![Council of the European Union — General Secretariat]

**Council of the European Union**
General Secretariat

*This is a paper intended for a specific community of recipients. Handling and further distribution are under the sole responsibility of community members.*

**WORKING DOCUMENT**

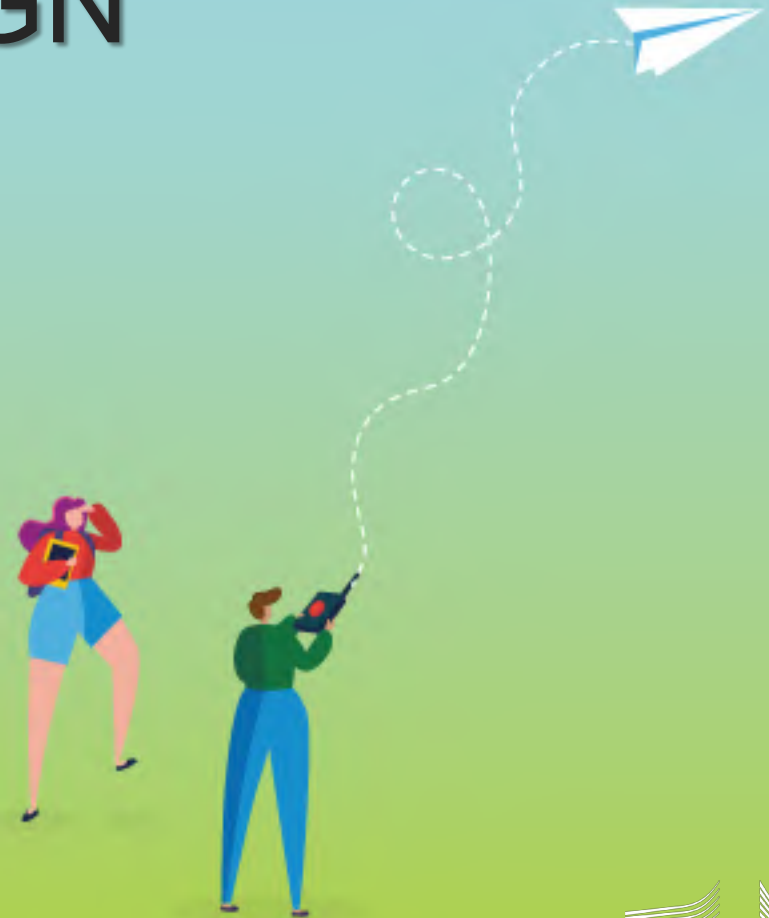| | |
|---|---|
| From: | General Secretariat of the Council |
| To: | ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee) |
| Subject: | TACKLING R&I FOREIGN INTERFERENCE : PPT presentation |

Delegations will find attached PPT on the above mentioned subject with the view to the meeting of

the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) on 12-13 April 2022.

# WHAT is foreign interference?

**Definition**

Activities that are carried out by, or on behalf of a **foreign actor**, which are **coercive**, **covert**, **deceptive** or **corrupting** and are **contrary** to the **EU's sovereignty, values and interests**.

**Possible tactics**

- **Political pressure** by influential representatives on strategic decision makers.

- **Financial support** in the form of investments, donations, funding, and loans.

- **Exploiting people** in strategic positions who are coerced, recruited, or placed.

- **Digital intrusions** breaching cybersecurity remotely or physically on location.

- **Spreading disinformation** against local interests or promoting foreign interests.

**Multi-dimensional threats**

Often multidimensional, combining coercive and **subversive measures**, using both **conventional** and **unconventional** tools and tactics. They are designed to be **difficult to detect or attribute**. These threats **target critical vulnerabilities** and extend across all **research activities**, **scientific domains**, **research outputs, and individuals at the organisations**.

# HOW to protect against foreign interference?

## Approach

**Raise awareness** on the risks and consequences of foreign interference

**Prevention** measures in order to limit foreign interference

**Recovery** from consequences of interference

**Response** appropriately in case of interference

## Areas of attention

- **Values**
  - Identify countries and partner institutions where academic freedom is at risk
  - Strengthen commitment to academic freedom and integrity at institutional/ individual levels
- **Governance**
  - Publish a Code of Conduct for Foreign Interference
  - Establish a Foreign Interference Committee
- **Partnerships**
  - Implementation of a risk management system
  - Establish procedure for robust partnership agreements
- **Cyber-security**
  - Raise awareness of cybersecurity risks
  - Detect, prevent, respond to and recover from cybersecurity attacks

Commission

# Reinforcing EU readiness: raising awareness and mutual learning

- **Promote and operationalise toolkit** on a voluntary basis towards research performing organisations

  - Support of development of **action plans**

  - Mainstreaming in funding programmes including the **EU Framework Programme**

- A **one-stop shop**, in the form of a digital portal accessible to everyone

  - Navigate through the different publications, avoid duplication of efforts

- **Mutual Learning Exercise**

  - Identification of **threats and vulnerabilities**: e.g. disinformation, cybersecurity

  - Implementation of **prevention measures**: e.g. strategic/critical value chains, technology transfer, funding programmes

European Commission

# Facilitating international cooperation – readiness in assessing opportunities and risks

- **Open-source intelligence** (OSINT)

  - Collection and analysis of data from open sources to produce **actionable intelligence**

  - **Dashboard:** provide research performing organisations, including universities, and researchers with readily accessible third country information on specific institutions, individuals, technologies, affiliations, research projects, universities

- **Networking** Foreign Interference **Committees**

  - Link to **national** intelligence services

  - Exchanging with cross-border committees in a structured and recurrent manner at **EU level**

European Commission

# THANK YOU!

**https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/commission-publishes-toolkit-help-mitigate-foreign-interference-research-and-innovation-2022-jan-18_en**