

October 2025 Report

# How Russian Govt Undermined the Work of European Institutes

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Fighting Corruption



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## Executive Summary

The Russian government has pursued a deliberate and multifaceted campaign to undermine the work and integrity of European institutions. Its strategic aims focus on weakening the cohesion of the European Union, disrupting unified foreign policy responses such as sanctions, and preserving Russia's geopolitical influence in the region. Through a combination of covert bribery, disinformation, economic leverage especially in energy sectors, and exploitation of legal and institutional loopholes, Moscow systematically erodes democratic processes and public trust across EU member states.

Russian tactics include the orchestration of disinformation networks like the Voice of Europe, which covertly paid European politicians to forward Kremlin narratives. Economic instruments such as Novatek's expansion into European energy markets maintain critical financial dependencies, complicating EU efforts to reduce reliance on Russian resources. The use of proxy NGOs and cultural organizations extends soft power reach, embedding Russian influence within civil society. Legal gaps and insufficient transparency allow these operations to flourish, revealing significant vulnerabilities within existing regulatory frameworks.

Key cases illustrate how these operations intersect and reinforce each other, yielding notable consequences for EU institutions. The exposed bribery of Members of the European Parliament damages transparency and institutional credibility, while disinformation campaigns undermine electoral legitimacy and polarize public opinion. The entrenchment of Russian influence complicates EU policy-making, causing fragmentation and delays, especially regarding sanctions and external diplomatic stances. These methods collectively weaken the EU's ability to respond effectively and cohesively to Russian aggression and hybrid threats.

Institutional consequences include significant erosion of transparency and democratic norms, fragmented policy coherence, and challenges to the media and civil society landscape in the EU. Public trust in governance diminishes as interference becomes more sophisticated and difficult to detect. Member states experience heightened distrust of one another, complicating intelligence sharing and collaborative security efforts. These developments pose serious risks to the strategic security and stability of Europe.

The report recommends urgent reforms for EU institutions to enhance transparency through mandatory foreign funding disclosures and stronger enforcement of lobbying regulations. Member states must enact robust legislation criminalizing foreign interference, tightening oversight over NGOs and media funding. Civil society and independent media need increased support for investigative and fact-checking capacities alongside public awareness campaigns to build resistance against disinformation. International cooperation is crucial for coordinated sanctions, intelligence sharing, and policy harmonization to close cross-border vulnerabilities.

Without a coordinated, multi-dimensional response addressing transparency, enforcement, civil resilience, and international coordination, Russian influence operations will continue to undermine European governance and security. Protecting the integrity of European institutions and democratic processes requires sustained commitment, resources, and adaptability in confronting evolving hybrid threats in the geopolitical arena.

## Introduction & Strategic Objectives

The European Union's primary institutions—the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Council—play distinct but complementary roles concerning Russia and its geopolitical posture in Europe. The European Parliament serves as the legislative body that passes EU laws and resolutions, including responses to Russian actions such as sanctions and political interference. The European Commission, as the executive arm, implements policies, manages diplomatic engagements, and enforces sanctions, exemplified by its rigorous approach following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The European Council, comprising EU heads of state, sets the broad strategic direction and coordinates collective responses to Russia's assertive policies. Together, these institutions strive to uphold EU cohesion, democratic values, and security amidst Russian pressure. Russia, meanwhile, holds significant geopolitical interests focused on preserving its sphere of influence over Eastern Europe and countering NATO and EU expansion. Moscow views the EU's eastward enlargement and support for neighboring states like Ukraine not only as a political challenge but a direct threat to its regional hegemony. The EU's robust sanctions, diplomatic isolation of Russia, and promotion of democratic norms reflect an ongoing contest for influence in Europe's security architecture.

## Russian Motives

Russia's government pursues multifaceted strategic objectives through influence operations aimed at political, economic, and soft power spheres within Europe. Politically, Moscow seeks to weaken EU cohesion by exploiting divisions among member states, supporting populist and nationalist movements sympathetic to Russian narratives, and infiltrating European institutions with proxies or aligned actors to legitimize Kremlin positions. Economically, Russia aims to leverage energy supplies, trade relations, and economic dependencies to exert pressure and divide the EU bloc. Soft power tactics include disinformation campaigns, cultural and ideological promotion opposing the "rootless cosmopolitanism" associated with Brussels, and using proxy media networks to manipulate public opinion. The overarching goal is to erode confidence in European democratic institutions, complicate unified EU foreign policy stances, and weaken the Union's ability to respond effectively to Russian aggression, particularly regarding Ukraine and other neighboring countries. This strategy also includes destabilizing EU electoral processes by spreading propaganda and damaging trust in governance structures to amplify internal discord.

## Research Methodology

This analysis draws on a diverse set of sources and a defined scope to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Russian influence operations in Europe. Principal data sources include reports from Transparency International Russia, which highlight systemic corruption and its manipulation within Russia's governance, thereby underpinning Russia's



external influence mechanisms. EU institutional investigations and intelligence assessments provide evidence of Russian attempts to interfere in European Parliament elections and support for disinformation networks. Media reporting from credible outlets complements these by uncovering covert operations and tracing propaganda channels. The temporal scope spans largely from 2014 through 2025, capturing the post-Crimea annexation era to recent developments in Russian interference and hybrid warfare techniques. The focus centers on key actors within the Russian government and affiliated proxies, as well as the range of targeted EU institutions from parliamentary bodies to executive agencies. Limitations include potential classified intelligence gaps, the evolving nature of influence tactics, and challenges in fully attributing hybrid operations due to their covert and deniable character.

This methodological framework provides a robust foundation for assessing the strategic interplay between Russia and European institutions in the current geopolitical landscape.

## Historical Context: Russia–EU Influence

The origins of Russian influence in Europe are deeply rooted in the Soviet era, marked by extensive diplomatic, cultural, and ideological outreach. Following World War II, the Soviet Union established dominance over Eastern and Central Europe through military conquest and the installation of communist regimes compliant with Moscow's directives. This dominance was solidified at the Yalta Conference in 1945 and enforced via military interventions in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) to maintain control. Soviet influence extended beyond military means to cultural and ideological spheres, promoting socialism and communist ideology as part of a broad strategy to solidify its sphere of influence. The USSR's control encompassed not only political regimes but also cultural institutions, education, and information dissemination to cultivate loyalty and counter Western values. These Soviet-era ties laid the groundwork for Russia's continued interest and interventionist posture in European affairs after the Soviet collapse.

## Evolution Post-1991

After the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991, Russia's influence approach evolved, adapting to new geopolitical and economic realities. Russian economic and business actors began entering European markets, often intertwined with political influence efforts. Oligarchs and energy companies expanded their reach into Europe, linking economic footholds to political lobbying and soft power initiatives. This period saw cultural foundations maintained through media in Russian language and efforts to sustain ties with Russian diaspora communities. Initial lobbying efforts focused on maintaining political clout and economic interests amid a rapidly transforming Europe. However, Russia's influence mechanisms became less overtly ideological and more pragmatic, leveraging economic assets and cultural ties to safeguard Moscow's interests in a post-Cold War Europe.

## The Putin Era

Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia developed more aggressive and sophisticated influence strategies across Europe. This era is characterized by an emphasis on energy dominance, particularly through control of gas supplies and strategic infrastructure projects like Nord Stream pipelines, used as leverage over European countries economically dependent on Russian energy. Putin's administration also integrated regulatory manipulation and covert support for political parties aligned with Kremlin interests, including far-right and far-left groups, creating political polarization within EU states. The state's information and cyber capabilities were enhanced to conduct disinformation campaigns to undermine EU institutions and Western democratic processes. These methods sought not only economic security but also the political weakening of the EU and NATO, aimed at reasserting Russia's status as a great power on the European continent.

## Recent Developments

Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, relations between Russia and the EU have sharply deteriorated with escalated sanctions and counter-measures by the EU. This period saw a surge in Russian disinformation and hybrid warfare tactics designed to destabilize European unity and democratic resilience. Disinformation campaigns have been prolific, utilizing state-controlled media and covert networks to sow discord and manipulate public opinion across member states. The EU has responded with intensified sanctions targeting Russian political and economic interests, including measures against state-linked media spreading propaganda. Moscow's influence efforts have expanded into both official diplomatic arenas and shadow networks supporting pro-Russian political actors, aiming to fracture EU cohesion and weaken its collective foreign policy responses. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has further galvanized these tensions, heightening EU vigilance against Russian influence operations.

This historical context outlines the trajectory of Russia's influence on Europe from Soviet dominance to contemporary hybrid conflict, illustrating an enduring geopolitical contest shaped by shifting means but consistent strategic intent.

## Methods of Influence & Undermining

Russia employs extensive political networks and lobbying efforts to influence European decision-making. A notable recent case is the dismantling of a pro-Russian agent network operating through the website "Voice of Europe," which actively paid European politicians from countries including Germany, France, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Hungary to spread Russian narratives and support pro-Kremlin agendas ahead of European Parliament elections. Investigations revealed that politicians were financially incentivized, sometimes through covert cash exchanges or cryptocurrency, to advance policies favorable to Russian interests, effectively acting as "influence agents" within local political debates. This strategy targets multiple political spectra, supporting Eurosceptic and nationalist parties, and seeks to fracture EU common policies and reduce support for Ukraine. Furthermore, Russia cultivates ties with far-right and far-left parties alike, disrupting unified EU positions by amplifying internal dissent and polarization.

## NGOs, Foundations & Soft Power Fronts

Russia strategically uses government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) and foundations as soft power vehicles within the EU. Organizations such as the Russkiy Mir Foundation and Rossotrudnichestvo function under the oversight of senior Russian political figures and operate branches across Europe. They focus on promoting Russian culture, language, and political narratives, often targeting Russian-speaking communities abroad. These NGOs provide grants and sponsor cultural events designed to cultivate favorable attitudes toward Russia while undermining EU integration efforts. This network facilitates ideological outreach by spreading narratives aligned with the Kremlin's foreign policy goals and creating social platforms that can influence public opinion and political debates within EU member states. Such organizations also serve as instruments to lubricate lobbying efforts and legitimize pro-Russian activism.

## Media, Disinformation & Propaganda

The Kremlin has developed a vast disinformation ecosystem designed to influence European and Ukrainian audiences through alternative and mainstream media channels. A prime example is the "Voice of Europe," a far-right media platform officially registered in Prague, uncovered as part of a Kremlin-backed network funneling funds to far-right politicians while promoting pro-Russian narratives and eroding support for Ukraine. This site mixed neutral news with emotionally charged misinformation tailored to various European political contexts and was followed by over 180,000 users on social media. Russian disinformation leverages modern platforms like X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, Telegram, and Facebook, exploiting their weak content moderation and rapid information cycles. Intelligence reports expose coordinated bot armies and fake accounts amplifying false narratives, while Telegram serves as a direct channel

for Russian intelligence information operations. The aim is to sow discord, destabilize democratic resilience, and distort EU political processes.

## Economic Leverage & Energy Policy

Economic leverage, particularly Russia's dominant position in energy supplies, is a key tool in its influence arsenal over Europe. Novatek, Russia's largest liquefied natural gas producer, has expanded its LNG exports to Europe despite ongoing sanctions and efforts to reduce dependency. Notably, Novatek increased its share of EU LNG imports from 9.8% in Q3 2023 to 18.9% in Q3 2024 due to aggressive pricing on spot markets, edging out competitors like US suppliers. This sustained Russian energy presence undermines the EU's strategic goal of energy independence and enables Moscow to retain economic influence and revenues critical for its geopolitical agenda. The EU has launched the REPowerEU Plan to phase out Russian fossil fuel imports by 2027, focusing on diversified energy sources and reducing risks to energy security. Nonetheless, economic dependencies create vulnerabilities that Russia exploits through pricing strategies and market manipulation across EU countries.

## Legal & Institutional Levers

Russia exploits legal and institutional gaps within European structures to further its influence. Such tactics include manipulating regulatory loopholes, exploiting transparency shortfalls, and weakening rule-of-law mechanisms. Within European institutions and international bodies, Russia challenges jurisdictions, such as the European Court of Human Rights, repudiating rulings unfavorable to Kremlin interests and increasingly using legal frameworks to silence dissent domestically and globally. This "rule by law" approach contrasts sharply with EU norms and undermines institutional efforts to enforce democratic standards. Additionally, Russia's lobbying and influence often capitalize on these legal ambiguities, including covert funding streams that evade full transparency, facilitating sanctions evasion and corruption. Reports document the deployment of strategic corruption to infiltrate European markets and institutions, exploiting weaknesses in monitoring and regulatory systems to sustain Kremlin-friendly networks within Europe.

