

Committee of Ministers Give Green Light to CoE Action on Information Manipulation and Foreign Interference

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News

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At their 135th session in Chişinău, Moldova, on 14–15 May 2026, the Committee of Ministers instructed the Secretary General to submit proposals for negotiations on a legal instrument addressing foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including the possible establishment of a framework convention.

The initiative follows on from the Secretary General's 2026 report "*The New Democratic Pact for Europe in times of rupture*", which stressed the importance of boosting democratic security. FIMI encompasses covert, coordinated, or deceptive activities undertaken by foreign actors with the aim of shaping the information environment in ways that undermine democratic discourse, public trust, and the integrity of electoral processes. Building on a feasibility study submitted to the Committee of Ministers, the initiative reflects the ministers' assessment that such operations pose a substantial threat to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democratic institutions, and the rule of law.

The aforementioned study was prepared by the Committee of Experts on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (PC-FIMI), which was mandated, under the authority of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), to assess the feasibility of establishing such an instrument (→[eucrim 3/2025, 212](#)). The work reflects a changed geopolitical environment, shaped in particular by [Russian information operations linked to its aggression against Ukraine](#), as well as the fragmented national responses to an inherently cross-border threat. Against this background, the study concludes that a common Council of Europe instrument is feasible and could establish a shared understanding of FIMI, strengthen societal and media resilience, improve detection and coordination, and enhance international cooperation.

The legal form and precise scope of a future instrument, however, remain open. At the CDPC's 89th plenary meeting in June 2026, delegations expressed divergent preliminary views, with some favouring a non-binding recommendation and others supporting a framework convention or another legally binding instrument (→[eucrim news of 30 July 2026](#)). The appropriate role of criminal law is similarly unsettled. The study emphasised that criminalisation should be considered only as a measure of last resort and that any response must safeguard freedom of expression and comply with the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

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