common terminology** to enable clearer



attribution thresholds and enhance the effectiveness of countermeasures, with an agreement between EEAS and VIGINUM to adopt the Information Manipulation Set analytical framework. The EEAS, together with Poland, Romania and The Netherlands, and through intensive efforts from G7 partners and Moldovan authorities, monitored FIMI activities around Moldovan elections.

The **FIMI-ISAC**, set up in 2024 to unite the civil society defender community to strengthen collaboration against information manipulation, has entered a new phase thanks to the support of EEAS East Stratcom Task Force (ESTF) and is evolving towards a mature, autonomous coordination mechanism for FIMI defenders from the civil society.

### 2025 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN MOLDOVA

On 28 September 2025, Moldova's Parliamentary elections took place less than a year after the presidential election and EU accession referendum, which had been heavily targeted by Russian information manipulation and interference – notably via vote buying, cyber-attacks and FIMI operations (the EEAS published its analysis of these events in the third EEAS Report on FIMI Threats)<sup>iv</sup>.

i <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2025/EEAS-3nd-ThreatReport-March-2025-05-Digital-HD.pdf>

ii [https://euvsdisinfo.eu/uploads/2025/06/VIGINUM\\_FCDO\\_EEAS\\_Technical\\_Report\\_African\\_Initiative.pdf](https://euvsdisinfo.eu/uploads/2025/06/VIGINUM_FCDO_EEAS_Technical_Report_African_Initiative.pdf)

iii [https://www.enisa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-11/ENISA\\_Threat\\_Landscape\\_2025\\_0.pdf](https://www.enisa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-11/ENISA_Threat_Landscape_2025_0.pdf)

iv <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2025/EEAS-3nd-ThreatReport-March-2025-05-Digital-HD.pdf>

The screenshot shows the top portion of a website article. At the top left is the 'EU vs DiSiNFO' logo. In the top right corner, there are search and menu icons. The main heading is 'MOLDOVA' in orange, followed by the title 'Kremlin disinfo surge targets Moldova ahead of elections' in large black font. Below the title is the byline 'By EUvsDisinfo' and the date 'September 26, 2025'. A row of social media sharing icons (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Print, and PDF) is displayed below the date. The main image of the article shows a nesting doll of a woman in a white dress, with two smaller nesting dolls in front of her, set against a background of the Moldovan flag and a dark, starry space.

FIMI observers, including the EEAS, anticipated that the 2025 Moldovan parliamentary elections would be the focus of similar FIMI operations with the aim to attack the EU and the European integration process of Moldova.

This is why the EEAS, in close coordination with the European Commission, took a comprehensive approach to respond to FIMI activities and strengthen societal resilience.

More specifically, the EEAS work rested on the pillars laid down in the FIMI Toolbox:

- EUvsDisinfo regularly collected examples of disinformation cases in its data base and publicly reported about election interference by Russia and its proxies to raise awareness. In a series of articles on the website, the EEAS showed examples of key tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) employed by the pro-Kremlin actors, targeting the Moldovan Parliamentary elections and the EU. Analytical articles were published on the Kremlin's attempts to advance with the use of FIMI operations<sup>v</sup>, employ different FIMI tactics<sup>vi</sup>, and disinform the Moldovan population

v <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/in-russias-fimi-laboratory-test-case-moldova/>

vi <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/kremlin-disinfo-surge-targets-moldova-ahead-of-elections/>

about the EU<sup>vii</sup>. Cooperation with EU Delegations was essential, as they contributed to the information environment monitoring and directly addressed serious disinformation cases, such as debunking the Russian foreign intelligence service's attempt to portray the EU as an occupying force and preparing ground for post-election confrontation. One of the keys to this success was the increased effort in understanding the local information space and audiences.

- In complement, the EEAS actively strengthened Moldova's capacity to tackle FIMI. Over the past two years, the EU provided numerous trainings for representatives of national institutions involved in communication and countering FIMI, but also for independent media communities and civil society organisations. Such effort included an experience-sharing roundtable that brought together Eastern European and Western Balkans media and civil society representatives to discuss challenges and opportunities related to the communication and FIMI campaigns related to EU integration. The EEAS also supported the European Union Partnership Mission in Moldova (EUPM) in analysing and addressing FIMI, as called for by the Strategic Compass, and provided relevant analytical support, including a media and FIMI analysis tool.

