

Radosław Sikorski  
Member of the European Parliament

President David Sassoli  
PHS 09B011

Secretary-General Klaus Welle  
PHS 11B011

Brussels, 11 March 2021

Dear President,  
Dear Secretary-General,

Recently European media outlets have highlighted the story of a Chinese influencer campaign in the European Parliament. According to press reports, such activities have been taking place in our House for years. For an attentive observer engaged in foreign relations, this does not come as a surprise. Foreign hostile actors are making continued efforts to influence the political agenda of the European Parliament and the EU at large. Some of our colleagues - often unintentionally - fell victim to such malign activities. Political lobbying, even on the part of our adversaries, is not a crime. What is worrying, are the activities that mimic legitimate initiatives to attract European audiences, but in reality present a hidden agenda and conceal their real sponsors. Such campaigns often escape public scrutiny, posing a real threat to European democracy.

The European Parliament, being the most open parliament in the world with thousands of events and visitors per year within its premises, is particularly vulnerable among all the EU institutions.

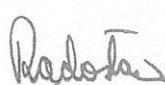
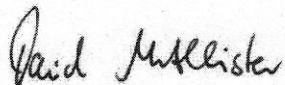
During the last two years, there has been a growing awareness in Brussels that the threat of espionage is real and there is an urgent need for boosting our counter-intelligence capabilities. In December 2019, the Council Conclusions called on EU institutions for "developing and implementing a comprehensive set of measures for countering hybrid threats and other malicious activities".

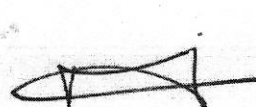
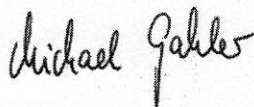
To our best knowledge, the European Parliament - contrary to other institutions - has not yet established a specialized department, which would actively contribute to building our institution's resilience to espionage and similar threats. With this letter, we call upon you to consider investing in bolstering our capabilities in this domain by establishing fully-fledged screening structures, whose task would include vetting non-elected personnel employed in the European Parliament. Such a structure should coordinate the work of the concerned Parliament's services, raise awareness as well as liaise with other EU institutions

and Member States' relevant services. The security of Members of the European Parliament and its administration is at stake, and thus the security of the entire European democratic process.

We would be happy to discuss this topic further, should you find it valuable. The current closure of the European Parliament to outside visitors could offer an opportunity to further develop and consequently implement this initiative before re-opening our premises.

Yours sincerely,

   
Radosław Sikorski      David McAllister

   
Arnaud Danjean      Michael Gahler