# [MD] Draft statute on the National Centre for Informational Defence and Combating Propaganda

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In May 2023, President Maia Sandu announced a legislative initiative to establish an institution that would combat propaganda harmful to the Republic of Moldova and defend its citizens from manipulation and propaganda attacks. She had the text of the draft statute published on the presidential website for a 10-day public consultation period and intends to propose it to the parliament by the end of July.

The draft statute on the National Centre for Informational Defence and Combating Propaganda, that will be known as “Patriot”, would have the mission to coordinate and implement state policy in the field of information security and to ensure strategic communication in order to identify, prevent and combat disinformation at the national level. The institution would have two basic responsibilities:

to communicate truthful information to the general public and to ensure a constant dialogue with citizens, as well as to collaborate with all state institutions in order to promote national interests and increase society’s resistance to disinformation; to identify, assess and combat disinformation in order to eliminate the risks posed by hybrid threats and disinformation to national security.
The centre will have 24 employees, all to be selected in a public competition. The first director of the institution, however, is to be appointed by President Sandu and then approved by the parliament. After that, the centre will be headed by a director appointed by the parliament at the proposal of the President of Moldova for a period of five years with the possibility of re-appointment. The activities of the centre will be coordinated by the President of the Republic of Moldova, who initiates the process of developing a strategic communications programme.

Its board will consist of 11 members, including one appointed by the President of Moldova, another appointed by the parliament, still another appointed by the government, and three civil society representatives selected by the centre.

In her speech about the initiative to create the centre, the president noted that due to “the resistance and courage of the Ukrainians, Russia cannot militarily attack our country. But it is constantly attacked informationally, through lies, propaganda, misinformation. Daily, the Kremlin launches hybrid attacks, using the weapon of propaganda to sow hatred in Moldova, to weaken our trust in each other and the trust in our own state.”

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She pointed to the sponsors of propaganda that aim to spread lies in the mass media and social networks. “Lies broadcast on television and on the Internet have become the most dangerous weapons with which we are attacked today.” She signalled that propaganda presents “a direct threat to the security of the country and endangers the free, democratic and prosperous future of Moldova”.

In the context of the creation of the new institution, the president assessed it from the perspective of freedom of speech: “The right to free expression is an indisputable value and is the basis of the democratic development we all want. But freedom of expression cannot be a screen for lies and intoxication.”

### *Lege privind Centrul Național de Apărare Informațională și Combatere a Propagandei - Patriot și modificarea unor acte normative. Projekt*

https://presedinte.md/rom/presa/anunt-privind-initierea-consultarilor-publice-asupra-proiectului-de-lege-privind-centrul-national-de-aparare-informationala-si-combatere-a-propagandei-patriot-si-modificarea-unor-acte-normative

*Draft law on the National Centre for Information Defence and Combating Propaganda – Patriot, and the amendment of certain normative acts*

### *President Maia Sandu's message about the initiative to create the National Center for Information Defense and Combating Propaganda - PATRIOT*

https://www.presedinte.md/eng/discursuri/mesajul-presedintei-maia-sandu-despre-initiativa-de-creare-a-centrului-national-de-aparare-informationala-si-combatere-a-propagandei-patriot

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