The EEAS, in very close cooperation with the Directorate General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), has enhanced its strategic communication efforts on ongoing activities and partnerships. The main objective was to raise the awareness about EU support and its benefits among the target audiences. The joint work of EEAS, the EU Delegations and DG ENEST contributed significantly to streamlining the flow of strategic information, ensuring a joint understanding of the threats, and to aligning communication priorities and actions. This approach established a direct link between the FIMI threat assessment and analysis on one hand, and public communication activities and campaigns on the other.

The EEAS East Stratcom Task Force continues to monitor FIMI operations in and about Ukraine. In 2025, as a response, it carried out several communication campaigns, aiming at raising awareness of Ukraine cause and globally exposing Russian disinformation. In addition, trips to Ukraine of two journalists' groups from Sub-Saharan Africa and Lusophone countries were organised to facilitate the first-hand exposure to war realities and enable the reporting for audiences back home.

In preparation for upcoming Parliamentary elections in Armenia and based on lesson learned from Parliamentary elections in Moldova, the team set up FIMI monitoring to enhance the EU's situational awareness and understanding of the information space in the country in order to prepare for potential FIMI operations.

vii <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/the-summit-on-a-disinformation-mountain/>

In addition, the East Stratcom Task Force developed and implemented several capacity building activities, such as a regional Media forum in Astana (Kazakhstan), that aim to increase the situational awareness on Russian FIMI and challenges that journalists face.

The Western Balkans Task Force continued to monitor the information environment and assess FIMI threats across the region, focusing on the main threat actors and anti-EU narratives targeting the Enlargement process. It supported studies in Albania and Kosovo mapping actors and narratives that attack EU values and democratic processes, and shared the findings, alongside emerging regional trends, with EEAS services, EU delegations in the region and other partners and EU institutions. The annual EU-Western Balkans Media Literacy Conference, held in Skopje in November 2025, again brought attention to the pressures facing fact-checkers and media organisations in the region.

The EEAS Sub-Saharan Africa Task Force **expanded its FIMI monitoring and analysis to sixteen countries and regions across the African continent**, as well as information manipulation patterns around **key events and crises** such as the EU - African Union Summit in November 2025 and the coup d'état in Madagascar. These analyses were shared and discussed with relevant services within the EEAS Headquarters, EU Delegations and EU Member States, thereby strengthening a collective understanding of FIMI trends and challenges in Africa. The Task Force also carried out baseline analyses and actor mappings of new countries of engagement such as Nigeria and Kenya to enhance its understanding of local information manipulation dynamics and inform responses in the region. The **first Africa FIMI Conference** took place in March 2025 and brought together the African and European FIMI defender communities to take stock of the latest trends in the FIMI landscape, exchange on respective strands of work and learn from each other's experience on responses implemented by local and European actors.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the EU Delegation to Argentina organised an international conference on FIMI and disinformation, with the participation of Canada, France, Poland, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine. The event involved journalists, academics, representatives from technology companies like Google and Microsoft, fact-checking organisations, diplomats, civil society leaders, and students – allowing the whole community of FIMI defenders to share expertise and lessons learnt.

The EEAS Task Force South continued its **FIMI monitoring and analysis across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region.

## 2\_BUILDING RESILIENCE WITHIN THE EU, THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND BEYOND

The EEAS continues to see **resilience building** as one of the most effective lines of defence against FIMI and invested in empowering civil society, supporting independent media and running capacity building projects.

Throughout 2025, the EEAS extended its support to strengthen resilience against FIMI across all 21 military and civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, with the aim of **empowering CSDP personnel to proactively detect and deter FIMI threats**. The EEAS focused its efforts on enhancing CSDP personnel's capabilities by developing an **online training programme** specifically tailored to the operational context of CSDP missions and operations. In parallel, the EEAS developed **written guidance** to streamline processes between the headquarters and missions and operations in the field, particularly regarding coordinated responses to FIMI incidents. Lessons learned and the way forward were also discussed with CSDP personnel during a seminar organised in spring 2025.

