



European
Commission

High-Level Conference

15-16 OCTOBER 2018

ELECTION INTERFERENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

BUILDING RESILIENCE TO
CYBER-ENABLED THREATS

Berlaymont building,
5th Floor Open Space,
Rue de la Loi 200, Brussels

Programme ◀

European **Political
Strategy** Centre



PURPOSE AND SCOPE

With a number of watershed elections on the horizon, including the 2018 mid-term elections in the United States and the 2019 European Parliament elections, this conference is convened to inform the European Commission's ongoing work towards improving the security and resilience of electoral processes against constantly evolving cyber-enabled threats.

It takes place under the political patronage of Sir Julian King, European Commissioner for the Security Union, and is organised by the European Political Strategy Centre, the European Commission's in-house think tank, in collaboration with the Security Union Taskforce.

The event will gather leading experts from around the world to discuss how best to follow up on existing initiatives, such as the European Commission's Communication 'Tackling online disinformation: a European approach' and the G7 Charlevoix Commitment on 'Defending Democracy from Foreign Threats'. It will also devote time to showcasing some of the latest technologies and tools to emerge in election interference and protection, from traditional cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns to the use of sophisticated micro-targeting, big data and Artificial Intelligence.

In addition to the Conference's two half-day sessions, a High-Level Member State Workshop, open only to Member States' nominated representatives, will be organised with the aim to bring together electoral commissions and cybersecurity officials, to exchange best practices and promote cooperation with a view to better securing election life-cycles in the digital age.

PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Monday, 15 October 2018

Venue: 5th Floor, Berlaymont building

13h00-14h00

Registration and Welcome Coffee

14h00-14h30

Opening Plenary

Elections in the Digital Age

Welcoming Remarks

Ann Mettler, Head, European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission

Introductory Remarks

Julian King, Commissioner for the Security Union, European Commission

14h30-15h30

Panel Discussion

From G7 Commitments to Transatlantic Action

The G7 Charlevoix Commitment on defending democracy from foreign threats offers a platform for fostering transatlantic collaboration and facilitating an adequate response to current and future challenges facing our democracies. But how does it work in practice? Has there been sufficient engagement with Internet service providers and social media platforms to stop the malicious misuse of information technology by foreign actors and the illegal use of personal data and breaches of privacy? What are the next steps?

15h30-15h45

Policy Insight Briefing

Cybersecurity in Elections: A Look at the Landscape

An overwhelming number of digital security experts say national election systems are not sufficiently protected against cyber threats. What do the gaps in cybersecurity look like? How easy (or difficult) is it to access election technology systems, and what kind of damage can perpetrators do?

- **Liisa Past**, Estonian Information System Authority, Chief Research Officer Cyber Security Branch

15h45-16h45

Panel Discussion

Cyber Election Stress Test: Are We Prepared for the Worst?

With a number of watershed elections on the horizon, including the 2018 mid-term elections in the United States and the 2019 European Parliament elections, have the necessary steps been taken to protect against cyberattacks? What can we learn from past experiences? What are the major potential pitfalls in the coming months, and how should policymakers respond?

- **Laura Rosenberger**, Senior Fellow and Director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, German Marshall Fund of the United States
- **Mikael Tofvesson**, Head of Global Monitoring and Analysis, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
- **Robby Mook**, Senior Fellow, Defending Digital Democracy Project and former Campaign Manager, Hillary 2016 Presidential Campaign (TBC)
- Representative from the Macron 2017 Presidential Campaign, France (TBC)

16h45-17h15

Coffee Break

17h15-17h30

Keynote Speech

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, European Commission

17h30-17h45

Policy Insight Briefing

Countering Disinformation: A Fact-Checker's Progress Report

The European Commission's Communication on tackling online Disinformation, released in April 2018 with support from a High-Level Expert Group on Fake News, sets the foundations of a European approach to online disinformation. But how well-developed is Europe's fact-checking community? How can independent fact-checkers, journalists and academics work better together? And what more can governments, tech companies and the European Commission do to support those efforts?

- **Clara Jimenez Cruz**, Fact-Checker and Co-Founder, Maldito Buló (TBC)

17h45-18h45

Panel Discussion

Election Interference in the Digital Age: How to Safeguard a Free and Fair Debate?

