



OECD Global Parliamentary Network

Meeting of the OECD Parliamentary Group on Integrity & Transparency

Session 2: Strengthening resilience to foreign undue influence and interference

OECD Public Sector Integrity Division



>> Foreign influence v. foreign interference

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

- > **ACTIVITIES:** legal activities carried out through traditional diplomatic channels or lobbying activities
- > **ACTORS:** foreign interest groups registered as legal entities (corporations, NGOs) or foreign governments
- > **AIMS:** to influence public opinion, policy, and laws in another country.
- > **IMPACT:** can be a legitimate activity and can be positive force in policy making
- > **But TRANSPARENCY is essential**

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

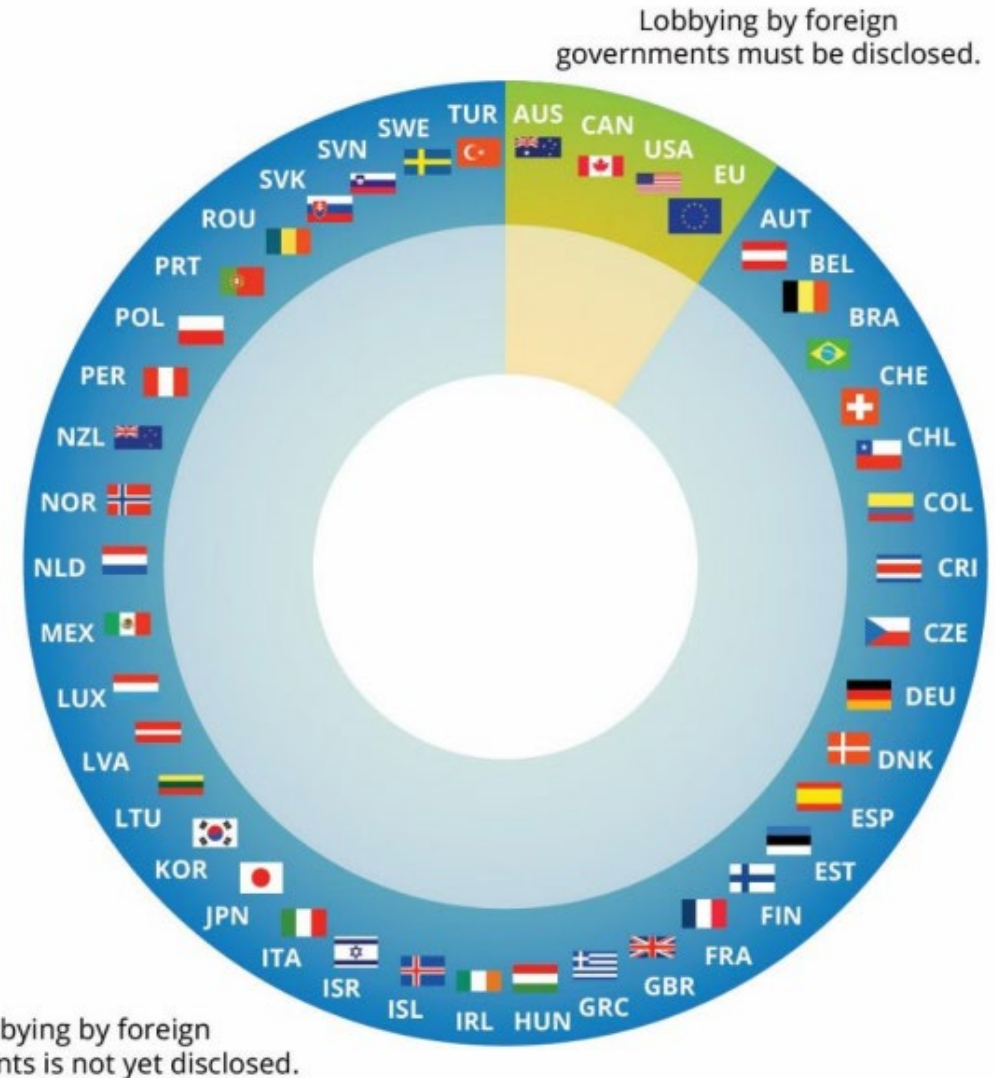
- > **ACTIVITIES:** covert, deceptive and coercive activities
- > **ACTORS:** foreign governments or carried out on behalf of foreign governments by entities without diplomatic status or through intermediaries
- > **AIMS:** manipulate public opinion, manipulate public decision-makers to advance their interests or objectives in another country, and undermine the interests and authorities of another country.
- > **IMPACT:** undermining integrity of election processes, biased development of public policies, disrupting markets and threats to national security.

Foreign influence – where do things stand?



Transparency on influence exerted by governments outside traditional diplomatic channels

- Recruitment of lobbyists, including former senior public officials
- Contracts with lobbying firms, public relations and communications firms to conduct influence operations
- Funding of civil society organizations, think tanks etc.
- Influence through state-owned companies, foreign-owned media, cultural institutes
- Financing of political parties etc.