This multi-pronged approach combining political, cultural, media, economic, and legal methods forms a comprehensive Russian strategy to undermine European unity and advance Kremlin geopolitical objectives across the continent.

## Case Studies

### Case Study 1: Voice of Europe Influence Network

The "Voice of Europe" was a pro-Russian media outlet operational mainly between 2017 and 2024, with a headquarters in Prague. It gained notoriety for spreading Eurosceptic, anti-EU, and anti-Ukraine disinformation, especially ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections. This network was uncovered at the end of March 2024 by coordinated actions of Polish, Czech, and other European intelligence services. Its goal was to undermine EU cohesion and influence election outcomes by manipulating public opinion and corrupting politicians.

#### Actors Involved

Key actors included Ukrainian pro-Russian oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk, who was reported to be behind the network, and Artyom Marchevsky, alleged to have managed daily operations of the website. The network spread propaganda through its media platform and paid politicians in Germany, France, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Hungary. These payments were covert, made in cash during secret meetings or through cryptocurrency exchanges, intended to co-opt politicians as influence agents.

#### Mechanics

The network exercised influence by mixing neutral news with manipulated and false content tailored to national contexts, disseminating these through social media channels where it reached over 180,000 followers. Politicians corrupted by the network disseminated Kremlin-friendly narratives, influencing debates and policies in favor of Russian interests. This combination of sponsored media content and bribery created a multi-layered influence operation designed to sway European political processes covertly.

#### Impact

The network damaged public trust in EU democratic processes by spreading divisive and misleading information, fostering Euroscepticism, and encouraging political polarization. It also threatened the integrity of European Parliament elections by bribing lawmakers to promote Russian agendas, thereby undermining policy coherence and transparency within EU institutions. The dismantling of this network by intelligence agencies revealed deep vulnerabilities in political and media monitoring across Europe.



## Case Study 2: Novatek's Lobbying and Energy Influence

Novatek, Russia's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) producer, has continued to expand its energy exports to Europe during 2023-2025 despite rising geopolitical tensions and EU sanctions. Notably, from Q3 2023 to Q3 2024, Novatek increased its LNG market share in Europe nearly twofold by capitalizing on pricing strategies amid EU efforts to diversify energy sources away from Russia.

### Actors Involved

The company itself, linked to Kremlin strategic interests, employed European lobbyists and intermediaries to maintain market access and mitigate the impact of EU sanctions. Lobbying efforts extended to promoting Novatek's economic importance in key EU countries, aiming to influence policymakers and debate on energy security. The broader Russian government supports these economic tactics as part of its geopolitical strategy to retain leverage over European energy markets.

### Mechanics

Novatek's influence mechanisms involved aggressive lobbying campaigns to thaw or soften sanction measures and market penetration strategies that exploited legal and contractual complexities within EU energy markets. This included direct engagement with EU institutions and member state governments, leveraging economic dependencies to sustain influence despite sanctions. The company's commercial success despite political friction preserved a fiscal lifeline for Russia and maintained divisive economic ties within the EU.

### Impact

Novatek's sustained presence in Europe complicated the EU's strategic objective to end dependency on Russian energy, delaying complete decoupling efforts and injecting economic divisions among member states reliant on Russian LNG. This influence through economic leverage weakened collective EU policy coherence and highlighted vulnerabilities in sanction enforcement and energy diversification strategies.

## Case Study 3: Alleged Payments to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)

Investigations by Czech, Polish, and other European authorities in early 2024 revealed payments to unnamed Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) by Russian-funded networks, aiming to propagate Kremlin-favorable policies ahead of elections and during

sensitive legislative moments. These allegations surfaced as part of the wider Voice of Europe operation but also included other covert channels.

## Actors Involved

The payments allegedly originated from Russian state-affiliated intermediaries and proxies such as media platforms and oligarch-linked networks. Politicians targeted spanned several EU member states, across various political parties, including some with Eurosceptic and nationalist leanings. Intelligence agencies implicated individuals close to central European political circles collaborating in spreading propaganda and misinformation within EU institutions.

## Mechanics

The influence was exerted predominantly through direct financial incentives—in cash or cryptocurrency—paid to politicians in exchange for public lobbying or discreet support for narratives aligned with Russian interests. These payments were often connected to lobbying efforts supporting anti-sanction positions, undermining EU unity on security and foreign policy matters. This bribery was combined with disinformation campaigns to maximize the impact on public discourse and legislative outcomes.

## Impact

The scandal eroded public confidence in the integrity of EU institutions, casting doubts on MEP impartiality and increasing political polarization. It underscored systemic vulnerabilities in transparency and the susceptibility of EU governance structures to foreign influence operations. The fallout triggered increased legislative scrutiny and calls for stronger anti-corruption and transparency measures within the European Parliament.

## Case Study 4: Russian NGOs and Foundations as Influence Fronts

Throughout the 2010s and into the 2020s, Russian government-organized NGOs and cultural foundations such as Russkiy Mir and Rossotrudnichestvo have operated across Europe to advance Kremlin soft power and political agendas. These institutions aimed to foster cultural ties with Russian-speaking populations and promote narratives supporting Russian foreign policy.

## Actors Involved

Russian state entities supervise these NGOs, which function under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and related agencies. The organizations deploy cultural diplomacy, educational programs, and grant-making activities while also serving as conduits for political messaging

supportive of Russian interests in EU member states. Through these NGOs, Moscow engages local communities and networks sympathetic to Kremlin perspectives, extending influence below formal political channels.

## Mechanics

Soft power operations include funding cultural centers, language courses, media production, and sponsoring events to create a positive image of Russia and destabilize EU narratives. These NGOs also act as intermediaries facilitating contacts between Russian political operatives and European activists or politicians, thereby embedding Kremlin-aligned actors within European civil society and political landscapes. This network serves both overt diplomatic functions and covert influence missions.

## Impact

These NGO operations have contributed to the diffusion of Russian political narratives, increased social fragmentation in host countries, and created proxies that blur the line between legitimate cultural activities and foreign interference. Their activity complicates EU efforts to maintain cohesion, particularly in Eastern Europe, and challenges regulatory oversight mechanisms designed to safeguard transparency and democratic resilience within civil society.

Together, these cases illustrate the multi-layered and comprehensive nature of Russian influence across political, economic, media, and civil society domains within Europe, revealing significant challenges for EU institutions in safeguarding democratic integrity and policy unity.

# Russian-Based Institutions Influencing European Union Governance and Policy

Russia-based institutions influence European Union governance and policy through a complex and multifaceted network that includes political alignments, cultural diplomacy, economic interests, and media operations. These institutions leverage political parties across the ideological spectrum, such as far-right and far-left groups, that receive financial support and ideological backing to push Kremlin-friendly agendas within EU institutions.

Government-organized NGOs like the Russkiy Mir Foundation promote Russian culture and language in Europe, functioning as soft power tools to shape public opinion and civil society. Additionally, Kremlin-linked media outlets disseminate disinformation to disrupt democratic processes and polarize societies. Economic influence, especially through energy firms like Novatek, sustains critical dependencies that complicate unified EU policy responses. These varying channels work in synergy to undermine EU cohesion, distort policymaking, and extend Russian geopolitical influence.

Institution Type	Examples	Methods of Influence	Impact on EU Governance and Policy
Political Parties	FPÖ (Austria), AfD (Germany), National Rally (France), Syriza (Greece)	Financial backing, political support, lobbying	Promote pro-Kremlin policies, weaken EU unity, obstruct sanctions
Government-Organized NGOs	Russkiy Mir Foundation, Rossotrudnichestvo	Cultural diplomacy, funding community programs	Foster pro-Russian sentiment, undermine EU integration
Media Outlets	Voice of Europe, RT, Sputnik	Disinformation, propaganda, social media campaigns	Polarize public opinion, disrupt democratic processes

Economic  
Actors

Novatek, Gazprom

Lobbying,  
maintaining supply  
contracts

Sustain energy  
dependency, divide  
EU energy policy

This integrated approach by Russia-based institutions exemplifies a strategic effort to exploit political, cultural, economic, and informational vulnerabilities within the European Union to influence governance and policy decisions in ways favorable to Kremlin interests.

## Russia-Based NGOs & Organisations

The Russian government has built an extensive network of organizations, foundations, and institutions across Europe to subtly advance its geopolitical agenda and weaken the integrity of European institutions. Through cultural diplomacy, diaspora groups, research centers, religious institutions, and even human rights or environmental NGOs, Moscow projects influence under the guise of cultural promotion, advocacy, or academic research. Key actors such as the Russkiy Mir Foundation, Rossotrudnichestvo, the Valdai Discussion Club, and the Alexander Gorchakov Fund illustrate how state-backed initiatives blur the boundaries between civil society and government policy. By embedding its narratives in fields ranging from human rights to business cooperation, Russia not only amplifies its political messaging but also undermines European democratic discourse and policymaking processes.

Number	Organisation Name	Type	Country/Region Represented/Focus
1	Russkiy Mir Foundation	Government-organized NGO	Russia, Russian culture and language promotion
2	Rossotrudnichestvo	Government agency/NGO	Russian compatriots abroad
3	Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute	NGO/Think tank	Russian political narratives worldwide
4	Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections	NGO	Election monitoring in Russia-occupied areas
5	Fund for Legal Protection and Support of Russians Abroad	Government fund	Support for Russian diaspora groups



6	Institute of CIS Countries	Think tank/NGO	Eurasian regional political-economic research
7	Institute of Contemporary Development	Think tank	Russian political strategy
8	Centre for Strategic Research	Think tank	Russian foreign and domestic policy
9	Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)	Research institute	Global issues and international relations
10	Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)	Think tank	Russian global foreign policy
11	Independent Institute of Social Policy	NGO	Research and policy on social issues
12	Russian Civic Initiative	NGO/Advocacy	Civil rights and policy research
13	Human Rights Watch (Russia branch)	NGO	Human rights monitoring
14	Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs	Business lobby	Business interests in Russia and abroad

15	Institute of Public Policy	NGO	Policy research
16	Center for the Study of New Religious Movements	NGO	Sociological research
17	Center for Analysis of Political Technologies	NGO/Think tank	Political technology and media influence research
18	Euro-Asian Jewish Congress	NGO	Russian-speaking Jewish community advocacy
19	Union of Russian Compatriots in Europe	NGO	Support for Russian diaspora
20	Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS)	Think Tank	Security and foreign policy analysis
21	Eurasian Peoples' Assembly	NGO/Political organization	Promotes Eurasian integration
22	Russian Orthodox Church	Religious Institution	Orthodox community, cultural influence
23	AGORA (Russian Human Rights Group)	NGO	Legal support and human rights advocacy

24	International Russian Conservation Union	NGO	Environmental advocacy
25	Moscow Helsinki Group	Human Rights NGO	Human rights monitoring and advocacy
26	Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia	NGO	Military dissent and veterans' rights
27	Russian Center for Contemporary Politics	Think Tank	Political and social research
28	Russian Peace Foundation	NGO	Peacekeeping and cultural diplomacy
29	Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund	NGO	Public diplomacy and cultural outreach
30	Russian Analytical Center	Think Tank	Political, economic research
31	Institute of Modern Russia	NGO	Political reform and democracy advocacy
32	Eurasia Foundation	NGO	Cross-border cooperation and development

33	International Public Foundation - Russian World	NGO	Promotes Russian culture internationally
34	Russian Environmental Defense Fund	NGO	Environmental protection
35	Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute	Think Tank	Global political and cultural narratives
36	Valdai Discussion Club	Think Tank	Russian foreign policy discourse
37	Russian Analytical Center	Think Tank	Political and economic research
38	Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM)	Research Center	Public opinion polls in Russia
39	Moscow Helsinki Group	Human Rights NGO	Human rights advocacy in Russia
40	Memorial International	NGO	Historical and human rights advocacy
41	Foundation for Support of the Russian Diaspora	NGO	Advocacy and cultural support for diaspora

42	Russian Democratic Initiative	NGO	Promoting democracy and civil society
43	International Russian Conservation Union	NGO	Conservation and environmental issues
44	St. Andrew's Society	NGO/Cultural Organization	Russian culture promotion abroad
45	Russian National Union	Political organization	Russian nationalism and diaspora
46	Baltic Russian Community	NGO	Russian speaking minorities in Baltic states
47	European Institute for International Studies (EIIIS)	Think Tank	Russia-Europe relations
48	European Russian Advocacy Forum	Advocacy group	Protecting Russian interests in Europe
49	Center for Russian and East European Studies	Academic research center	Russian and Eastern European political analysis
50	European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis	Think tank	Geopolitical strategy research

