



The *Integrity Initiative* <https://www.integrityinitiative.net/> was conceived by the London based Institute for Statecraft and launched in the autumn of 2015. Its aim is to track, expose and counter the increasing current of Russian malign influence and disinformation throughout the West. The Institute consists of independent experts and former Government officials with a broad range of experience. Details are at www.statecraft.org.uk.

The *Integrity Initiative* works through setting up networks (“clusters”) within European countries which link individuals from all sectors (government, media, academia) who understand, or who are concerned about, this growing threat from Russia. The clusters disseminate information on this problem to policy makers and opinion formers in their own countries and increasingly, through coordinated campaigns, to the general public, helping them to understand better the threat posed to our societies. The national clusters are linked together into a “network of networks”, coordinated from London, which acts as a conduit for sharing knowledge, stimulating thinking and focusing research on disinformation and other aspects of hybrid warfare being waged by Russia. Where relevant, the network also addresses other, linked sources of disinformation and influence, such as Daesh and China. The *Integrity Initiative* has a partnership with the Institute for European Studies at the Free University of Brussels, which provides academic authority and credibility to the programme as well as improved access to NATO and the EU. See an example here at <https://www.ies.be/policy-brief/identifying-disinformation-abc-approach>.

There are now national clusters, in various stages of establishment, functioning in Spain, France, Lithuania, Italy, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Moldova, Malta and Jordan. There is close cooperation with existing bodies doing similar work in the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The next phase of the project will involve expanding the expert clusters to other countries, starting with: Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland.

Having funded the *Integrity Initiative* privately for 2 years, the Institute approached the FCO Counter Disinformation Programme for funding in 2017. The UK Government has been supporting the Initiative for the past year and is increasing its support for the current financial year.

To date, the *Integrity Initiative* has profited greatly from the expertise of members and former members of the US State Department’s *Global Engagement Center*, and by close collaboration with experts from DC-based think tanks, including CEPA, ACUS and CNA. This fruitful collaboration has encouraged the Institute for Statecraft to consider expanding the *Integrity Initiative* programme into the USA. We would like to establish whether the US Government has any views on this. We understand that the Institute for Statecraft is currently in the process of establishing a subsidiary in the USA, the *Institute for Statecraft and Governance*, for which an application for 501 (c) (3) status is underway. When this status is granted, the Institute will be in a position to apply for funding both to the State Department and to charitable foundations for grants to expand the *Integrity Initiative* activities both within and outside of the USA.

The main objectives of expanding the *Integrity Initiative* into the USA would be to:

- Revive and rebuild the expert knowledge base on Russian strategic affairs within the USA, and through that to strengthen transatlantic links and raise the US profile in NATO and European defence institutions.

Defending Democracy Against Disinformation



- Contribute to changing the attitude towards Russian malign influence and disinformation by enriching the US public discourse with facts about Russian malign behaviour (challenging the ignorance of, tolerance of or sympathy for the Russian activity).
- Counter Russian use of disinformation and malign influence and associated weapons of “hybrid warfare” by: expanding the knowledge base; harnessing existing expertise, and; establishing a network of experts, opinion formers and policy makers, to educate national audiences on the threat and to help build national capacities to counter it.

To this end, the Institute for Statecraft would establish an office in Washington DC so as to be able to benefit from the expertise within Government. But, understanding that DC is well served by existing US institutions, such as those with which the Institute already collaborates, it would be the intention to concentrate on extending the work of the *Integrity Initiative* into major cities and key State capitals across the USA. Preliminary investigations have established that there is a great appetite amongst university, business, media and state government institutions for the information and understanding that the *Integrity Initiative* can provide.