

# TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ONLINE POLITICAL ADVERTISING

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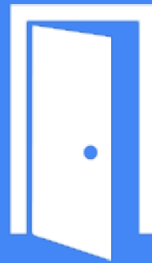
Raphaël Kergueno Transparency International EU

# THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY IN POLITICS

Lobbying  
activities



Conflicts of  
Interests



Political  
Finance



# KEY AIMS OF POLITICAL FINANCE RULES

## 1. FAIR

- Prevent improper influence on political decisions ensuring transparency on donations
- Regulate the flow the of donations to guarantee independence of political actors



## 2. CLEAN

- ensure that all political parties have an opportunity to compete in line with the principle of equal opportunity;
- Guarantee equal access to political campaigning advertising opportunities

## 3. CLEAR

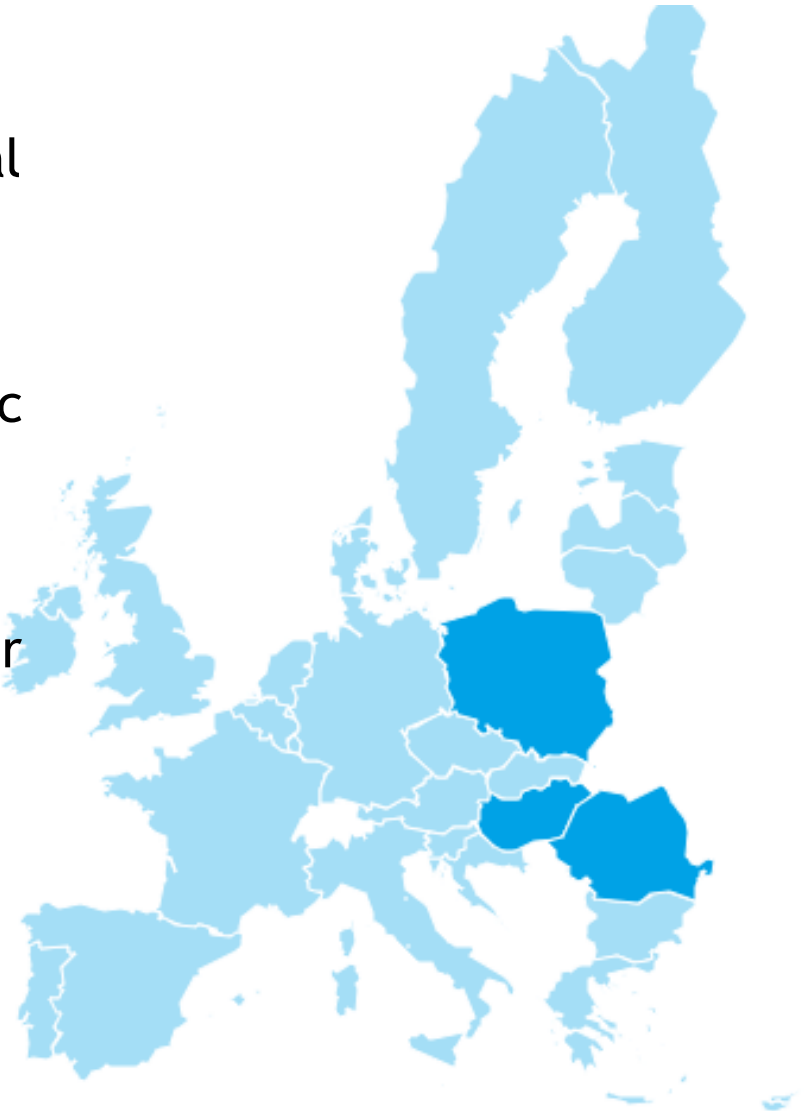
- Ensure transparency in expenditure on political campaign
- Accountability on both in-flows and out-flows of political finance with credible sanctioning mechanisms;

# REGULATING POLITICAL ADVERTISING

- Spending limits & campaign finance controls. 
- Subsidies for campaigning communications.
- Pre-poll black outs.
- Media regulation in particular broadcast licensing.
- Rules guaranteeing impartiality and “equal” air time 
- Self-regulation and journalism ethics.