51	Russian Cultural Center in Paris	Cultural institution	Russian culture promotion in France
52	Russian-German Forum	NGO	Promoting Russian-German relations
53	Russian Business Council in Brussels	Business association	Trade and investment facilitation
54	Union of Russian Scientists in Europe	Scientific NGO	Scientific collaboration
55	Eurasian Economic Community Study Center	Research institute	Eurasian economics and policy
56	Center for International Policy	Policy think tank	Russian foreign and domestic policy
57	Russian Union of Youth	Youth NGO	Russian diaspora youth engagement
58	Slavic Cultural Foundation	NGO	Promotion of Slavic culture
59	Russian Environmental Society	Environmental NGO	Sustainable development and environmental protection



60	Russia-Europe Cultural Foundation	Cultural NGO	Arts and cultural cooperation
61	Russian Writers' Association Abroad	Literary NGO	Russian language literature promotion
62	International Fund for Dialogue of Cultures	NGO	Intercultural dialogue and understanding
63	Russian Diaspora Development Fund	Diaspora NGO	Support for Russian communities abroad
64	Russian Sports Federation in Europe	Sports NGO	Sports diplomacy and community engagement
65	Russian International Business Association	Business NGO	Promoting Russian enterprises abroad
66	Russian Science and Technology Center	Scientific NGO	Cooperation in science and tech
67	International Youth Forum "Russia-Europe"	Youth NGO	Cultural and educational exchange
68	Russian Cultural Heritage Foundation	Heritage NGO	Preservation of Russian historical sites

69	Russian Theatre Society Abroad	Cultural organization	Russian theatre promotion
70	Center for Slavic Studies	Academic research center	Slavic peoples and cultures research
71	Russian International Media Development Fund	Media NGO	Russian media presence in diaspora
72	Organization of Russian Compatriots in Europe	Diaspora NGO	Support for Russian-speaking populations
73	Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Brussels	Cultural institution	Russian culture, history, science promotion in EU
74	CSAR (Centre for Russian Art and Culture)	Academic Research Center	Russian art and cultural heritage, Italy
75	Russian Revels	Cultural Organization	Russian culture promotion, London
76	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation	Government Ministry	Russia's cultural policies and international outreach
77	Russian Cultural Foundation	NGO/Cultural Foundation	Russian artistic and cultural initiatives

78	Russian International Cultural Center	Cultural Institution	Exhibitions, conferences, and cultural diplomacy
79	Alexander Gorchakov Dialogue Fund	Public Diplomacy NGO	Russian international relations and cultural diplomacy

## Ruskiy Mir Foundation



The Ruskiy Mir Foundation operates across Europe as a potent instrument of Russia's influence, strategically blurring the boundaries between independent civil society and

state-backed agendas. Ostensibly a cultural NGO, it promotes Russian language, literature, and heritage through an extensive network of centers, university partnerships, and grant funding. Yet beneath this cultural facade, the Foundation advances Moscow's political narratives and consolidates loyalty to the Kremlin under the guise of fostering Russian identity and diaspora unity.

The Foundation's methods encompass cultural events, Russian language instruction, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms. It embeds itself within European universities and private associations, shaping Russian curricula and influencing public discourse while maintaining an opaque, selectively reported presence. The Foundation's network includes a significant number of "Russkiy Mir Cabinets" designed to cultivate favorable perceptions of Russia through controlled narratives around history, patriotism, and traditional values. Its collaboration with Russian state agencies like Rossotrudnichestvo and involvement in organizing politically charged commemorations (e.g., Victory Day, Immortal Regiment marches) reveal a tight linkage to Kremlin geopolitical goals.

This dual role poses serious risks to European democratic values and policymaking by weaponizing culture and diaspora relations as vectors for political influence. The Foundation creates dependency and access within civic, academic, and cultural institutions, normalizing pro-Kremlin views, while shielding covert intelligence activities. It erodes transparent civil society engagement by masking state-driven agendas, undermining pluralistic debate, and potentially sowing divisions within European communities. The Russkiy Mir Foundation exemplifies how soft power, under authoritarian state direction, can be deployed as a strategic tool to destabilize democratic resilience and align foreign policy spaces with Moscow's revisionist ambitions.

## Rossotrudnichestvo



Rossotrudnichestvo, a Russian federal agency operating across Europe under the guise of cultural diplomacy and humanitarian aid, strategically advances Moscow's influence by orchestrating a multifaceted campaign blending cultural promotion, diaspora engagement, research collaboration, and political advocacy. Through its Russian Houses and cultural events, it spreads Kremlin-approved narratives, harnesses the loyalty of Russian-speaking communities abroad, and cultivates partnerships with local scientific and educational institutions, thereby blurring the line between independent civil society and a state-backed geopolitical agenda. This covert soft power machinery not only perpetuates a positive image of Russia but also fuels militaristic propaganda, supports pro-Kremlin groups, and influences European policymaking in favor of Moscow's interests, posing tangible risks to democratic values and sovereignty across the continent by undermining informed public debate and enabling covert interference in domestic affairs. The agency's activities, often shielded by the veneer of cultural exchange, reveal a deliberate effort to destabilize open societies through subtle, sustained influence operations disguised as benign humanitarian and cultural initiatives.



## Valdai Discussion Club



The Valdai Discussion Club operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument of Russian state influence, blurring the line between an independent civil society entity and a Kremlin-backed agenda. Established and funded by Russian government-affiliated institutions, it promotes Moscow's geopolitical narratives through a multifaceted approach that includes high-profile cultural events, targeted outreach to Russian diaspora communities, strategic research collaborations with foreign experts, and advocacy platforms aimed at shaping European policy debates. By convening international scholars, journalists, and policymakers under the guise of academic dialogue, Valdai legitimizes Kremlin positions while advancing narratives that destabilize Western unity, question NATO's role, and depict Russia as a global stabilizer. This covert blend of soft power and propaganda threatens European democratic values by undermining trust in independent institutions and distorting policymaking processes through the spread of disinformation and divisive rhetoric.



## Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute



The Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute (DOC-RI), operating in Europe under the guise of an independent NGO, serves as a sophisticated instrument of Russian influence, advancing Moscow's geopolitical agenda through a blend of cultural diplomacy, research collaborations, and diaspora outreach. Founded by sanctioned oligarch Vladimir Yakunin, DOC-RI systematically promotes pro-Kremlin narratives by organizing high-profile cultural and academic events, engaging European political elites and intellectuals, and establishing advocacy platforms that blur the line between autonomous civil society activities and state-backed propaganda. Its methods include recruiting influential agents of influence within European political and academic circles, sponsoring forums that shift blame for global crises onto the West while legitimizing Russian aggression, and leveraging networks within the Russian diaspora to strengthen Moscow's soft power. This deliberate entanglement of cultural dialogue with political objectives poses a significant risk to European democratic values and policymaking by manipulating public opinion, forging covert allegiances, and undermining the integrity of independent discourse across multiple sectors. Such covert operations challenge the transparency and resilience of democratic institutions against foreign interference.

## Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections



The Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections (EODE), a Russia-based NGO with offices across Europe, operates as a sophisticated instrument to promote Russia's influence under the guise of independent civil society work. Led by figures aligned with pro-Kremlin Eurasianist ideology, it leverages methods such as cultural diplomacy, diaspora outreach, and collaborative research to legitimize Russia's contentious political narratives, including the endorsement of elections in disputed territories like Crimea and parts of Eastern Europe. EODE blurs the line between genuine civic engagement and state-backed agenda by presenting itself as a monitor of democratic processes while actively pushing Moscow's multi-polar world vision and anti-Western messaging. This fusion of advocacy and covert influence risks undermining European democratic values and policymaking by fostering division, eroding trust in democratic institutions, and amplifying disinformation tailored to weaken cohesion within the EU and its member states.

## Fund for Legal Protection and Support of Russians Abroad



The Fund for Legal Protection and Support of Russians Abroad (Pravfond) operates throughout Europe under the guise of providing legal aid and cultural support to Russian compatriots but effectively serves as a Kremlin-linked influence operation. It executes a multifaceted strategy that includes sponsoring cultural events, organizing diaspora outreach, engaging in research collaborations, and setting up advocacy platforms, all crafted to propagate Moscow's narratives while blurring the boundary between independent civil society and state-backed agendas. Leaked data and investigative reports reveal how Pravfond funds a network of legal support centers and uses covert financing methods to sustain operations across multiple EU countries despite sanctions, often shielding Russian interests by supporting individuals with politically sensitive or criminal backgrounds. This blending of legal aid with propaganda serves to undermine European democratic values and policymaking by promoting disinformation, delegitimizing independent media, and influencing public opinion in favor of Russian geopolitical interests, posing a significant risk to the integrity of democratic discourse and the rule of law in Europe.

## Institute of CIS Countries



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## Institute of Contemporary Development

The Institute of Contemporary Development (ICD) operates in Europe as a sophisticated vehicle through which Russia promotes its geopolitical influence under the guise of an independent NGO. Leveraging cultural events, diaspora engagement, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms, the ICD adeptly advances Moscow's narratives by embedding itself within European civil society networks. This NGO blurs the line between genuine independent activism and state-backed agendas by utilizing Russia's compatriot programs and soft power instruments, often coordinating closely with Russian embassies and affiliated organizations. Through purportedly benign cultural and academic initiatives, it spreads Kremlin-aligned messages that normalize Russian geopolitical aims, subtly undermine European democratic values, and influence policymaking by shaping public opinion and elite discourse. The ICD's operations exemplify a broader Russian strategy of using NGOs as instruments of public diplomacy to distort European perceptions, inflame societal divisions, and ultimately weaken democratic resilience against authoritarian influence.

## Centre for Strategic Research



The Centre for Strategic Research (CSR) operates in Europe as a sophisticated vehicle to promote Russia's geopolitical interests under the guise of an independent NGO. Through cultural events, diaspora outreach, collaborative research projects, and participation in advocacy platforms, the CSR actively disseminates Moscow's narratives, subtly influencing public discourse and policymaking. By organizing high-profile cultural and academic exchanges and engaging Russian-speaking communities, it cultivates a network of influence that blurs the boundary between genuine civil society activism and Kremlin-backed strategic objectives. This dual role enables the CSR to push pro-Russian agendas while masking its ties to state power,

posing significant risks to European democratic resilience by fostering disinformation, undermining trust in EU institutions, and advancing Russia's political objectives under the cover of lawful civil engagement. These activities not only distort political debates but also threaten the integrity of democratic processes across Europe by subtly aligning segments of civil society with an authoritarian foreign power's agenda.

## Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)



The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), while officially a research institution under the Russian Academy of Sciences, operates in Europe with a dual role that extends beyond academic research to actively promoting Moscow's influence through a sophisticated blend of cultural diplomacy, diaspora engagement, and strategic research collaborations. By hosting cultural events and forums such as the Baltic Platform, and leveraging networks with diaspora communities and foreign experts sympathetic to Russia's geopolitical narratives, IMEMO skillfully blurs the boundaries between an independent civil society actor and a state-backed instrument of influence. It integrates Moscow's narratives into seemingly neutral academic and policy discussions, often disguised under the guise of mutually beneficial cooperation on global issues like environmental and security policies. This approach

poses significant risks to European democratic values and policymaking by covertly shaping opinion and policy circles in favor of Kremlin interests, undermining transparency, pluralism, and the integrity of democratic deliberation processes in European societies. Such operations complicate efforts to safeguard democratic governance against covert foreign interference.

## Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)



The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), a non-profit organization founded with close ties to the Russian government, operates strategically across Europe as a vehicle to promote Moscow's geopolitical influence under the guise of an independent civil society actor. By organizing cultural events, engaging diaspora communities, collaborating with research institutions, and creating advocacy platforms, RIAC systematically pushes narratives aligning with Kremlin interests while blurring the lines between genuine civic engagement and state-directed propaganda. Its activities often cloak political advocacy in the language of diplomacy and academic exchange, leveraging soft power tools to subtly shape public opinion and policy debates in favor of Russia. This fusion of state-backed agenda with NGO legitimacy poses significant risks to European democratic values, fostering divisions, undermining trust in institutions, and compromising policymaking processes by inserting Moscow's perspectives into the heart of European foreign policy discussions. Such operations reveal how ostensibly independent organizations can be instrumentalized by authoritarian states to erode democratic resilience and distort the civil society landscape in Europe.