The EEAS also reinforced the analytical capabilities of the EU Member States through the **Rapid Alert System (RAS)**, by organising dedicated in-person workshops and analytical events. These activities connected RAS analysts with external initiatives and supported the development of standardised and interoperable methodologies. Notably, an **EEAS-NATO joint event** represented the largest gathering of government-based FIMI analysts to date, providing a key forum to advance interoperability discussions.



In addition, the EEAS organised an advanced training on FIMI analysis in cooperation with the **European Security and Defence College** for RAS analysts and analysts deployed in CSDP missions and operations and sent internal experts to Ukraine to strengthen intergovernmental coordination and advance work on common standards and joint actions.

i [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/59644\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/59644_en)



The EEAS Western Balkans Task Force and DG ENEST jointly organised another **TAIEX Workshop on FIMI** in February 2025 for a **peer-to-peer exchange between Albanian civil servants and EU experts** in the framework of the ad hoc Albanian parliamentary committee looking into all forms of interference in democratic processes. The workshop aimed to identify best practices for the Albanian Parliament to approach possible scenarios in the future. This resulted in the adoption of the first-ever National Strategy on FIMI by the Parliament in July 2025.

### SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

In 2025, the EEAS Sub-Saharan Africa Task Force and East StratCom Task Force, in cooperation with several EU Member States and Ukraine, facilitated trips to Ukraine for journalists from Africa (Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia) and Brazil. The visits provided the journalists with a unique opportunity to report about Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine by relying on first-hand evidence gathering and local testimonies. Such effort contributed to countering FIMI activities in these countries that aimed distort information on Russia's war of aggression and its consequences.



Engagement with African journalists and media professionals expanded with four events in Brussels, **two visits in Ukraine and one press trip in Angola for the EU-African Union summit** to increase their knowledge about EU policy-making, with a specific focus on topics of interest to African audiences (e.g. migration, peace and security) and on FIMI dynamics in Europe and Africa.

The EEAS Sub-Saharan Africa Task Force supported EU Delegations' initiatives to counter FIMI through fact-checking trainings and workshops for journalists in Burundi,

Rwanda and Nigeria, including members of the Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Nigeria, as well as the "Above the Noise" campaign targeting youth in Benin, Chad, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa, alongside additional trainings for civil society, media professionals, government officials and Team Europe. This engagement strengthened local resilience and enhanced the EU's visibility as a leading actor in the fight against FIMI in Africa. Throughout the year, the EEAS also worked with European Commission services, notably the **European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI)**, and EU Delegations to design and implement flagship projects supporting local actors and promoting information integrity, enabling the launch of initiatives testing innovative approaches to counter disinformation, strengthening the African media sector, and improving online moderation and platform governance. In parallel, the EEAS contributed to high-level events, including World Press Freedom Day in Brussels, the UNESCO Regional Conference on Information Integrity in West Africa and the Sahel, the Africa Facts Summit, the Media and Development Conference in Abuja, the African STRATCOM seminar in Romania and the Casa Africa training programme in Spain, reinforcing the EU's leading and supportive role for African actors countering FIMI.

The EEAS Task Force South continued to engage with the counter-FIMI community in the MENA region to exchange on observations, best practices, and methodologies, including through the **first MENA FIMI Roundtable**. The event brought together 26 prominent members of the civil society from 13 countries in the MENA region, among them activists, researchers, developers and educators working on information integrity in their respective countries. Together they identified common challenges and new ways of cooperation in mapping and tackling this crucial threat. The EEAS also delivered capacity-building trainings on FIMI to relevant partners from the region and journalists from Israel and Palestine.