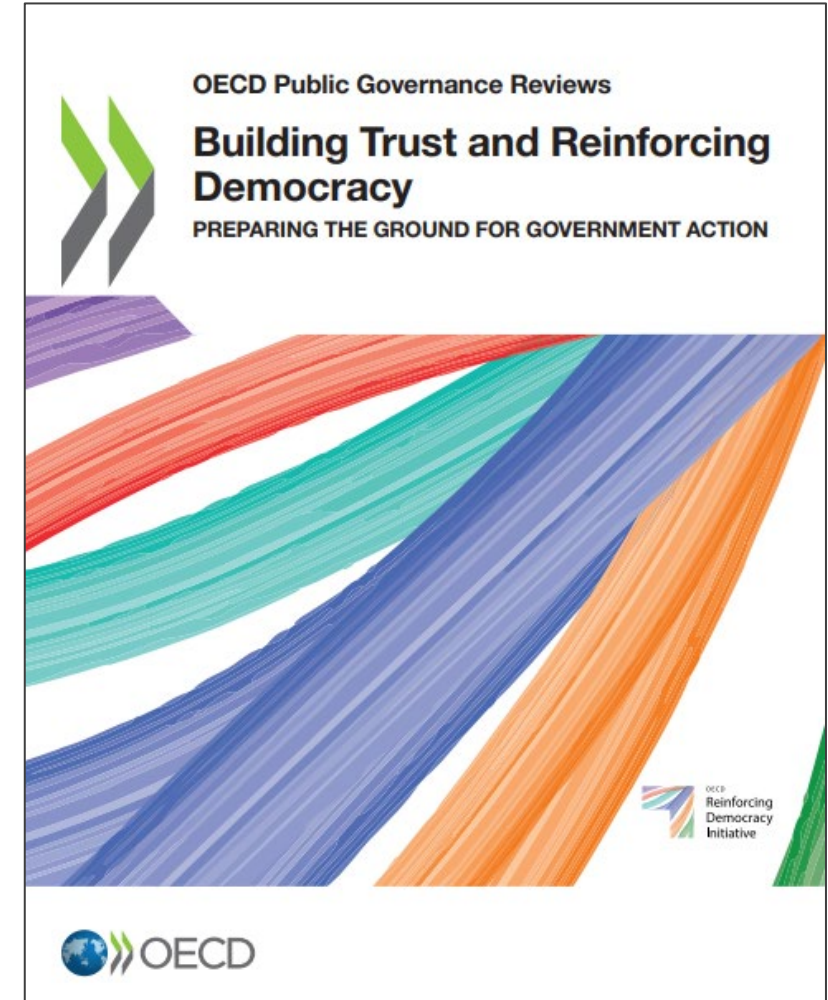


>> Foreign influence – where do things stand?

- > **United States Foreign Agents Registration Act** (1938), often referred to as the oldest lobbying regulation and was enacted in 1938 to counter rising Nazi influence in the country
- > **Australian Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act** (2018)
- > Under the new **EU Inter-Institutional Agreement on the transparency register for organisations and self-employed individuals engaged in EU policy-making and policy implementation**, activities by third countries are covered by the EU Transparency Register when they are carried out by entities without diplomatic status or through intermediaries (2021)
- > In **Canada**, consultant lobbyists representing the interests of foreign governments are bound by the same disclosure requirements as other actors specified in the **Lobbying Act**. + on March 10, the Canadian Government also launched a public consultation to guide the creation of a [Foreign Influence Transparency Registry in Canada](#).
- > The **UK** is now also considering establishing a **Foreign Influence Registrations Scheme (FIRS)**.
- > **EU Defense of Democracy Package**: discussion on a Directive requiring transparency registers on 'interest representation services' paid for or directed from countries outside the EU.



- Strengthen transparency and integrity in **lobbying** and all forms of influence including **political financing**
- Strengthen the **information integrity ecosystem**
- Strengthen integrity and transparency in the **not-for-profit and educational sectors**
- Tackle **faulty RBI and CBI schemes**
- Close critical gaps in **illicit trade, AML, beneficial ownership, and tax transparency** through wide-ranging multidisciplinary approaches



Source: OECD (2022), *Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy: Preparing the Ground for Government Action*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/76972a4a-en>.



Where can we go from here?

Areas where OECD could support on strengthening resilience to foreign undue influence / foreign interference

International declarations

Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy, adopted 18 November 2022

Action Plans

OECD Action Plan on Public Governance for Combating Mis-information and Dis-information
OECD Action Plan on Participation and Representation

OECD Action Plan on Stronger Open Democracies in a Globalised World (to be developed in course of next 18 months)

International standards

OECD draft revised **Recommendation on Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying & Influence**
(adoption planned for summer 2023)

Guidance

Guidelines for Public Officials on Recognising and Responding to Threats of Foreign Interference

Dialogue

Dialogue with integrity practitioners (integrity bodies, lobbying commissions, electoral finance commissions, etc.) and the **national security community**

Dialogue with elected and appointed officials (OECD Meetings of the OECD Parliamentary Group on Integrity & Transparency)



Roundtable discussion

- What are the key forms of foreign influence and undue influence that parliamentarians can encounter, during the election period and once in office (e.g. political finance, lobbying by foreign governments and companies, receiving gifts and benefits such as sponsored trips, disinformation campaigns, others)?
- What measures have been adopted by (a) political parties, (b) parliaments and (c) oversight institutions in your country to support parliamentarians in identifying and responding to forms of foreign influence and undue influence?
- What additional measures could be adopted by (a) political parties, (b) parliaments and (c) oversight institutions in your country to support parliamentarians in identifying and responding to forms of foreign influence and undue influence?