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## TI EU statement on state of EU Defence of Democracy Directive

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Friday, October 17th, 2025

For almost two years, the EU has sought to bring forward a dangerous foreign agent law under the guise of defending democracy. Upon its introduction, we criticised this proposal as [dangerous, misguided and burdensome](#).

After months of bargaining, the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection has voted on its report. Yet the text does nothing to alter the proposal's fundamental structure, which remains a dangerous law that if wielded by authoritarian leadership, risks chilling the activity of civil society organisations across the Union. Member States such as Hungary are already introducing legislation to curb civil society activity, in a violation of the EU's fundamental rights. The dubious legal language that remains in the Parliament's text empowers the suppression of civic space even further.

Instead of affording civil society the protection it needs, the text adopted today will do nothing to quell the very real concerns of those facing repression across the EU. If the EU truly cared about defending democracy, it would look to protect those doing their utmost to uphold it, instead of giving autocrats further means to silence them.

The EU must commit to civil society protection. The scope of the Directive must therefore be expanded to a full Interest Representatives' Register, covering all entities providing interest representation in the EU. In doing so, full harmonisation of transparency rules across the EU must be ensured. It must also ensure that national authorities responsible for the management and supervision of this Directive are fully independent from national governments, to avoid weaponisation.

This entry was posted on Friday, October 17th, 2025 at 10:39 am