In **Asia**, the EEAS delivered a number of capacity trainings for EU partners across government, the civil society, and Team Europe (comprising EU Delegations and EU Member State embassies), including the Philippines and Indonesia. These trainings combined analytical upskilling and response framework workshops, and in many cases brought together defender communities to help foster a whole-of-society approach.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the EEAS launched pilot trainings in Mexico and Colombia to share with local FIMI defenders, journalists and EU Member States the FIMI toolkit and OSINT investigation techniques.



The EEAS also pursued the **Connecting Media Communities project**, a gathering for media professionals from the EU Neighbourhood, Africa and Asia, during which participants engaged in several workshops spanning from constructive journalism and the usage of artificial intelligence in newsrooms to addressing FIMI in gaming.

The **third Media Forum**, organised jointly by the EU Delegation in Kazakhstan in cooperation with the EEAS East Stratcom Task Force, took place in Astana, Kazakhstan. It brought together a diverse group of 120 journalists, fact-checkers, researchers, and media professionals from all the region of Central Asia to discuss the role of artificial intelligence, FIMI and online personal and professional safety of journalists.

The EEAS also launched a **communication campaign in Mexico, Brazil and South Africa**. It aimed to reduce the space for FIMI activities related to Ukraine in countries further from the conflict zone, showcase the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and keep the political and public spotlight on Ukraine and Ukrainians. Through stories, testimonials and interviews of Ukrainian protagonists, the campaign achieved over 140 million impressions and engaged more than 450K people.

Furthermore, EU Delegations in Latin America developed bilateral initiatives to support media literacy, enhance journalists' capacity to detect and tackle FIMI and disinformation (Seminars on Investigative Journalism – Peru and Colombia), and promote partnerships with like-minded partners. The European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) provided key support to the region through the implementation of two relevant regional actions: promoting reliable information and tackling disinformation in Latin America (Chile, Mexico and Uruguay) and supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy (ADD) in fostering independent and pluralistic media, access to information and the fight against disinformation in Panama, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Ecuador.



## 3\_EXTERNAL ACTION AND DIPLOMACY

FIMI continues to be **increasingly transversal and transnational**, requiring comprehensive policy responses. One of the key advancements in 2025 was the **EU Democracy Shield** developed in collaboration with the European Commission, whose one of the external dimensions aims at protecting the integrity of the information environment.

At the same time, the EU's global partners offer invaluable perspectives on regional threat environments, emerging threat actors, cultural nuances, and operational expertise, all of which can strengthen the EU's collective situational awareness and response capabilities. Given the asymmetric nature of FIMI, it is imperative that we enhance information-sharing with these partners, build mutual capacities, and foster coordinated action. This is why the EEAS pursued its engagement with like-minded governments on countering FIMI in 2025, further enshrined by the signing of **Security and Defence Partnerships with the UK and Canada** – with FIMI as one of its explicit areas of engagement.

The **G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM)** operationalised its Collective Response Framework, the development of which was led by the EEAS. The G7 RRM issued a collective statement on Russia's ongoing covert FIMI activity in January,<sup>i</sup> another one on Hong Kong's arrest warrants in August<sup>ii</sup> and finally one on Iranian transnational repression efforts and other malign activities in September.<sup>iii</sup> More so, to support Moldova ahead of their parliamentary elections, the G7 RRM monitored FIMI targeting the crucial event.

The EU also expanded its sanctions under the "Russia destabilising activities" regime to raise costs and add friction to Russian FIMI efforts. **New listings** targeted key FIMI operatives, media fronts and technical enablers across Europe, Africa and occupied Ukrainian territories. The **scope of the regime was expanded** beyond individual designations, to include assets – such as digital and communications infrastructure – that facilitate Russia's destabilising activities. More so, the power to **suspend broadcasting licences of Russian state-controlled outlets**, now allows the EU to adopt a more systemic, network-disrupting approach. With regards to the number of designations under the Ukraine territorial integrity regime, there were 13 new listings related to FIMI and war propaganda.

The EEAS continued to be an active member of **Ukraine Communications Group (UCG)** – a multilateral initiative to synchronise Ukraine-related strategic communications towards priority countries in South America and Africa.

It also pursued its exchanges of in-depth analysis and real-time insights with NATO.

