



## NATO Parliamentary Assembly

### RESOLUTION 436

on

### CONFRONTING DISINFORMATION AND THE WEAPONISATION OF INFORMATION\*

The Assembly,

1. **Mindful** of the fact that the rapid development of new information and communication technologies has accelerated the forces of globalisation and has significantly impacted all aspects of life, including contemporary political systems, international relations and global security, challenging notions such as privacy, identity, and national borders;
2. **Noting** that the remarkable growth of social media in recent years has reduced the cost for people to organise and communicate, among themselves and with their governments, thus enriching the democratic discourse as well as empowering human rights and anti-corruption activists in authoritarian countries;
3. **Concerned** however, that, at the same time, the trends in the information domain facilitate the propagation of false and disruptive stories, entrench users within ideological cocoons and offer new opportunities for those who seek to disrupt the liberal democratic world order;
4. **Alarmed** by Russia's strategy to weaponise information and conduct sophisticated and well-funded disinformation and intimidation campaigns designed to weaken, divide, and destabilise Euro-Atlantic democracies, erode trust in their government institutions, electoral systems, mainstream media and Euro-Atlantic solidarity and disturb their social fabric and undermine the Euro-Atlantic integration process;
5. **Deeply disturbed** by the growing use of the Internet by non-state actors such as terrorist organisations for recruitment, propaganda, fund-raising, communication as well as command and control purposes, **noting in particular** the technological proficiency and adaptability of the Daesh terrorist organisation's online activities;
6. **Welcoming** important steps taken by the Euro-Atlantic institutions, national governments, traditional and social media outlets and civil society activists to counter the weaponisation of information, including by strengthening the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and establishing the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, the European External Action Service East

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Stratcom Task Force, Europol's European Union Internet Referral Unit, centres against hybrid threats in Prague and Helsinki and the social media industry's Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism;

7. **Stressing**, however, that the response of the Euro-Atlantic community to the weaponisation of information so far has been haphazard, irresolute, and insufficiently funded;

8. **Convinced** that the principles of openness, pluralism and inclusion are key to separating truth from falsehood;

9. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:

- a. to designate or create specific units to conduct – in cooperation with private media companies and civil society – round-the-clock monitoring of detrimental uses of online platforms, exposing fake news and hostile propaganda, and countering them with facts, while respecting fundamental freedoms;
- b. to increase support and ensure adequate funding for Allied and other joint institutions and capabilities in the information domain, including the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and relevant centres of excellence;
- c. to ensure that Euro-Atlantic institutions and armed forces routinely revisit their social media policies, adjust the contents and the format of their communications to the needs of mobile users, incorporate social media aspects in the training and exercises of their personnel and build in the capacity to utilise social media at every level of command;
- d. to exchange best practices for protecting the electoral process, political parties and electoral commissions from disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks;
- e. to facilitate the modernisation of journalistic standards to address the threat of fake news and further emphasise the importance of fact-based analysis, and advocate independent investigative journalism that contributes to public discourse and serves the public interest;
- f. to continue, nevertheless, the application of certain restrictive measures to curtail the online activity of terrorists as well as state-sponsored disinformation and intimidation campaigns, including the removal of extremist content – in close cooperation with private media companies – and imposing international sanctions against individuals sponsored by Russia to weaponise information;
- g. to encourage and incentivise media companies, including social media, to enhance their capabilities dedicated to taking down unlawful content, developing anti-trolling and fact-checking software, and adapting algorithms to bolster professional journalism and protect social media users from online harassment;
- h. to invest more in educating citizens and developing their digital competencies on how to differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources and recognise the use of 'trolls' and 'bots' as well as to promote the value of genuine, fact-based debate and critical thinking;
- i. to increase capacity-building assistance to partner countries including Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the Western Balkan countries in the field of strategic communications;
- j. to refrain from using the unscrupulous methods of opponents and to support the role of civil society and grassroots initiatives such as volunteer 'elves' in fighting extremism and fake news.