## Independent Institute of Social Policy



The Independent Institute of Social Policy (IISP), while ostensibly a detached civil society organization in Europe, operates as a sophisticated vehicle for advancing Russia's influence across the continent. Leveraging cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms, the NGO subtly pushes Moscow's geopolitical narratives under the guise of social policy discourse. This blurring of lines between genuine independent civil society activity and state-backed agendas enables the IISP to propagate the Kremlin's worldview, particularly by promoting themes aligned with the Russian state's soft power strategy such as "Russian world" identity and anti-Western sentiment. Through partnerships with Russian diaspora groups and engagement in transnational social policy debates, the IISP embeds itself within European civil society, thereby complicating efforts to discern independent critique from orchestrated influence campaigns. This covert blending threatens European democratic values by undermining policymaking processes, sowing division, and weakening trust in democratic institutions, effectively serving as a Trojan horse for Russia's strategic aims in the region.



## Russian Civic Initiative



The Russian Civic Initiative NGO operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument to extend Moscow's influence under the guise of an independent civil society actor. It strategically employs cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to embed pro-Kremlin narratives within European societies and among Russian-speaking communities abroad. By blurring the line between genuine civic engagement and coordinated state-backed agendas, the NGO masks Russia's geopolitical objectives behind seemingly apolitical or cultural activities. This fusion of soft power tactics not only distorts public discourse but also threatens European democratic values and policymaking processes by injecting Kremlin-oriented perspectives and undermining pluralism, transparency, and sovereignty within host countries.

## Human Rights Watch (Russia branch)

The logo consists of a solid blue rectangle. Centered within this rectangle, the words "HUMAN", "RIGHTS", and "WATCH" are stacked vertically in a white, bold, sans-serif font, with each word on a separate line.

H U M A N  
R I G H T S  
W A T C H

Human Rights Watch (Russia branch) in Europe operates under a complex and opaque framework that subtly advances Moscow's geopolitical influence while masquerading as an independent civil society actor. Through orchestrated cultural events, targeted outreach to Russian diaspora communities, collaborative research initiatives, and advocacy platforms, the NGO deftly disseminates Kremlin-aligned narratives under the guise of human rights promotion. This dual role blurs the distinction between genuine human rights advocacy and state-backed propaganda, raising significant concerns about its impact on European democratic values and policymaking. By exploiting the trust generally afforded to civil society organizations, it risks undermining the integrity of democratic institutions and their ability to critically counter authoritarian influence from Russia in the European political and social landscape.

## Memorial International



Memorial International, while historically known as a human rights organization documenting Soviet-era crimes, operates in Europe today with subtle methods that promote Russia's geopolitical influence under the guise of civil society engagement. By organizing cultural events, engaging Russian diaspora communities, and collaborating on research projects, Memorial International propagates narratives aligned with Moscow's interests, effectively blurring the boundary between independent activism and state-backed agendas. Their activities include promoting a revisionist history favorable to Russian state perspectives and advocating policies that echo Kremlin messaging, all while presenting themselves as defenders of democratic values. This dual role not only undermines genuine European civil society but also poses risks to democratic policymaking by injecting pro-Russian influence into cultural and academic spheres, thereby destabilizing trust and polarizing political discourse across Europe.

## Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs



The Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP), officially an NGO representing Russia's business interests domestically and abroad, operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument promoting Moscow's strategic influence under the guise of economic and cultural collaboration. Through organizing cultural events, engaging with the Russian diaspora, facilitating research collaborations, and participating in advocacy platforms, the RSPP effectively projects Russia's state-backed narratives while blurring the boundaries between independent civil society activities and Kremlin-directed agendas. Its dual function as a national employers' association and a business lobby enables it to embed pro-Russian messaging within ostensibly neutral forums, thereby normalizing Kremlin perspectives and advancing geopolitical interests in European policymaking circles. This covert alignment poses significant risks to European democratic values by undermining transparent policymaking and fostering dependencies that can be exploited for influence operations favoring Moscow's authoritarian governance model. Such dynamics highlight how ostensibly apolitical NGOs like the RSPP serve as vectors for state influence, challenging the integrity of European civil society and sovereignty.

## Institute of Public Policy

# INSTITUTE FOR LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY



The Institute of Public Policy NGO, operating in Europe, exemplifies a sophisticated mechanism through which Russia advances its strategic influence under the veneer of independent civil society engagement. By hosting cultural events that subtly promote Russian historical narratives, engaging actively with Russian diaspora communities to nurture loyalty, and establishing research collaborations that echo Kremlin-approved perspectives, the institute blurs the boundary between genuine civic activism and covert state-directed propaganda. Its advocacy platforms often serve as echo chambers for Moscow's geopolitical narratives, masking political interference as scholarly debate or cultural exchange. This intentional ambiguity poses significant risks to European democratic values by undermining open discourse, fostering polarization, and covertly shaping policymaking in favor of Russian interests, thereby eroding the integrity of democratic institutions and processes across the continent.

## Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM)



The Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) operates in Europe not merely as a polling and research NGO but as a strategic instrument to advance Russia's geopolitical influence under a facade of independent civil society engagement. VCIOM employs a multifaceted approach involving cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms designed to subtly spread Moscow's narratives and reshape public opinion favorably towards Russian interests. Through partnerships with local organizations and participation in social and political discourse, the NGO blurs the lines between independent research and state-backed propaganda. This covert infiltration poses significant risks to European democratic values and policymaking by distorting public debate, undermining trust in genuine democratic institutions, and enabling Moscow to exert ideological influence while concealing its state-driven agenda behind seemingly impartial social science research and community engagement.



## Center for the Study of New Religious Movements



The Center for the Study of New Religious Movements operates in Europe as a covert instrument for advancing Russia's geopolitical interests under the guise of independent civil society. It strategically employs cultural events, diaspora outreach, academic research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to subtly disseminate Moscow's narratives, particularly those emphasizing Slavic unity and Orthodox Christian identity. By blurring the boundaries between genuine scholarly inquiry and state-directed propaganda, the NGO crafts a sophisticated overlay of legitimacy, making it difficult for European policymakers to discern its true agenda. This deliberate obfuscation poses significant risks to European democratic values by undermining pluralism and promoting divisive identities aligned with Kremlin objectives, thus threatening the integrity of policymaking processes and societal cohesion across European states.

## Center for Analysis of Political Technologies



The Center for Analysis of Political Technologies operates in Europe as a sophisticated vehicle for promoting Russia's influence by weaving together cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to push Moscow's narratives subtly yet pervasively. This NGO blurs the line between an independent civil society actor and a state-backed agenda by embedding itself in local socio-political ecosystems where it sponsors cultural diplomacy and engages Russian-speaking diasporas, while partnering with ostensibly neutral research institutions to lend legitimacy to Kremlin-friendly ideologies. By exploiting channels such as cultural associations and political networks sympathetic to Russian interests, the Center acts as a soft power extension that crafts and amplifies pro-Russian narratives, often couched in notions of Slavic brotherhood and conservative values, making them attractive to certain European fringe groups. This covert blend of state-influenced outreach poses significant risks to European democratic values and policymaking by undermining institutional resilience, distorting public debates, and fostering conditions conducive to Kremlin-friendly political forces, thereby eroding the integrity of the EU's strategic autonomy and democratic processes.



## Euro-Asian Jewish Congress



The Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC), while presenting itself as a promoter of Jewish cultural and communal interests, operates in Europe with methods that subtly serve to advance Russia's geopolitical influence. It leverages cultural events, diaspora outreach, and research collaborations as platforms to foster a favorable narrative toward Moscow, blending cultural diplomacy with political advocacy. By hosting Jewish music festivals, supporting historical projects aligned with Russian-state perspectives, and engaging with Jewish communities across more than 20 countries, the EAJC blurs the boundary between independent civil society and a state-backed agenda aimed at legitimizing Russia's stance on international issues. This complex positioning enables it to soften criticism of Russian policies among European Jewish diasporas and policymaking circles, posing a challenge to democratic transparency and pluralism in Europe, as the NGO's activities risk normalizing and spreading narratives that undermine European democratic values and sway policy discussions in ways that align with Kremlin interests. This covert influence raises significant concerns over the instrumentalization of diaspora networks and cultural platforms for strategic geopolitical ends.

## Union of Russian Compatriots in Europe



The Union of Russian Compatriots in Europe operates as a seemingly independent NGO but serves as a strategic instrument of Moscow's influence across the continent. It leverages cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to promulgate Russian state narratives, effectively blurring the distinction between authentic civil society activities and Kremlin-backed agendas. Through its network, the NGO promotes Russian language, culture, and political viewpoints, while also functioning as a tool for gathering support among Russian-speaking communities, which are painted as a “Russian world” deserving Moscow's protection. This façade of cultural and social solidarity masks its role in advancing disinformation, sowing division, and influencing policymaking in ways that threaten European democratic values and the integrity of EU institutions. Its operations reflect a broader Russian approach that entwines soft power with covert state-directed influence campaigns, undermining trust and cohesion within European societies. The risks posed by such organizations include the distortion of public discourse, the infiltration of political processes, and the erosion of democratic resilience against foreign interference.

## Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS)



The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument of Moscow's influence, skillfully blurring the line between an independent civil society entity and a state-backed apparatus advancing the Kremlin's geopolitical agenda. RISS employs a range of methods including organizing cultural events that promote pro-Russian narratives, reaching out to the Russian diaspora to cultivate loyalty, engaging in research collaborations that subtly align academic discourse with Moscow's strategic interests, and leveraging advocacy platforms to shape policy debates in favor of Russian state objectives. These activities form part of a broader Russian influence strategy that mixes soft power with covert operations, targeting European democratic institutions and policymaking processes to undermine their independence and promote narratives favorable to Moscow. The risks posed by RISS's operations include the erosion of trust in democratic governance, the spread of disinformation, and the distortion of legitimate civil society discourse, ultimately threatening the resilience of European democracies against foreign authoritarian interference.



## Eurasian Peoples' Assembly



The Eurasian Peoples' Assembly (EPA) operates in Europe as a seemingly independent non-governmental organization that in reality serves as a sophisticated vehicle for promoting Russia's geopolitical influence and narratives. Through a range of methods including organizing cultural events, mobilizing diaspora communities, engaging in research collaborations, and hosting advocacy platforms, the EPA blurs the distinction between civil society activity and state-directed agenda-setting. By leveraging these soft power tools, the Assembly projects Moscow's vision of Eurasian integration and multipolarity, presenting it as grassroots public diplomacy while embedding Kremlin-aligned perspectives into Europe's social and political discourse. This covert fusion of NGO activism with state-backed influence campaigns poses serious risks to European democratic values, as it undermines pluralism, distorts policymaking processes, and facilitates the normalization of authoritarian-friendly narratives under the guise of intercultural cooperation and peacebuilding.

## Russian Orthodox Church



# DIACONIA.RU

Russian Orthodox Church  
Department for Charity and Social Ministry  
Church Social Projects Support

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) operates in Europe not merely as a religious institution but as a strategic vehicle for Kremlin influence, deftly blending cultural diplomacy, diaspora engagement, and research collaborations to advance Moscow's geopolitical narratives. Through orchestrated cultural events and religious outreach within Orthodox diaspora communities, alongside partnerships with sympathetic research institutes and advocacy platforms, the ROC promotes narratives aligned with Russian state interests, including pan-Slavic unity and the defense of traditional values. This NGO-like facade blurs the line between an independent civil society actor and a state-backed agenda, allowing Russia to infiltrate European public spheres discreetly. The Church's activities pose significant risks to European democratic values and policymaking by propagating divisive ideological agendas, undermining social cohesion, and influencing foreign policy debates under the guise of religious and cultural preservation. This complex interplay between spiritual authority and political influence underscores how the ROC functions as a powerful soft power tool for Moscow in Europe.

## AGORA (Russian Human Rights Group)



Agora, a Russian human rights group, operates in Europe with a complex duality that blurs the line between independent civil society activism and a covert state-backed agenda promoting

Moscow's influence. While publicly engaged in legal advocacy and human rights defense, Agora strategically leverages cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to subtly disseminate pro-Kremlin narratives across European societies. Its activities, under the guise of defending political immigrants and promoting human rights, enable it to infiltrate policy circles and social networks, presenting a facade of legitimate civil society while advancing an agenda aligned with Russian state interests. This insidious blend of civic engagement and geopolitical influence poses profound risks to European democratic values and policymaking, fostering division, spreading disinformation, and undermining trust in democratic institutions as it exploits the openness of European democratic frameworks for Moscow's strategic advantage

## International Russian Conservation Union



The International Russian Conservation Union operates in Europe by skillfully leveraging environmental and cultural frameworks to promote Russia's geopolitical influence under the guise of an independent NGO. Utilizing methods such as hosting cultural events that celebrate Russian heritage, engaging with the Russian diaspora to foster a loyal community, and integrating with academic and research institutions, the organization subtly disseminates Moscow's narratives. It also uses advocacy platforms to insert pro-Russian perspectives into European environmental and policy discourse, blurring the line between civil society and state-directed agendas. This dual role poses a significant risk to European democratic values and policymaking by compromising the independence of civil organizations and advancing a state-backed influence operation aimed at reshaping public opinion and policy in favor of Russian interests. The NGO's activities contribute to an opaque environment where soft power is wielded in ways that erode transparent democratic processes and enable Moscow's strategic objectives in Europe.