<sup>i</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g7-rapid-response-mechanism-rrm-statement-russian-influence-campaign\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g7-rapid-response-mechanism-rrm-statement-russian-influence-campaign_en)

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/hong-kong/g7-rapid-response-mechanism-rrm-statement-hong-kong-arrest-warrants\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/hong-kong/g7-rapid-response-mechanism-rrm-statement-hong-kong-arrest-warrants_en)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/iran/news/article/g7-rapid-response-mechanism-rrm-statement-on-iranian-transnational-repression>

## 4\_ANALYSIS OF THE THREAT LANDSCAPE IN 2025

### RUSSIA AS A FIMI ACTOR

In 2025, Russia's FIMI efforts were highly focused on undermining European unity and destabilising countries within the EU's neighbourhood. State-controlled media, proxy networks, and deepfake technology were used to amplify anti-Western narratives and spread disinformation at an unprecedented scale. **FIMI operations targeted elections in Europe**, aiming to weaken public trust in democratic processes and sow division, particularly in countries like Romania, Germany, and Moldova. The well-known Russian FIMI Information Manipulation Sets (Matryoshka, Undercut, Storm 1516 and Doppelganger) played an unprecedented role in interfering in the **Moldovan elections**, after which these networks already shifted their attention to the next target, **Armenia**.

Russia also portrayed the EU as corrupt and elite-driven, with accusations that it was prolonging the war in Ukraine for financial and political gain. Russian FIMI activity sought to exploit tensions related to cost of living, migration, and political instability, while Russian state actors like the **Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR)** escalated efforts to launder false claims through official channels. Disinformation campaigns sought to portray Ukraine as a corrupt, Nazi-led state and depicted its fight for independence as illegitimate. As **AI and generative tools** advanced, Russia's FIMI campaigns expanded beyond traditional media, influencing a broader range of platforms, including social networks like Telegram, which allowed disinformation to spread more freely within the EU.

### CHINA AS A FIMI ACTOR

Throughout 2025, **China** continued its multifaceted FIMI activities, deploying a broad range of tactics spanning from the spreading of **conspiracy narratives** and **expanding its global FIMI infrastructure** to clearly illegitimate operations such as **intimidation** and **harassment of critical voices** with the aim of **suppressing information** even outside of its borders. Different tactics are often used in combination and can be connected to **other forms of interference**, such as economic coercion, lawfare, and cyber-attacks.

The most common narratives promoted by China in 2025 remained largely similar to those observed in 2024. Chinese efforts to project a positive image abroad intensified, aiming to position China as a force for peace, a reliable and consistent diplomatic and trading partner. **These narratives were often coupled with criticism of "the West"**—particularly the US— as unreliable and hypocritical. The narrative portraying EU foreign policy as subservient to the US (e.g. on Gaza, Ukraine) remained, but this year also included criticism of the HR/VP Kaja Kallas as hawkish on China, as well as Russia, Iran, and DPRK. The change of US trade policy was used to deploy narratives

calling for closer cooperation between the EU and China in setting up a new multilateral order. This narrative was particularly prominent around the EU-China Leaders' Summit in July. The so-called big four topics (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet) featured heavily, as did the situation in the South China Sea. The ecosystem continued presenting the war in Ukraine and Ukraine's accession to the EU as a source of division.

As noted in the previous years, **Transnational Information Suppression (TIS)** remained a key tool for Chinese FIMI. TIS operates by silencing critical voices and filling the information space with content favourable to the threat actor and aligned with its objectives by targeting entities such as businesses, civil society, universities and even governments, but also (diaspora) individuals and their families. TIS straddles the policy areas between FIMI, human rights, and broader non-traditional security threats. It is often overlooked and difficult to track as it is based on self-censorship through threats and incentives. In 2025, **the EEAS worked on developing a better understanding of TIS** to help inform the EU's future responses to this understudied aspect of FIMI.

**China's FIMI activities operated alongside other threat actors, including Russia.** While there were several reports about the extent of **convergence and mutual learning between the Russian and Chinese ecosystems**, the cross-pollination between the two seemed to remain largely **opportunistic**. A number of Chinese outlets provided a platform for Russian voices in particular in the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit and the Victory Day commemorations.