Digital technologies promised to make us better informed by making knowledge available to everyone, and, in many ways, they do. But the introduction of big data and micro-targeted political advertising have blurred the lines between responsible democratic debate and illegitimate or disproportionate interference in elections – including disinformation and illicit campaign financing. What measures are available to increase transparency for citizens, fact-checkers and journalists today, and will this suffice to safeguard our elections? Can democracies strike back when interfered with?

- **Jennifer Kavanagh**, Associate Director, RAND Corporation, and Co-author of the report Truth Decay
- **Anja Bechmann**, Research Director, DATALAB, Institute for Advanced Studies, Aarhus University
- **Elizabeth Denham**, Information Commissioner, United Kingdom
- **Katie Harbath**, Global Politics and Government Outreach Director, Facebook (TBC)

18h45-19h00

Concluding Remarks

- **Věra Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, European Commission

19h00-20h00

Networking Cocktail

Day 2 – Tuesday, 16 October 2018

Venue: 5th Floor, Berlaymont building

08h30-09h00

Welcome Coffee

09h00-09h30

Opening Plenary

Elections in the Digital Age

Welcoming Remarks

- **Julian King**, Commissioner for the Security Union, European Commission

Introductory Remarks

- **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, European Commission
- **Bogusław Liberadzki**, Vice-President, European Parliament (TBC)

09h30-09h45

Policy Insight Briefing

Deep Fakes: The Next Stage of Disinformation and “Elections 3.0”

Artificial Intelligence and deep learning are increasingly enabling the production of seemingly real – but in reality fake – audio and audio-visual materials. What are the risks for the democratic debate and elections today? And what does the future hold in store?

- **Karoly Zsolnai**, Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Visual Computing and Human-Centered Technology, Technical University of Vienna

09h45-10h45

Panel Discussion

Is Seeing Believing? How to Preserve Trust in Elections in the Digital Age?

As technological advances make it all the more easy to disrupt the integrity of information, policymakers have to adapt policies and institutions, including electoral processes. What future disruptions can be expected? What areas need to be prioritised in terms of policy attention and possible intervention in order to protect elections?

- **Matthias Niessner**, Professor and Head, Visual Computing Lab, Technical University of Munich
- **Guido Caldarelli**, Professor in Theoretical Physics, Sapienza University of Rome
- **Fabrice Pothier**, Chief Strategy Officer, Rasmussen Global (TBC)
- **Steven Brill**, Co-Chief Executive Officer, NewsGuard (TBC)

10h45-11h15

Coffee Break

11h15-11h45

Policy Insight Briefing

Playing to Win: Innovative Approaches to Combating Disinformation

Effective countermeasures to cyber-enabled threats to elections, such as online disinformation, have often been hampered by the lack of data and cohesive evidence, or by sectoral hesitance. Entrepreneurs are now trying to bridge the gap by developing new business models and offering innovative services to educate the public. How successful can these approaches be? How can they be scaled up further?

- **Ruurd Oosterwoud**, Founder, DROG – a project developing apps and games to teach school children and the broader public about the ‘disinformation logic’
- **Barend Mons**, Professor of BioSemantics and Founder, FAIR Data Initiative, Leiden University

11h45-12h45

Panel Discussion

A Democratic Responsibility: Will Businesses Help Secure Elections?

Recent experiences of voter manipulation and attacks on political parties have made tech companies increasingly aware of their responsibility to help safeguard our democracies and elections. But are businesses up to the task? Are protective services being scaled properly? And will they be ready in time?

- **Scott Carpenter**, Managing Director, Jigsaw
- **Cristina Frutos**, Senior Manager, Elections, Indra
- **John Frank**, Vice-President EU Government Affairs, Microsoft
- **Inti De Ceukelaire**, Ethical Hacker and Bug Bounty Hunter, HackerOne (TBC)

12h45-13h00

Concluding Remarks

Preparing Elections for the Digital Age

- **Ann Mettler**, Head, European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission
- **Tiina Astola**, Director-General, Directorate-General of Justice and Consumers, European Commission (TBC)
- **Roberto Viola**, Director-General, Directorate-General of Communication, Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission (TBC)

13h00-14h30

Lunch

