



LEARNING FROM 32 REAL-WORLD CASES OF FOREIGN INFORMATION MANIPULATION AND INTERFERENCE (FIMI)

FIMI AS A GROWING THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

The brief analyses 32 case studies showing how foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) tactics—from disinformation to deepfakes—are increasingly used by states like Russia, China, Iran, and others to destabilise democracies and undermine trust in institutions.

ADAPTABILITY OF ATTACKERS

FIMI campaigns are highly adaptive, employing evolving tactics across multiple platforms. Attackers use advanced tools like AI, bots, and narrative laundering to evade detection, making attribution and response more difficult.

RAPID RESPONSE AND PRE-BUNKING

Quick debunking of disinformation, preventive surveillance, and pre-bunking (warning the public before attacks occur) significantly reduce the impact of FIMI.

NEED FOR STRONGER FRAMEWORKS AND COLLABORATION

The policy brief stresses the importance of frameworks like DISARM to systematise monitoring and response. It also highlights the necessity of cross-sector collaboration (governments, academia, media, civil society, and tech) and stronger international cooperation.

ATHENA STRENGTHENS EUROPE'S SECURITY WITH EVIDENCE-BASED INSIGHTS AND COUNTERMEASURES

MEDIA LITERACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS AS FIRST-LINE DEFENCE

Educating citizens in digital and media literacy—especially image/video verification—can build resilience. Well-funded awareness campaigns, fact-checking initiatives, and critical thinking education are crucial to counter manipulative content.

REGULATION, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Governments and platforms must increase transparency around political advertising, funding sources, and sponsored content.

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