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Foreign Interference and European Security

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The problem of foreign interference is of the most discussed issues in European security, together with often interchangeable concepts like foreign influence, misinformation, or hybrid warfare. It has found its firm place in security strategies documents of EU, NATO, and their individual member states, and has been discussed – often critically –in academic literatures. This panel will address the problem of foreign interference in European security by outlining theoretically-grounded research into a range of different empirical contexts. The unifying theme of the papers is the conceptual elasticity of the notion of foreign interference: what is seen as falling under its definition and, therefore, requiring a security response, is typically a result of social and political processes. Therefore, this panel will ask how foreign interference is constructed (or not constructed) as a problem in EU official documents, in parliamentary debates of selected member states, or by Russian-speaking publics in the Baltic States. It will interrogate how administration changes influence the shifts in understanding foreign interference, e.g. in relation to EU's understanding of US role under Donald Trump, or concerning the recent change of government in Czechia. Thereby, the problem will be evaluated through the lens of multiple theories, including small states in world politics, vernacular security, and leadership studies.

Track Classification: European Security Working Group