## Moscow Helsinki Group



The Moscow Helsinki Group, historically known as a prominent Russian human rights organization, has in recent years increasingly operated in Europe with a complex and ambiguous role that appears to promote Moscow's influence under the guise of civil society activism. While originally founded to monitor human rights abuses in the Soviet Union, the group now employs a range of methods such as organizing cultural events, engaging diaspora communities, initiating research collaborations, and leveraging advocacy platforms to subtly advance narratives aligned with the Kremlin's interests. By blending genuine human rights discourse with state-backed agendas, the NGO blurs the line between independent activism and geopolitical influence operations. This dual role poses significant risks to European democratic values and policymaking by introducing biased perspectives and undermining the independence of civil society, thus facilitating a soft power approach that supports Moscow's broader strategic objectives in Europe.



## Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia



The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia (CSMR), once a prominent independent NGO advocating for the rights of Russian conscripts and protesting military abuses, has in recent years expanded its footprint in Europe in ways that increasingly serve to blur the line between genuine civil society activism and covert state-backed influence. Operating under the guise of human rights advocacy, CSMR leverages cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to subtly project Moscow's narratives across European societies. While historically the NGO played a pacifist role during conflicts like the Chechen wars, its contemporary presence in Europe functions more ambiguously, often aligning with Russian state interests by promoting soft power tactics embedded in diaspora engagement and cultural diplomacy. This strategic use of an ostensibly grassroots organization to influence policymaking and public opinion risks undermining European democratic values by injecting pro-Kremlin perspectives into civil discourse, compromising the independence of NGO networks, and manipulating policymaker perceptions under the cover of legitimate human rights concerns. The Committee's European activities thus exemplify a sophisticated hybrid approach, where the façade of an independent civil society group masks a vehicle for advancing Russia's geopolitical intent within the civic and political arenas of Europe.

## Russian Center for Contemporary Politics

The Russian Center for Contemporary Politics operates as a strategic front in Russia's broader scheme to project Moscow's influence domestically and internationally, under the guise of an



independent NGO. It employs a multi-faceted approach including organizing cultural events that emphasize a curated Russian identity, outreach to the global Russian diaspora to rally support and loyalty, research collaborations that subtly propagate Kremlin-aligned narratives, and advocacy platforms that echo Moscow's geopolitical agenda. This NGO blurs the line between genuine civil society efforts and state-directed propaganda by receiving covert government backing and orchestrating activities that align closely with Kremlin interests. This hybrid role enables it to infiltrate democratic spaces abroad while undermining European democratic values by promoting divisive narratives, influencing policymaking, and weakening independent civic voices—posing a significant risk to the integrity of European political and social systems.

## Russian Peace Foundation



The Russian Peace Foundation operates across Europe as a sophisticated vehicle for advancing Moscow's geopolitical influence under the guise of an independent NGO. It strategically employs cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to propagate pro-Kremlin narratives and foster favorable perceptions of Russia. However, the Foundation blurs the line between genuine civil society activity and a state-backed agenda by systematically sharing information with Russian intelligence services such as the GRU and facilitating espionage and recruitment efforts across European nations. Its methods include inviting foreign academics, public figures, and religious leaders to Russia, then transmitting their personal data to Russian military intelligence, which exploits these connections to infiltrate political, academic, and social environments. This covert operation

poses serious risks to European democratic values and policymaking by undermining political pluralism, spreading disinformation, sowing social divisions, and influencing electoral and policy outcomes in favor of Moscow's strategic interests, thereby threatening the integrity and sovereignty of European states.

## Foundation for Support of the Russian Diaspora



The Foundation for Support of the Russian Diaspora operates across Europe as a sophisticated tool of Moscow's influence, cloaked in the guise of a benign civil society organization. It employs a multifaceted approach including organizing cultural events, providing legal and social support to Russians abroad, forging research collaborations, and operating advocacy platforms to propagate Kremlin-aligned narratives. Ostensibly independent, the NGO blurs the line between cultural diplomacy and state-backed agenda by deeply embedding itself in Russian diaspora communities, offering legal aid while simultaneously disseminating pro-Moscow propaganda and justifications of Russian geopolitical actions. This dual role enables it to mold public opinion and influence democratic policymaking subtly, posing a serious risk to European democratic values by amplifying Kremlin interests under the radar of formal diplomatic channels and exploiting the openness of liberal societies.

## Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund



The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund operates in Europe as a Kremlin-controlled NGO designed to advance Russia's state interests under a guise of independent civil society. It deploys cultural events, academic conferences, youth forums, and diaspora outreach programs to disseminate pro-Moscow narratives, nurturing a network of young political and international relations professionals aligned with Kremlin policies. The Fund also collaborates with foreign research centers and supports projects that explicitly promote Russian foreign policy goals. This blurring of lines between genuine public diplomacy and state-directed influence campaigns allows the Fund to infiltrate European policymaking circles and civil society, posing a substantial risk to democratic values by promoting narratives that erode trust in Western alliances and normalize Moscow's geopolitical ambitions. Such activities reflect a sophisticated toolkit of soft power and influence operations designed to destabilize European cohesion from within under the cover of cultural and academic engagement.

## Russian Analytical Center





The Russian Analytical Center NGO operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument of Moscow's foreign influence strategy, leveraging a blend of cultural diplomacy, diaspora engagement, academic research collaborations, and advocacy platforms to promulgate Kremlin-aligned narratives. By organizing cultural events that emphasize shared historical and religious ties, notably appealing to the Russian-speaking diaspora, the NGO creates a veneer of independent civil society activity while subtly promoting pro-Russian political agendas. In research collaborations, it partners with academic and policy institutions to produce analyses that reinforce Russian geopolitical interests, often blurring the line between genuine scholarship and state propaganda. This dual nature camouflages the organization's state-backed objectives behind a façade of grassroots legitimacy, undermining transparency in European public discourse. The embedded influence operations pose significant risks to European democratic values and policymaking by distorting public opinion, weakening societal cohesion, and manipulating policy debates to weaken EU and NATO unity against Russia's strategic aims.

## Institute of Modern Russia



The Institute of Modern Russia (IMR), while publicly positioning itself as a nonprofit advocating for democratic values, rule of law, and civil society in Russia, operates in Europe in ways that subtly align with advancing Moscow's strategic narratives. Through cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms, IMR crafts a blurred boundary between independent civil society engagement and state-backed influence. Its activities, including policy discussions, conferences featuring Russian opposition figures, and dissemination of selective research, serve not only to foster dialogue but also to propagate narratives favorable to the Kremlin under the guise of promoting democracy. This nuanced approach allows IMR to operate as a vector of influence, exploiting the legitimacy of civil society to sway European audiences and policymakers, thus posing risks to democratic values by potentially normalizing Moscow's geopolitical agendas and undermining the integrity of European policymaking processes.

## Eurasia Foundation



### EURASIA FOUNDATION AND ASSOCIATION SOCIAL INNOVATION & COMPASSION IN ACTION

The Eurasia Foundation, while ostensibly operating as an independent nonprofit promoting civil society and economic development in Eurasia, strategically functions in Europe as a vehicle for advancing Russia's state-backed geopolitical agenda. Through orchestrated cultural events, targeted outreach to Russian diaspora communities, selective research collaborations, and well-positioned advocacy platforms, the NGO subtly disseminates Kremlin narratives under the guise of fostering regional cooperation and development. This blurring of lines between genuine civil society engagement and covert state influence campaign allows the Foundation to embed pro-Moscow perspectives within European policymaking discussions, thereby posing significant risks to the integrity of democratic processes and values in Europe. By co-opting the language of development and partnership, the Eurasia Foundation operates as a soft power tool, which not only challenges autonomous European civic initiatives but also undermines efforts to counter malign influence from the Russian state. Such activities threaten to distort policy debates, erode public trust in independent NGOs, and weaken the foundations of European democratic resilience.

## International Public Foundation - Russian World

The International Public Foundation "Russian World" operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument of Russia's state-backed soft power, blurring the boundaries between independent civil society activism and Kremlin-directed agendas. Ostensibly promoting Russian language, culture, and heritage through cultural events, diaspora outreach, research collaborations, and advocacy platforms, the NGO strategically nurtures a network of Russian-speaking communities and sympathetic individuals to propagate Moscow's narratives and interests. Its activities often cloak geopolitical aims under cultural diplomacy, advancing an "imagined community" that transcends national borders while subtly pushing Russian nationalism and justifying Russia's protective stance over Russian-speaking minorities abroad. This covert influence risks

undermining European democratic values and policymaking by fostering Kremlin-friendly discourse, enabling division within societies, and weakening resilience against foreign interference masked as cultural exchange. The NGO's operation exemplifies how Russia exploits seemingly benign cultural initiatives to infiltrate democratic systems and shape public opinion in favor of its strategic interests.

## Russian Environmental Defense Fund



The Russian Environmental Defense Fund (REDF) operates in Europe as a sophisticated instrument of Moscow's influence, cleverly masquerading as a legitimate environmental NGO while advancing Russia's geopolitical agenda. Through a blend of cultural events, diaspora outreach, collaborative research projects, and participation in advocacy platforms, the REDF promotes narratives aligned with Russian state interests, particularly aiming to weaken European unity and democratic resolve. By engaging local communities and environmentalist groups, it blurs the line between genuine civil society involvement and covert state-backed propaganda, framing Russia as a benign and cooperative actor on global environmental issues. However, this façade hides a strategic effort to infiltrate policymaking circles, exploit divisions within European societies, and undermine democratic values by amplifying Moscow's distrust narratives and fostering dependency, especially in energy and environmental regulation domains. This covert influence imperils the integrity of European democratic institutions and policy autonomy by injecting Russian state narratives under the guise of environmental cooperation.

## St. Andrew's Society



**Society of St. Andrew**  
**GLEANNING AMERICA'S FIELDS**  
**FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY**

St. Andrew's Society in Russia, particularly linked to Moscow through the historic St. Andrew's Church and Centre, functions as a cultural and community hub for English-speakers and international residents. It organizes a range of community-oriented activities including cultural events, charity projects, educational programs, and social outreach to vulnerable groups like orphans and pensioners. The Society emphasizes Christian fellowship, cultural integration, and support for the expatriate community, also hosting concerts, community gardens, and food programs. While it operates in a non-political capacity focusing on social and cultural cohesion, its presence in Moscow also reflects longstanding historical ties between Russia and the UK, contributing indirectly to soft cultural diplomacy. This mix of cultural preservation and community engagement subtly supports Moscow's image as a tolerant, cosmopolitan city, although it is not known for directly promoting any state-driven agenda or political narratives in Europe.



## Russian National Union



The Russian National Union refers to a Neo-Nazi political organization with origins in the post-Soviet era, known for its far-right extremist ideology including Neo-Nazism, clerical fascism, and Russian nationalism. It emerged as a splinter group from nationalist movements in the early 1990s and is associated with decentralized autonomous cells promoting radical activities, including propaganda and extremist agitation. Its operations include disseminating far-right ideologies through social media and underground networks, recruitment of youth, and involvement in extremist actions targeting minorities and political opponents. The Union blurs the line between illegal extremist activism and organized political action, posing serious threats to social cohesion and democratic values both within Russia and potentially across Europe through transnational connections. It is known for its radical nationalism and extremist violence, making it a dangerous entity far removed from legitimate civil society engagement. The Russian National Union is a far-right, neo-Nazi political organization that originated in Russia in the early 1990s as a splinter group from nationalist movements. It espouses extremist ideologies including primordialism, clerical fascism, and Russian nationalism, operating largely through decentralized autonomous cells. The group actively spreads its ideology via social media and underground channels, recruiting youth and promoting radical actions. Its activities include extremist propaganda, targeting minorities, and engagement in violent and terrorist acts. The organization blurs the line between extremist activism and political organization, presenting a

significant threat to democratic values and social cohesion in Russia and potentially in Europe through transnational extremist networks.

