

Subject: Request for coordinated EU action on Russian Houses operating in the EU

Dear President Costa,
Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear High Representative Kallas,

More than four years after Russia launched its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, institutions belonging to a sanctioned Russian state influence network continue to operate openly on European Union territory.

The so-called “Russian Houses” present themselves as centres for culture, science, education and the promotion of the Russian language. In reality, they form part of the international network of Rossotrudnichestvo, a Russian federal government agency sanctioned by the European Union since July 2022.

The EU’s own sanctions decision describes Rossotrudnichestvo as “the main state agency projecting the Kremlin’s soft power and hybrid influence”¹, promoting the concept of the “Russkiy Mir”, acting as an umbrella organisation for networks of Russian compatriots and agents of influence, funding propaganda projects and disseminating Kremlin narratives and historical revisionism.

The European Parliament has also expressed concern about the activities of Russian House offices, stating that projects funded by Rossotrudnichestvo spread disinformation, propaganda and the Kremlin’s agenda among EU civil society.²

The concerns extend beyond propaganda and influence operations. The Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service has reported that “Rossotrudnichestvo and its representatives abroad – Russian research and cultural centres – are regularly used by the FSB and SVR as cover for their officers.”³

Yet, as of September 2026, Russian Houses continue to operate across 15 members states of the European Union : Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia and Spain.

The legal position of these institutions differs significantly between Member States: some operate as or alongside diplomatic representations, others are based on bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation, have separate legal personality under national law or operate as representations of Rossotrudnichestvo. As a result, their legal status, premises,

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/572/oj/eng>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0219_EN.pdf

³ <https://raport.valisluureamet.ee/2023/en/4-russian-special-services/4-1-covers-used-by-russian-intelligence-services/>

personnel and financing are subject to differing combinations of EU sanctions law, national legislation and bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation, with some centres also linked to Russian diplomatic missions.

We recognise that these differences make a single legal solution difficult. However, the European Union cannot sanction the organisation at the centre of this network for its role in projecting Kremlin soft power and hybrid influence while allowing its representations, operating under different legal arrangements, to continue their activities across the Union.

The Commission has stated that decisions on closing individual Russian Houses remain the prerogative of Member States. But **national competence cannot become an excuse for European inaction when the underlying threat is explicitly recognised at European level.**

That's why European level coordination is essential.

We therefore call on the Commission, the EEAS and Member States to establish a coordinated European approach towards these institutions and to identify the legal measures available at both EU and national level to end the operation of structures serving the Kremlin's influence apparatus within the European Union.

We further call on the High Representative and Member States to place the continued operation of Russian Houses in the European Union on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Council, with a view to establishing a common political approach and coordinating action among Member States.

As a basis for this coordinated approach, the Commission and the EEAS should first map the legal and financial arrangements under which these institutions operate across the Union. This assessment should establish their financing and access to economic resources, and their relationship with Russian diplomatic representations and Rossotrudnichestvo. It should also establish how many of their staff hold diplomatic or consular status, and whether these staff are covered by the prior notification mechanism introduced in the 19th sanctions package.

This assessment should also cover the premises themselves: their ownership, the property arrangements agreed with the Russian Federation, and their location relative to critical infrastructure, military sites and EU and national institutions.

Crucially, it should assess whether the continued activities of these institutions are fully compatible with EU restrictive measures.

The EU already recognised the threat when it sanctioned Rossotrudnichestvo in July 2022. What is missing is a coherent approach to the physical infrastructure through which part of that influence continues to reach European citizens.

Ultimately, we cannot claim to be serious about defending Europe against Russian threats while allowing institutions belonging to a sanctioned Russian state influence network to continue operating in our cities.