### CSDP MISSIONS

In 2025, CSDP missions and operations continued to be the target of aggressive FIMI campaigns. These missions and operations remained particularly vulnerable to FIMI attacks, as they support partners under the EU's flag, very often at the crossroads of competing geopolitical influences. **In Sub-Saharan Africa**, FIMI incidents largely sought to undermine the reputation of EU deployments and hinder the implementation of their mandates, often through narratives carrying neo-colonial undertones. In the **Eastern Partnership region**, Russian disinformation narrative focused on the EU support to Ukraine, elections in Moldova, and the forthcoming elections in Armenia, misleading local audience on the role of CSDP missions and operations. In 2025, FIMI threats also reached the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region**, where EU operations were accused of inefficiency. Tactics ranged from creation of fake accounts, coordinated messages on social media to flooding information environment by posting across different platforms.

## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

In the **Eastern Partnership countries**, FIMI operations mainly targeted EU candidate countries Moldova and **Ukraine** to support and justify Russia's war efforts as well as undermine Ukraine's fight for its sovereignty and independence. Deceitful claims included the following: "Ukraine does not want peace" and is "an EU/UK puppet". Due to EU aspirations for **Moldova** and Ukraine, FIMI operations intensified into amplifying disinformation messages, claiming that "EU accession leads to loss of sovereignty", "EU membership leads to hardship" and that "EU is corrupt and morally decadent". Later in 2025, **Armenia** became the focus of FIMI operations trying to undermine the peace process with Azerbaijan and the intensifying cooperation between the EU and Armenia. **Diminishing the EU's reputation** in the region is a long standing "modus operandi" of Russian information manipulation operations.

In **Sub-Saharan Africa**, information manipulation by foreign and domestic actors continued to expand and intensify throughout the year, taking advantage of security crises (Sahel, Great Lakes, Central African Republic, Benin), electoral processes and contested governance (Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Central African Republic, Tanzania, Cameroon), coups d'état (Guinea Bissau, Madagascar) as well as EU partnerships and programmes (European Peace Facility deliveries, Security Cooperation, Migration agreements, Fishery agreements, Just Energy Transition, etc.) and global event and crises (war of aggression against Ukraine). FIMI-related dynamics were marked by **two key dominant trends across the continent this year**. The first one relates to the Reparations agenda (stemming from the African Union's year of "Justice for Africans & People of African Descent through Reparations") that saw coordinated campaigns conducted and amplified by foreign and domestic

actors to blame former colonial powers and demand financial reparations, including by the EU. The second trend consisted in the active promotion of military ruling beyond Sahelian borders (Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa among others). Foreign and domestic actors launched coordinated campaigns, including through AI generated content and networks of Youtube and paid influencers, to glorify Burkina Faso leader Ibrahim Traoré, to promote the need for military ruling in Africa and to criticize security partnerships with Western actors. Overall, the interactions and coordination between foreign and domestic actors increased, including through the expansion of the "Pravda network" in Africa, through offline engagement with African media actors, in the form of trainings (RT Academy, Sputnik pro, as well as the newly launched Russia linked Global Fact Checking network) notably to promote strategic competitors like Russia and China as alternative, "reliable and genuine" partners.

In the **Western Balkans**, FIMI continued to target the EU's credibility and hinder the region's EU and NATO accession prospects, amplifying narratives of a 'multipolar' and illiberal world order, often by local actors who acted as proxy of foreign interests. These messages were tailored to align with longstanding local grievances and deeply entrenched beliefs. As a result, a generalised and now-markedly anti-Western and anti-EU sentiment gained traction.

In the **MENA** region, hostility toward the West and EU continued to increase alongside the regional polarisation, enabling diverse actors to exploit volatility, spread manipulated content, and incite hate speech – some of which spilled into Europe, fuelling violence against minority groups. Tactics included AI-generated media, falsified translations, staged footage, impersonation and other techniques aimed at distorting perceptions and eroding trust.

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