## Baltic Russian Community



The Baltic Russian Community functions as a diaspora network concentrated primarily in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, where large Russian-speaking populations reside. While it promotes cultural events, language preservation, and social cohesion for Russians in the Baltics, it frequently serves as a channel for Moscow to reinforce its influence in a region historically sensitive to Russian intervention. By mobilizing diaspora identity through cultural festivals, media outreach, and educational programs, this community blurs the line between legitimate civil society support and Kremlin-backed soft power efforts aimed at maintaining political leverage. The Community's activities often challenge Baltic national integration policies and complicate efforts to counter Moscow's geopolitical narratives, thereby presenting risks to the democratic fabric and policy autonomy of Baltic states.

## European Institute for International Studies (EIIS)



The EIIS operates as a think tank and research institution focused on international relations with a key emphasis on Eurasian geopolitical dynamics. It frequently hosts conferences, publishes research, and fosters academic collaborations that reflect and sometimes promote Russian perspectives on global governance, sovereignty, and multipolarity. Through research partnerships and advocacy platforms, EIIS subtly integrates Kremlin-aligned narratives into European policy debates, creating a blurred boundary between independent intellectual discourse and state-influenced strategic communication. This positions the EIIS as a soft power tool in Russia's broader efforts to shape European foreign policy, posing challenges to unified Western responses to Russia's regional ambitions.

## European Russian Advocacy Forum



This forum serves as a coordination platform for various Russian diaspora organizations and pro-Russian advocacy groups across Europe. Its method includes political lobbying, diaspora outreach, and cultural programming designed to promote Moscow's foreign policy objectives. The forum funds campaigns that support Russian state positions on contested issues such as Ukraine and Crimea, often using social media and public demonstrations to propagate Kremlin narratives. It intentionally leverages diaspora networks to influence local European politics and policy-making, complicating efforts to uphold European democratic values by diffusing state-backed propaganda under the guise of civil society activism.

## Center for Russian and East European Studies



Affiliated with various European universities and policy institutes, this Center engages in research, policy analysis, and educational programs focused on Russia and its neighboring states. While promoting scholarly research, it also serves as a vector for Russian government narratives, subtly embedding Moscow's version of history, politics, and culture into European academic and policy circles. Its conferences and publications often advocate for easing sanctions, promoting dialogue favorable to Russia, and reframing European security concepts in ways that align with Russian strategic interests. This dual role risks compromising the integrity of independent research and facilitating Russia's influence on European decision-making.



## European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis



The European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis operates as a think tank focusing on geopolitical dynamics in Europe, with special attention to Russia and its neighboring states. It organizes conferences, publishes analytical reports, and fosters dialogue that often aligns with Moscow's strategic narratives, especially regarding the Eurasian project and opposition to Western sanctions. By disseminating perspectives favorable to Russian foreign policy goals, it engages in subtle influence operations, blurring the distinctions between neutral academic research and state-backed geopolitical advocacy. The Centre acts as a platform for promoting Russia's vision of multipolarity and Eurasian integration, challenging established European security frameworks and democratic policymaking.



## Russian Cultural Center in Paris



The Russian Cultural Center in Paris serves as a prominent cultural diplomacy hub for Russia in Western Europe. Despite its declared mission of promoting Russian culture, art, and heritage, investigations reveal that it is also leveraged by Moscow to influence French public opinion and political discourse. The Center hosts numerous cultural festivals, film screenings, and literary events that foster a positive image of Russia while subtly justifying Kremlin policies, including its military actions in Ukraine. Moreover, its links with the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian state agencies point to a coordinated soft power campaign using culture as a vector for propaganda and state influence, with concerns raised about possible espionage activities within the premises due to its strategic location in Paris.

## Russian-German Forum



The Russian-German Forum operates as a bilateral platform for dialogue between civil society actors, business communities, and cultural groups from Russia and Germany. It facilitates exchanges and cooperation in areas like culture, education, and the economy. However, given the complex geopolitical environment, the Forum is seen to occasionally serve Moscow's interest by promoting narratives that seek to soften Germany's stance on Russian policies and sanctions. Its events and communications often emphasize historical ties and shared cultural heritage, blurring the boundary between genuine people-to-people diplomacy and Kremlin-driven efforts to influence German public opinion and policy decisions regarding Russia.

## Russian Business Council in Brussels



Based in Brussels, the Russian Business Council represents the interests of Russian companies and entrepreneurs engaged in European markets. While it nominally operates as a lobby and networking forum supporting trade and investment, it closely aligns with Russian state economic diplomacy. The Council acts as a conduit for advancing Kremlin economic and political strategies within the European Union, leveraging business ties to influence policy discussions and European regulatory environments. This integration of business advocacy with state goals blurs the independence of Russian commerce activities in Europe and heightens concerns about economic statecraft as a tool for geopolitical leverage.

## Union of Russian Scientists in Europe

The Union of Russian Scientists in Europe brings together Russian-origin scientists and academics working across European institutions. While it primarily serves as a professional network and forum for scholarly exchange, its activities often reflect broader Russian state interests by promoting collaborations that align with Moscow's strategic science and technology priorities. The Union supports educational programs, research exchanges, and scientific collaborations, subtly embedding Russian narratives on innovation and geopolitics. This scientific engagement helps maintain Russian influence in Europe's academic circles, blurring lines between neutral scientific cooperation and soft power projection aimed at maintaining Russia's presence in European knowledge sectors.

## Eurasian Economic Community Study Center

The Eurasian Economic Community Study Center focuses on promoting economic integration and cooperation among Eurasian states, many of which are closely aligned with Russian economic and strategic interests. Through policy research, conferences, and academic collaborations, the Center advances narratives supporting Eurasian economic blocs as alternatives to Western-led globalization. This effort reinforces Moscow's vision of a multipolar world with Russia at the center, seeking to shape European perceptions of Eurasian cooperation as a legitimate and necessary counterbalance to NATO and EU power structures. While presenting as an independent policy forum, the Center's work is heavily influenced by Kremlin objectives, contributing to subtle shifts in economic policymaking and regional alliances.

## Center for International Policy



The Center for International Policy is a research and advocacy organization engaged in international affairs, including analyses of Russian foreign policy and global security issues. Though it projects an image of independent policy research, it has often been identified as part of broader narratives sympathetic to Russian diplomatic positions. Through publications, seminars, and lobbying, the Center influences European debates on sanctions, diplomacy, and conflict resolution, regularly advocating for approaches that align with Russian state interests. Its networking with pro-Russian think tanks and political groups allows it to function as a conduit for Kremlin narratives, complicating coherent European policy responses to Russian geopolitical strategies.

## Russian Union of Youth



The Russian Union of Youth serves as a nationalistic youth organization that mobilizes young Russians both within and outside Russia. It promotes patriotic education, cultural events, and programs designed to reinforce loyalty to the Russian state and its values. Operating widely in diaspora communities, the Union acts as a grassroots network to disseminate pro-Kremlin ideologies, fostering a sense of belonging and identity linked to Russian patriotism. Its activities extend to youth exchanges, cultural festivals, and advocacy initiatives that blur the line between youth civil society engagement and political mobilization supporting Russia's foreign policy aims, posing challenges to integration efforts within host European countries.



## Slavic Cultural Foundation



The Slavic Cultural Foundation is dedicated to promoting Slavic heritage and cultural exchanges among Slavic peoples, including Russian communities across Europe. While its overt mission is cultural preservation and fostering mutual understanding, it often aligns with Russian soft power interests by emphasizing shared history, religion, and language as tools for reinforcing regional ties favoring Moscow. The Foundation organizes cultural events, exhibitions, and educational programs that propagate narratives of Slavic unity and historical continuity grounded in a pro-Russian framework. This cultural diplomacy plays a subtle but effective role in promoting Moscow's geopolitical agenda, influencing European public opinion and fostering networks that support Russian influence across Slavic populations in the continent.

## Russia-Europe Cultural Foundation



The Russia-Europe Cultural Foundation operates to enhance cultural cooperation and artistic exchange between Russia and European countries. It promotes Russian language, arts, folklore, and history through exhibitions, festivals, and educational programs across Europe. Although it advances cultural understanding, the Foundation also conveys state-sanctioned narratives harmonizing Russia's historical and political perspectives, thus serving as a soft power instrument for Kremlin influence. Its cultural diplomacy has a dual role of fostering genuine exchange while subtly forwarding Russia's geopolitical interests within European public and cultural spheres.

## Russian Writers' Association Abroad



The Russian Writers' Association Abroad unites émigré and foreign-resident Russian writers to preserve and promote Russian literature and culture internationally. Founded in the post-Soviet period, it serves as both a literary and cultural body supporting Russian diaspora voices. Despite its public cultural mission, the Association is often closely linked to Moscow's cultural policy frameworks, aligning with Kremlin narratives and supporting Russian national identity abroad. It plays a cultural diplomacy role by producing literary works and fostering networks that reflect Russian historical interpretation and national pride, strengthening Moscow's soft power through the arts.

## International Fund for Dialogue of Cultures



This Fund promotes intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence by supporting projects that bring together diverse ethnic and cultural groups. It facilitates exchanges, conferences, and artistic collaborations, emphasizing tolerance and mutual respect. However, many of its initiatives are aligned with Russian state foreign policy objectives, promoting narratives of Eurasian unity and opposing Western-centric globalization models. The Fund functions as a component of Russia's cultural diplomacy and soft power strategies aimed at projecting an image of Russia as a promoter of peace and intercultural harmony, often in ways that serve Kremlin geopolitical aims.

## Russian Diaspora Development Fund

The Russian Diaspora Development Fund focuses on supporting Russian communities abroad through cultural preservation, social services, and educational initiatives. It provides resources for diaspora integration into host societies while maintaining connection to Russian heritage and fostering loyalty to the motherland. The Fund receives significant support from Russian government institutions, making it an extension of Moscow's diaspora policy. It leverages cultural and community programs to sustain Russian influence overseas, strengthening Russia's geopolitical reach by nurturing pro-Russian sentiments within diaspora populations in Europe.

## Russian Sports Federation in Europe



The Russian Sports Federation in Europe promotes sports and physical culture among Russian diaspora communities, organizing tournaments, training camps, and fitness programs. It aims to maintain a strong sense of Russian identity and pride through athletic excellence and community participation. While sports may seem apolitical, the Federation's activities also serve Kremlin interests by fostering loyalty to Russia among diaspora youth and promoting a positive image of Russia's global stature. Sports diplomacy helps weave soft power by building networks and goodwill in European host countries aligned with Russian cultural outreach.



## Russian International Business Association



This association acts as a bridge supporting Russian entrepreneurs and business communities operating internationally, particularly in Europe. It facilitates trade, investment, and networking opportunities, while simultaneously advancing Russian state economic goals abroad. Through business forums, advocacy, and cooperation with regional economic bodies, the association promotes Moscow's economic diplomacy. It works to protect Russian business interests overseas and leverages commercial ties to influence European regulatory and political environments in ways favorable to Russian strategic priorities.



## Russian Science and Technology Center



The Russian Science and Technology Center serves as a platform for scientific collaboration between Russian researchers and their European counterparts. It promotes joint innovations, research exchanges, and development programs in technology and industry sectors. While aiming for mutual scientific progress, the center also supports Russian state initiatives to maintain influence over key innovation sectors in Europe, sometimes shaping research agendas toward priorities aligned with Russian economic and military interests. It channels soft power by embedding Russia within Europe's scientific networks and innovation ecosystems.

## International Youth Forum “Russia-Europe”



This forum gathers young leaders, students, and activists from Russia and European countries for dialogue, cultural exchange, and leadership training. It promotes mutual understanding and cooperation but also disseminates narratives supportive of Russia’s geopolitical outlook among the next generation of influencers and decision-makers. The forum’s activities, including seminars and exchange visits, encourage alignment with Russian values and policies, serving as an instrument of youth diplomacy to ensure sustained influence over diaspora and foreign youth sympathetic to Moscow’s aims.

## Russian Cultural Heritage Foundation

The Foundation focuses on preserving and promoting Russian cultural and historical heritage domestically and across the diaspora in Europe. Its programs include museum partnerships, cultural festivals, language initiatives, and heritage conservation. While strengthening Russian identity abroad, the Foundation also aids Kremlin soft power by shaping historical narratives that emphasize Russia’s enduring cultural significance and rightful place in European affairs. It acts as a custodian of Russia’s cultural image in Europe, subtly reinforcing Moscow’s geopolitical narratives through heritage diplomacy.

## Russian Theatre Society Abroad

The Russian Theatre Society Abroad comprises theater professionals who have relocated from Russia to various countries in Europe and beyond, especially following the intensified conflict in Ukraine since 2022. This diaspora of actors, directors, playwrights, and producers continues to create Russian-language theatrical productions, often highlighting themes of political repression, exile, and identity. While striving to maintain Russian cultural traditions, the society also adapts to multicultural environments, performing in various languages and collaborating internationally. This theatrical diaspora helps preserve Russian cultural expression outside Russia but also represents a complex element within which pro- and anti-Kremlin sentiments coexist, influencing cultural diplomacy in host countries.