Undersigned by the Members of the European Parliament:

1. **Rasa Juknevičienė (EPP, Lithuania)**
2. **Tomas Tobé (EPP, Sweden)**
3. **Sandra Kalniete (EPP, Latvia)**
4. **Sergey Lagodinsky (Greens/EFA, Germany)**
5. **Andrzej Halicki (EPP, Poland)**
6. **Dainius Žalimas (Renew, Lithuania)**
7. **Karin Karlsbro (Renew, Sweden)**
8. **Kosma Złotowski (ECR, Poland)**
9. **Ondřej Kolář (EPP, Czechia)**
10. **Ivars Ijabs (Renew, Latvia)**
11. **Krzysztof Brejza (EPP, Poland)**
12. **Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP, Czechia)**
13. **Mariusz Kamiński (ECR, Poland)**
14. **Jüri Ratas (EPP, Estonia)**
15. **Milan Zver (EPP, Slovenia)**
16. **Riho Terras (EPP, Estonia)**
17. **Petras Auštrevičius (Renew, Lithuania)**
18. **Helmut Brandstätter (Renew, Austria)**
19. **Anna Stürgh (Renew, Austria)**
20. **Roberts Zīle (ECR, Latvia)**
21. **Liudas Mažylis (EPP, Lithuania)**
22. **Inese Vaidere (EPP, Latvia)**
23. **Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz (EPP, Poland)**
24. **Mika Aaltola (EPP, Finland)**
25. **Tobiasz Bocheński (ECR, Poland)**
26. **Pekka Toveri (EPP, Finland)**
27. **Reinis Pozņaks (ECR, Latvia)**
28. **Dan Barna (Renew, Romania)**
29. **Mārtiņš Staķis (Greens/EFA, Latvia)**
30. **Rihards Kols (ECR, Latvia)**
31. **Virginijus Sinkevičius (Greens/EFA, Lithuania)**
32. **Maria Grapini (S&D, Romania)**
33. **Veronika Vrecionová (ECR, Czechia)**
34. **Alexandr Vondra (ECR, Czechia)**
35. **Rasmus Nordqvist (Greens/EFA, Denmark)**

36. Villy Søvndal (Greens/EFA, Denmark)
37. Nicolae Ștefănuță (Greens/EFA, Romania)
38. Verena Mertens (EPP, Germany)
39. Ondřej Krutílek (ECR, Czechia)
40. Michael Gahler (EPP, Germany)
41. Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (Renew, Germany)
42. Georgiana Teodorescu (ECR, Romania)
43. Aura Salla (EPP, Finland)
44. Damian Boeselager (Greens/EFA, Germany)
45. Nela Riehl (Greens/EFA, Germany)
46. Kai Tegethoff (Greens/EFA, Germany)
47. Reinier van Lanschot (Greens/EFA, Netherlands)
48. Anna Strolenberg (Greens/EFA, Netherlands)
49. Erik Marquardt (Greens/EFA, Germany)
50. Lukas Sieper (NI, Germany)
51. Jörgen Warborn (EPP, Sweden)
52. Thijs Reuten (S&D, Netherlands)
53. Kamila Gasiuk-Pihowicz (EPP, Poland)
54. Giuseppina Picierno (S&D, Italy)
55. Michał Dworczyk (ECR, Poland)
56. Lukas Mandl (EPP, Austria)
57. Miriam Lexmann (EPP, Slovakia)
58. Thomas Waitz (Greens/EFA, Austria)
59. Aurelijus Veryga (ECR, Lithuania)
60. Bernard Guetta (Renew, France)
61. Paulius Saudargas (EPP, Lithuania)
62. Gheorghe Falcă (EPP, Romania)
63. Ľubica Karvašová (Renew, Slovakia)
64. Lena Schilling (Greens/EFA, Austria)
65. Lucia Yar (Renew, Slovakia)
66. Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová (Renew, Slovakia)
67. Michal Wiezik (Renew, Slovakia)
68. Martin Hojsík (Renew, Slovakia)
69. Nikola Minchev (Renew, Bulgaria)
70. Alice Teodorescu Måwe (EPP, Sweden)
71. Hannah Neumann (Greens/EFA, Germany)