# ONLY 3 EUMS LAWS MENTION ONLINE POLITICAL ADS

- Nearly all EUMS have provisions on regulating traditional political advertising in their national political finance laws.
- **BUT** most don't have any specific provisions on online political advertising.
- Are 20th century rules still fit for purpose in the age of social media?



# THE EU'S RESPONSE: THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON DISINFORMATION

- The Code of Practice on Disinformation actually contain dispositions seeks to implement rules on online political advertising:

“Relevant Signatories commit to **enable public disclosure of political advertising** (defined as advertisements advocating for or against the election of a candidate or passage of referenda in national and European elections), which could include **actual sponsor identity** and **amounts spent**”

## *Section II.B.3 of the Code*

- In practice seeks to ensure **transparency** and **accountability** on the in & out flows of political finance dedicated to online political advertising.
- All **3 major social-media platforms** have signed the code and implemented political ads transparency libraries

# HOW HAVE THE ADS LIBRARY BEEN IMPLEMENTED ?

Political advertising on Google

Overview

**European Union**

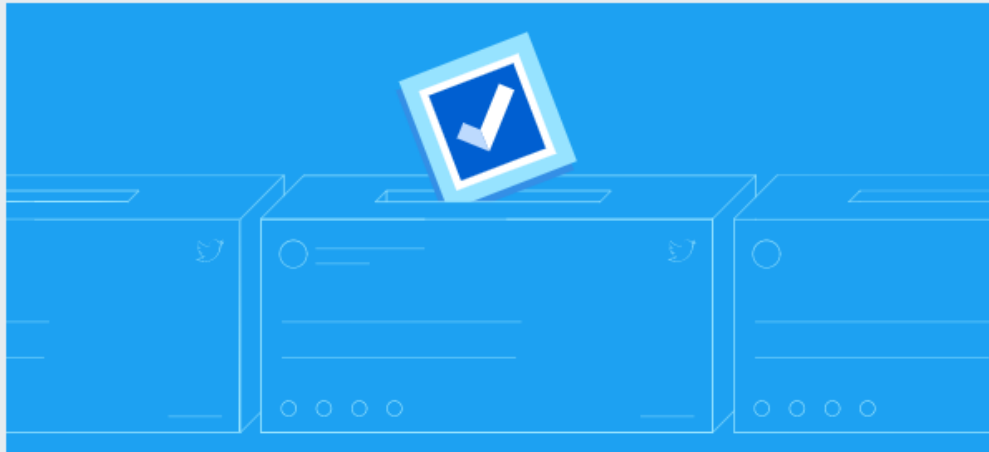
India

United States

 Ad Library report

 **Ads Transparency Center**

 Search advertisers



## Political campaigning advertisers

European Union 

As part of our increased transparency efforts, we clearly label and show disclaimer information for Promoted Tweets that fall under our Political campaigning policy.

Political campaigning on Twitter for EU Parliamentary Elections is defined as:

- Ads purchased by a European or national political party,
- Ads purchased by a candidate registered with their corresponding national electoral authority, or
- Ads that advocate for or against a clearly identified candidate or party for European

## Political campaigning policy

In addition to Twitter Ads policies, all political advertisers must comply with applicable laws regarding disclosure and content requirements, eligibility restrictions, and blackout dates for the countries where they advertise.

[Learn more](#)

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# MAIN TAKE-AWAYS

- Can the Code guarantee **fair, clean & clear** elections ?
  1. Currently difficult to track expenditure accross all 3 platforms
  2. Citizens, journalists, CSO's and national regulators must be able to ensure compliance with spending limits
  3. Equal « air time » provisions entirely absent in the Code. How would this key provision of party finance rules translate to social-media?
- Should the EU encourage Member States to **introduce specific legislation** on online political ads ?
  1. Regulating online political advertising would fall under national competence
  2. Single definition of electoral, campaign and issue-based online advertising could ensure higher compliance with national law