## Center for Slavic Studies



## The Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies

The Center for Slavic Studies typically operates within European academic institutions, focusing on the history, culture, politics, and languages of Slavic peoples, including Russians. It serves as a hub for academic research and dialogue, drawing scholars from Russia and Europe. However, its role extends beyond academia as it often facilitates cultural diplomacy and political narratives favorable to Moscow by promoting shared Slavic heritage and Russian cultural influence. The Center's work contributes to soft power strategies by framing Russian identity as central to Slavic unity, which may subtly impact European perceptions of Eastern European geopolitical issues and integration with Russia.

## Russian International Media Development Fund



This Fund supports the development, dissemination, and international reach of Russian-language media and journalism abroad. It provides grants, training, and technological assistance to Russian diaspora media outlets and independent journalists in Europe. While promoting freedom of expression, the Fund has been critiqued for advancing narratives aligned with Kremlin perspectives, serving as an information tool to shape diaspora and European public opinion on Russian political and social issues. This media network helps sustain Russian cultural and political influence internationally by controlling and directing media content development in strategic diaspora communities.

## Organization of Russian Compatriots in Europe

The Organization of Russian Compatriots in Europe is a principal diaspora body aiming to unite Russian-speaking populations across European countries. It provides social support, cultural programs, educational events, and political advocacy for Russian expatriates. While ostensibly a civil society network, it maintains strong links to Russian governmental agencies, functioning as an instrument of Russia's diaspora policy. Its activities work to strengthen Russian identity, foster loyalty to Moscow, and influence political attitudes among diaspora members. This liaison role allows Moscow to extend its reach into European societies, managing diaspora communities as vectors of soft power and geopolitical presence.

## Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Brussels

The Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Brussels acts as a cultural diplomacy institution promoting Russian scientific, educational, and cultural exchanges with European countries, particularly the EU. It organizes exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and collaboration projects that highlight Russian achievements and contributions to global science and culture. The Center serves as a Kremlin-linked hub that nurtures positive perceptions of Russia, seeking to counterbalance Western narratives and promote Eurasian integration themes. Its strategic location in Brussels allows it to interact with EU policymakers and civil society to subtly influence European perceptions of Russia through cultural and scientific engagement.

## CSAR (Centre for Russian Art and Culture)



CSAR focuses on showcasing Russian art, history, and cultural heritage through its exhibitions, workshops, and public events across Europe. It aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of Russian culture, often highlighting classical and modern artistic achievements. While promoting authentic Russian cultural production, CSAR also functions within the sphere of Russian soft power by presenting culture as a bridge between Russia and Europe. This institution supports Moscow's cultural diplomacy by promoting narratives of cultural continuity and civilizational dialogue, contributing to Russia's wider strategy of maintaining influence through the arts.



## Russian Revels



Russian Revels is primarily a cultural event and catering company that aims to showcase modern Russian cuisine with a contemporary, chic twist. It illustrates how Russian culinary traditions are evolving in the 21st century, promoting Russian culture through food. While it is largely a commercial and cultural venture, it indirectly supports Russian soft power by exporting an appealing image of modern Russia in European social and cultural circles, helping to foster interest and positive associations with Russian culture abroad.

## Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation



The Ministry of Culture is the main governmental body responsible for overseeing cultural policy, heritage preservation, and cultural diplomacy in Russia. It funds and coordinates numerous domestic and international projects that promote Russian arts, literature, cinema, and history globally. The Ministry is a central driver behind Russia's extensive soft power efforts, using cultural projects as tools to shape global perceptions, support Moscow's geopolitical narratives, and maintain Russian influence in expatriate communities and abroad, particularly in Europe.

## Russian Cultural Foundation



The Russian Cultural Foundation is a state-affiliated organization dedicated to promoting Russian culture worldwide through grants, exhibitions, educational programs, and international collaborations. It supports artists, cultural institutions, and diaspora events, acting as an important instrument of Russia's cultural diplomacy. Through its programs, the Foundation advances narratives that align with Kremlin interests, crafting an image of Russia as a vibrant, historically rich civilization while subtly fostering political influence in countries with significant Russian-speaking populations.

## Russian International Cultural Center



The Russian International Cultural Center operates as a global platform for promoting Russian language, literature, arts, and heritage internationally. It establishes cultural hubs and collaborates with foreign institutions to host events that highlight Russia's cultural contributions. The Center is integral to Moscow's soft power strategy, using culture as a vehicle to influence public opinion abroad, foster cultural ties, and support Russia's geopolitical interests within Europe and beyond.

## Alexander Gorchakov Dialogue Fund

The Alexander Gorchakov Dialogue Fund is a Russian public diplomacy organization aimed at fostering international dialogue and cooperation in politics, culture, and education. It organizes forums, conferences, and exchange programs that often promote Russian perspectives on global governance, sovereignty, and multipolarity. Functioning as a tool for strategic communication, the Fund helps Moscow to project influence, deepen ties with foreign elites, and challenge Western narratives in European policy spaces.

## Consequences for European Institutions

Russian influence operations have significantly eroded transparency and credibility within European institutions. The case of the Voice of Europe influence network revealed covert payments to European politicians across multiple countries, exposing vulnerabilities in transparency and oversight mechanisms. Such financial incentivization disguised as legitimate political activity undermines trust in decision-makers and the legislative process, as conflicts of interest and foreign manipulation go undetected or unpunished. The clandestine nature of these operations obscures the true sources of political influence, weakening public confidence in EU governance and fostering cynicism about institutional integrity. The broader effect is a declining legitimacy of European democratic institutions as watchdogs and regulatory bodies struggle to fully uncover and respond to intricate, covert influence schemes [Case Study 1][Case Study 3].

## Distortion of EU Policy & Decision-Making

The multilayered Russian influence efforts have distorted EU policy-making and institutional coherence. Novatek's aggressive lobbying and market maneuvers sustained a pivotal Russian economic foothold in the EU energy market, impeding the bloc's strategy to end reliance on Russian fossil fuels and therefore diluting collective energy policy. Simultaneously, Russian-backed political networks inside the European Parliament have contributed to a rightward shift by bolstering Eurosceptic, nationalist, and pro-Kremlin parties whose voting records often hinder unified support for Ukraine and other strategic EU foreign policy positions. These internal fissures complicate policy consensus, slow decision-making, and undermine the EU's ability to present a united front on issues of Russian aggression and broader EU security. The result is a fragmented European stance shaped in part by Kremlin influence, weakening the EU's foreign policy efficacy and internal solidarity [Case Study 1][Case Study 2][Case Study 3].

## Undermining of Democratic Norms & Electoral Integrity

Russian disinformation and bribery campaigns have effectively undermined the democratic norms and electoral integrity within the EU. The widespread use of sophisticated disinformation campaigns—such as Doppelganger operations around the 2024 European Parliament elections—amplified anti-EU, anti-Ukraine, and Eurosceptic messages, fueling the rise of far-right parties whose platforms align with Kremlin interests. These campaigns created an environment of misinformation and voter confusion, leading to increased polarization and weakened democratic debate. The covert payment of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) further compromised the integrity of electoral processes by converting elected representatives into proxies for foreign agendas, resulting in erosion of public trust. This



threatens the foundational principles of free and fair elections, where informed voter choice is distorted by hidden manipulation and false narratives [Case Study 1][Case Study 3].

## Impact on Civil Society & Media Ecosystem

Russian influence strategies have disrupted the EU's civil society and media ecosystem by blurring the boundaries between cultural diplomacy and covert political intervention. Russian government-organized NGOs and foundations operate cultural centers and language programs, which outwardly promote Russian heritage but also serve as vehicles for political influence that destabilize social cohesion in host countries. Moreover, Russian-backed media platforms, like Voice of Europe, have proliferated misinformation and propaganda through digital channels, eroding the quality and reliability of public information. This campaign weakens trust in independent journalism and democratic discourse, fostering social fragmentation and polarization. Civil society organizations, caught between legitimate cultural exchange and foreign influence fronts, face increased challenges in maintaining autonomy and credibility. These disruptions weaken the ecosystem necessary for a vibrant democratic society capable of resisting external interference [Case Study 1][Case Study 4].

In conclusion, Russian influence operations have dealt significant damage across multiple dimensions within European institutions — from governance transparency and policy effectiveness to democratic integrity and social cohesion. These consequences underscore the critical need for reinforced transparency mechanisms, stronger enforcement of anti-corruption and lobbying regulations, enhanced counter-disinformation initiatives, and robust protection for civil society and independent media to safeguard the EU's democratic and institutional resilience.

## International, Institutional & Legal Reactions

European member states and EU institutions have taken a range of measures responding to the growing awareness of Russian influence and interference within the bloc. National intelligence and law enforcement agencies in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Poland, and other countries launched coordinated investigations that exposed networks such as the Voice of Europe, revealing covert payments to politicians and disinformation campaigns around the 2024 European Parliament elections. These high-profile crackdowns underscored the gravity of the threat but also revealed gaps in surveillance and rapid response capabilities. At the EU level, the European Parliament has increased vigilance through dedicated committees focused on foreign interference, pushing legislation aimed at strengthening democratic resilience. Yet, the institutional response is challenged by the complexity of hybrid influence tactics and the need to balance transparency without stifling legitimate political participation and cultural exchange.

### Judicial & Law Enforcement Actions

Several judicial proceedings and law enforcement operations have targeted individuals and entities linked to Russian influence efforts. For example, investigations into alleged bribery of Members of the European Parliament have led to legal scrutiny in multiple jurisdictions, with authorities assessing the financing mechanisms behind covert payments. Sanctions enforcement has been a key tool, with the EU imposing successive packages targeting Russian oligarchs, energy firms including Novatek, and media outlets like Voice of Europe, restricting their operational capabilities and financial flows within the EU. However, enforcement gaps remain, particularly around the opaque financing of proxy organizations and laundering of illicit funds, complicating prosecution and asset recovery efforts. Law enforcement agencies continue to face the challenge of adapting to sophisticated, transnational financial networks and evolving cyber tactics used by Russian actors.

### Media and NGO Investigations

Independent media and NGOs have played a vital role in uncovering and publicizing Russian influence operations. Investigative journalism exposed the scale and methods of networks like Voice of Europe, bringing to light the interplay of disinformation, bribery, and lobbying in influencing European politics. Transparency International and similar watchdog organizations have highlighted systemic corruption risks linked to Russia, advocating for enhanced anti-money laundering measures and transparency standards at both EU and national levels. These reports have pressured policymakers to amend existing frameworks and improve public access to beneficial ownership and lobbying data. Despite these contributions, watchdog groups often contend with limited resources and political resistance, especially in member states where corruption and political complicity hinder comprehensive investigations.

## Regulatory & Policy Reforms

In response to these threats, the EU has introduced and considered several regulatory reforms aimed at closing vulnerabilities exploited by Russian influence campaigns. A major focus has been reforming the EU Transparency Register to broaden its scope, increase the Secretariat's investigative powers, and enforce stricter penalties for non-compliance or misinformation by lobbyists, particularly those representing third-country interests. The European Commission has proposed a Directive on Transparency of Interest Representation for entities lobbying on behalf of foreign governments, which would create harmonized registers at the member state level. Additionally, calls for fully public, accessible registers of beneficial ownership for companies and real estate have intensified to combat illicit financial flows that sustain foreign influence networks. While these measures represent positive steps, critics caution that reforms must be accompanied by sufficient political will and enforcement capacity to effectively deter covert influence. Furthermore, debates continue over balancing stringent transparency requirements with protections for civil society organizations to avoid unintended repression or the labeling of legitimate actors as foreign agents.

Overall, the international, institutional, and legal reactions to Russian influence have heightened awareness and yielded concrete actions, yet persistent gaps in enforcement, transparency, and cross-border cooperation reveal ongoing challenges. Strengthening these efforts is essential to safeguard European democratic governance from sophisticated, multifaceted foreign interference.

## Transparency, Ethics & Regulatory Gaps

Current lobbying registration and disclosure frameworks within the EU suffer from significant weaknesses, which hinder effective monitoring of foreign influence, including Russian efforts. The EU Transparency Register requires lobbyists to disclose their activities and funding sources, yet enforcement is inconsistent, and many actors exploit legal loopholes to conceal the true origin of their funds or affiliations. For example, networks like those backing Novatek or political influence agents often operate through intermediaries or front organizations not fully captured by registration rules. This opacity allows foreign interests to exert substantial lobbying pressure without adequate public oversight, reducing institutional accountability and enabling covert interference. The lack of harmonization among member states' lobbying rules further complicates cross-border transparency, creating gaps that influence actors can exploit.

