



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Commission for Citizenship, Governance,
Institutional and External Affairs

The Chair

v. 7 July 2021

Disinformation as a threat to EU democracy
Lunch Briefing
14 July 2021, 12.30 – 14:00 CEST

Access to information is infinitely easier and faster today than it ever was, as well as its dissemination. Anyone with a smartphone can find information on practically everything in a matter of minutes; through many different social media, then, everyone may publish almost any content in few clicks.

At the same time, the crisis caused by the pandemic has exacerbated a number of trends that existed long before its beginning. Widespread misinformation and disinformation, conspiracy theories, and the lack of trust towards authorities by many citizens are among these trends. . Interference in political elections at European, national and local level have a negative impact on our democracies.

Democratically-elected local and regional politicians must engage in permanent and transparent communication with their citizens to regain trust and confidence. They must fight disinformation, propaganda, manipulation and attempts to change people's attitudes, as it is also highlighted in the [European democracy action plan](#) (EDAP) published by the European Commission in December 2020, in its follow-ups and in the related [CoR opinion](#) adopted in July 2021.

The lunch briefing organised by the CIVEX commission of the CoR in the framework of its activities on EDAP and as a contribute to the debate in the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

will look at the threat caused by disinformation on EU democracy and its different dimensions, such as:

- political elections;
- foreign interference; and
- media freedom and pluralism.

Introductory remarks: **Mr Mark Speich** (DE/EPP), Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), CIVEX Chair

High-level panel discussion

Moderator: **Mark Speich**, Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), CIVEX Chair

- **Ms Sasha Havlicek**, CEO Institute for Strategic Dialogue
- **Ms Aleksandra Dulkiewicz** (PL/EPP), Mayor of Gdansk, European Committee of the Regions Rapporteur on the European Democracy Action Plan
- **Ms Renate Nikolay**, Head of Cabinet of EC Vice-President for Values and Transparency Věra Jourová
- **Mr Oliver Rentschler**, Director AFFGEN - Inter-institutional relations, policy coordination and public diplomacy, European External Action Service

Debate with participants via Q&A - chat

The event will take place in English as a Microsoft Teams Webinar and it will be available to the public.

When it's time, simply [click here to join the webinar](#).