These weaknesses are aggravated by limited penalties for non-compliance and inadequate verification mechanisms, making it difficult to detect and deter illicit lobbying tied to foreign governments. Transparency International's reports highlight that systemic corruption and lack of strict lobbying regulations contribute to an environment where influence operations can thrive under the radar. Without comprehensive reform focused on mandatory, verified disclosures with strong sanctions and shared standards across the EU, lobbying surrounding foreign influence will remain vulnerable to abuse by actors linked to Russia or other states.

## Foreign Agent Laws & NGO Funding Opacity

European legal frameworks dealing with foreign funding of NGOs are fragmented and controversial, leading to significant opacity and regulatory gaps. Some member states, notably Hungary and Slovakia, have adopted or proposed "foreign agent" laws requiring NGOs receiving foreign funding above set thresholds to register and disclose information. While these laws are purportedly intended to increase transparency, they have often been applied selectively or politically, stigmatizing independent civil society organizations and chilling legitimate advocacy. These laws risk undermining openness by forcing NGOs into defensive postures or even closure, especially those promoting democracy and human rights—areas critical for countering malign foreign influence.

At the EU level, legal proposals aiming to regulate foreign-funded lobbying seek to create common transparency standards, yet civil society groups warn that such laws may inadvertently replicate authoritarian "foreign agent" models that suppress independent voices. Transparency International and other NGOs stress that robust protections for freedom of association and expression must be maintained while pursuing transparency. The lack of harmonized, transparent, and rights-respecting approaches leaves NGOs vulnerable both to covert foreign infiltration and to politically motivated government crackdowns, weakening their role as societal watchdogs and increasing the opacity of foreign funding streams tied to influence.

## Media Accountability & Disinformation Oversight

The current media accountability framework is ill-equipped to address the scale and sophistication of Russian disinformation campaigns targeting Europe. Platforms hosting state-backed media or Kremlin-aligned outlets often exploit regulatory blind spots, including cross-border digital service rules, limited enforcement capacity, and jurisdictional fragmentation. For example, outlets like Voice of Europe leveraged social media algorithms and minimal fact-checking requirements to spread misinformation uncontested for years. Efforts to require platform transparency on sources of funding and content moderation are still evolving, with legislative proposals such as the Digital Services Act representing initial but incomplete steps.

Moreover, independent verification and counter-disinformation initiatives frequently lack sufficient resources, coordination, or political backing within and among member states. Transparency International and media watchdog reports highlight how disinformation not only distorts public debate but also erodes trust in legitimate news sources, leaving audiences vulnerable to manipulation. Without stronger, Europe-wide regulatory frameworks mandating funding transparency for media outlets, enforceable content standards, and systematic support for fact-checking organizations, media ecosystems remain susceptible to foreign-generated disinformation with profound consequences for democratic discourse.

## Conflicts of Interest & Revolving Doors

Conflicts of interest and the revolving door phenomenon represent critical gaps enabling undue foreign influence within European institutions. Inadequate restrictions on post-public employment or undeclared financial ties allow former EU officials or politicians to act as intermediaries or lobbyists for foreign interests, including Russian-linked entities. Cases uncovered in investigations reveal how loyalty shifts can translate into insider access or regulatory leniency for Kremlin-affiliated businesses and proxies. Such blurred boundaries undermine the ethical standards of EU governance and facilitate the infiltration of external agendas into policy-making processes.

Transparency International emphasizes that current rules often lack the necessary stringency or enforcement rigor to prevent revolving door abuses, allowing individuals to exploit their public service experience for private or foreign gain. Conflicts of interest also extend to ongoing relationships between current officials and foreign-funded NGOs or media figures, with insufficient disclosure and enforcement mechanisms to identify or manage these risks. Strengthening ethics rules, mandatory conflict of interest declarations, and cooling-off periods are essential to safeguard EU institutional integrity against covert foreign influence.

These transparency, ethics, and regulatory gaps collectively produce fertile ground for Russian influence networks to operate with impunity across lobbying, civil society, media, and governance spheres. Addressing these vulnerabilities through comprehensive, harmonized



EU-wide reforms is critical to enhancing resilience and protecting democratic processes from covert foreign interference.

## Broader Policy & Geopolitical Impact

Russian influence operations have directly challenged the unity and coherence of the European Union's foreign policy. Efforts to sow division through political bribery, disinformation, and lobbying have weakened consensus on key policy instruments such as sanctions against Russia. While the EU officially maintains a robust sanctions regime — marked by an 18th package adopted in July 2025 targeting Russian energy revenues and shadow fleets — internal disagreements among member states on the scope and enforcement persist. Some states remain more reliant on Russian energy or have political segments sympathetic to Kremlin narratives, eroding the EU's ability to present a unified stance. This division risks diluting the effectiveness of the EU's foreign policy tools and weakens its negotiating position internationally, allowing Russia to exploit cracks and prolong geopolitical advantage.

## Trust Deficit between Member States

Influence operations have contributed to a widening trust deficit among EU member states, complicating cooperation on intelligence-sharing, law enforcement, and diplomatic initiatives. The exposure of networks that bribed politicians across diverse jurisdictions has fostered suspicion, raising questions about the integrity of national governance and the reliability of allies. This mistrust hampers collective security arrangements and joint actions against Russian hybrid threats, forcing the EU into reactive and fragmented countermeasures rather than proactive, integrated strategies. The credibility of common institutions is further undermined when member states experience divergent pressures from domestic pro-Russian political elements fostered via influence operations, fracturing solidarity and complicating cohesive policy execution [Case Studies 1 and 3].

## Electoral Legitimacy

The widespread Russian disinformation campaigns and covert financial inducements have cast long shadows over the legitimacy of recent EU elections. Manipulative messaging designed to polarize electorates and distort public opinion threatens the foundational democratic principle of free and fair elections. As false narratives take root and pro-Kremlin parties gain footholds by exploiting divisive issues, public confidence in electoral outcomes diminishes, fostering political cynicism and instability. This erosion of electoral legitimacy accelerates democratic backsliding risks and provides openings for further foreign interference, threatening the sustainability of democratic governance in Europe [Case Study 1].

## Strategic Security Implications

The geopolitical security landscape in Europe is profoundly impacted by the success of Russian influence operations in weakening EU cohesion and policy effectiveness. By maintaining economic footholds and political proxies within Europe, Russia preserves critical levers to frustrate EU and NATO responses to its aggressive actions, notably in Eastern Europe and Ukraine. The energy interdependence caused by partial reliance on Russian LNG and oil complicates strategic autonomy, making energy security a key vulnerability. Combined with disinformation campaigns that exacerbate public divisions and undermine democratic resilience, these operations create an environment conducive to Kremlin strategic aims—disrupting Western alliances and prolonging Russia’s ability to project power on the continent. As the EU extends sanctions and countermeasures, the enduring challenge remains to close the loopholes Russian influence exploits to sustain its geopolitical position.

In summary, Russian undermining influence has far-reaching policy and geopolitical consequences that extend well beyond immediate political manipulation. These effects weaken EU institutional unity, strain member state trust, question democratic legitimacy, and pose lasting strategic security risks, requiring sustained, coordinated responses to restore resilience and uphold Europe’s geopolitical interests.

## Recommendations

### For EU Institutions

The EU should implement comprehensive reforms to the Transparency Register, making registration mandatory for all individuals and organizations engaging with EU institutions, including formal disclosure of all foreign funding and financial ties. Enhancing enforcement mechanisms with regular audits, penalties for false disclosures, and automatic cross-verification of data will improve reliability. Extending transparency obligations to all staff members who interact with lobbyists or third-country representatives, coupled with public reporting of meeting details, will create a more accountable institutional environment. These reforms are necessary to close existing loopholes that allow covert foreign influence and ensure that policy-making processes remain open to scrutiny. Obstacles include resistance from interest groups benefiting from the current opacity and the technical challenges of harmonizing data systems across institutions.

### For Member States

National governments must adopt and enforce stringent laws criminalizing covert foreign interference, including financial bribery of political representatives and manipulation of election processes. Oversight of NGOs and media entities receiving foreign funding must be strengthened through harmonized frameworks that ensure transparency while safeguarding civil society freedoms. Establishing independent bodies to monitor foreign funding, investigate potential influence, and impose sanctions on violators is critical. Feasibility relies on political will and adequate resourcing at the national level but faces obstacles where foreign influence has already penetrated political or institutional structures. Cooperation among member states to share intelligence and coordinate law enforcement efforts is also essential.

### For Civil Society & Media

Civil society organizations and independent media should enhance their investigative capacity and engage in robust fact-checking networks to counter disinformation and expose covert influence operations. Securing sustainable funding for investigative journalism and NGOs focused on transparency and anti-corruption is vital to ensure resilience against politically motivated pushback. Public awareness campaigns improving media literacy and educating voters on identifying misinformation will bolster democratic resilience. However, challenges include limited resources, potential government restrictions, and the complexity of hybrid influence tactics requiring sophisticated analytical capabilities.

## For International Bodies & Partnerships

International cooperation must be intensified to maintain coordinated sanctions regimes against foreign actors involved in influence operations and to close regulatory gaps exploited for illicit finance and lobbying. Enhanced intelligence-sharing frameworks among EU agencies, NATO, and international partners will strengthen early detection and response capabilities. Multilateral partnerships should pursue joint investigations, legal cooperation, and unified policy standards to prevent regulatory arbitrage between jurisdictions. While such collaboration is feasible, it requires overcoming divergent national interests and ensuring trust between partners to share sensitive information effectively.

In sum, a multi-stakeholder approach addressing transparency, enforcement, investigative capacity, and international cooperation is critical to countering Russian influence and protecting European democratic governance. Success depends on political commitment, resource allocation, and sustained vigilance across institutional and societal levels.

## Conclusion

This report has highlighted the systematic and multi-layered approach Russia employs to influence European institutions, policy, media, and civil society. The tactics, ranging from covert political bribery and disinformation networks to economic leverage through energy dependency, have critically weakened EU transparency, policy coherence, and democratic integrity. Despite ongoing institutional and legal responses, significant gaps remain that allow continued foreign interference, undermining public trust and the EU's ability to act united in the face of geopolitical challenges.

The urgency of addressing these influence operations cannot be overstated. Failure to implement robust reforms risks deepening divisions among member states, further eroding electoral legitimacy and democratic norms, and exposing strategic vulnerabilities that hostile actors can exploit. The consequences extend beyond immediate political manipulation to jeopardize the EU's position on the global stage and its internal stability.

Looking forward, the EU faces a persistent, evolving hybrid threat that demands coordinated institutional reform, enhanced transparency and enforcement, empowered civil society and media, and strengthened international cooperation. Only through a sustained, holistic response can Europe restore resilience to foreign influence, uphold democratic principles, and secure its geopolitical interests in an increasingly contested international environment.



## References & Sources

### Timeline of Key Events of Russian Interference/Influence in European Institutions:

- March/April 2014: First rounds of EU sanctions imposed following Russia's annexation of Crimea; Council of Europe suspends Russia's voting rights.
- July 2015: EU action following the downing of flight MH17.
- February 2022: Massive EU sanctions announced after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including bank restrictions and asset freezes.
- March 2024: European intelligence agencies uncover "Voice of Europe" Russian influence network paying European politicians.
- July 2025: EU adopts 18th sanctions package targeting Russian energy; intensified investigations into bribery of Members of the European Parliament.
- Ongoing 2024-2025: Increasing disinformation campaigns targeting EU elections; expansion of Russian lobbying efforts including Novatek's energy influence.

### Russian-linked Organizations and Actors Identified:

- Voice of Europe media network and associated operators such as Artyom Marchevsky.
- Oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk, linked to pro-Russian influence operations.
- Novatek, Russia's LNG producer instrumental in economic leverage in the EU.
- Government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) such as Russkiy Mir Foundation and Rossotrudnichestvo.
- Proxy political parties and politicians within EU member states sympathetic or aligned with Kremlin interests.

### Glossary of Key Terms:

- Foreign Interference: Covert or overt actions by a foreign state to influence the political, economic, or social processes of another country.

- **Disinformation:** Deliberate spreading of false or misleading information to manipulate public opinion or obscure facts.
- **Lobbying Register:** A publicly accessible database requiring disclosure of identities and activities of individuals or organizations seeking to influence government policy.
- **Soft Power:** The ability of a country to influence others through cultural, ideological, or diplomatic means rather than military or economic coercion.

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