



**Regional Center
for Democracy
and Security**

RESEARCH REPORT

Comparing Russian Information Influence in Moldova and Armenia: Patterns, Challenges, and Specificities

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The comparison between Armenia and Moldova in the face of foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) threats is occupying an increasingly prominent place in European discourse. On March 17, during the [conference](#) on countering information interference, Kaja Kallas explicitly drew a parallel between the two countries. She notably underlined that, following what was considered an unsuccessful attempt in Moldova, Russia had deployed the “same modus operandi” in Armenia, this time in a more premature and structured manner.

Russian information manipulation campaigns in Moldova and Armenia reflect a broader Russian strategic logic aimed at maintaining, or even restoring, Moscow’s political influence through information influence mechanisms. These are mobilized as instruments of power projection and of shaping domestic political perceptions, by exploiting the structural vulnerabilities of Armenia and Moldova. In this context, the EU intends to strengthen its support, as illustrated by the [deployment](#) of a hybrid rapid response team in Armenia ahead of the elections scheduled for June 7. This comparison between Moldova and Armenia is part of a broader tendency among international actors to analyse these spaces through shared analytical frameworks, highlighting common dynamics in Russian influence strategies within its “near abroad”, the post-Soviet space seen by Russia as a privileged sphere of influence.

Such an interpretation, while highlighting real dynamics in the diffusion of informational practices, may lead to an oversimplification of contexts that are nonetheless distinct. Armenia and Moldova, although both inheritors of a common Soviet past, display differentiated political, economic, and geopolitical trajectories that call for a more nuanced comparison. The degree of interdependence with Russia, the orientations of their foreign policies, their security configurations, and their regional environments vary significantly, shaping the modalities, objectives, and reception of

information operations.

In both contexts, Moscow’s enduring influence is embedded in a post-imperial vision in which the sovereignty of its neighbouring states remains implicitly contested, as illustrated by major events such as the Russo-Georgian War and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. However, the forms this influence takes differ considerably. Armenia, situated within the security context of the South Caucasus and historically close to Russia, is currently undergoing a strategic reconfiguration marked by a gradual distancing. Moldova, for its part, is evolving within a more integrated European environment, yet remains weakened by its internal divisions, particularly the issue of Transnistria, and by its immediate proximity to the conflict in Ukraine.

Therefore, while the comparison between Armenia and Moldova may appear relevant for identifying certain common mechanisms of information manipulation, it also calls into question the conditions under which such a comparison is valid. To what extent can these two contexts be meaningfully compared, and according to which criteria? Although similar dynamics can be observed, their respective specificities raise the question of the transferability of both analyses and policy responses. This tension between points of convergence and national singularities lies at the core of the comparative analysis of disinformation strategies in these two countries.

This analysis does not aim to be exhaustive. Its objective is to prioritize the most relevant comparative elements, namely the narratives mobilized, the informational actors operating, the tactics employed, and the institutional responses developed to counter these dynamics. Such an approach makes it possible to identify both structural similarities and localized divergences in the ways information environments are shaped around electoral competition in Moldova and Armenia.

Common Vulnerabilities of Armenia and Moldova to Russian Influence Strategies in the Information Space

Convergence of EU Rapprochement

Despite their distinct trajectories, Armenia and Moldova today share a number of structuring challenges, particularly in their growing relationship with the EU.

Both countries are engaged in a process of rapprochement with the EU, although through different modalities. Moldova holds official candidate country status, which provides a formalized framework for negotiations with Brussels. Armenia, for its part, remains at an earlier stage of this rapprochement: it signed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2017, which entered into force in 2021. This agreement currently constitutes the main legal framework governing its relations with the EU, without opening the prospect of formal membership in the short term.

However, relations between Yerevan and Brussels have deepened significantly in recent years. Armenia has recently strengthened its cooperation by adopting a strategic partnership agenda with the EU, reflecting a political willingness to intensify the country's European anchoring. In 2025, the adoption of a law expressing the intention to initiate a process of accession to the EU constituted an additional political signal, illustrating the gradual evolution of Armenia's positioning, still in formation but increasingly oriented toward structural rapprochement.

Structural Dependence and Strategic Rebalancing

In both cases, this rapprochement with the EU reflects a strategy of diversifying strategic partnerships aimed at reducing vulnerabilities linked to Russian pressure. Both countries

indeed share structural fragilities that create opportunities for both foreign and domestic actors to exploit their information environments, leveraging existing political, societal, and institutional fragilities to shape public perceptions and influence political dynamics. European anchoring thus appears as a means of rebalancing these patterns of dependence and strengthening the scope for strategic autonomy for both Moldova and Armenia.

Moldova, long dependent on Russian gas and electricity (via Gazprom and the Kuchurgan power plant, Moldavskaya GRES, located in Transnistria), has recently strengthened its cooperation with the EU in order to diversify its energy supply sources and reduce its energy vulnerability. Before 2022, Moldova's energy self-sufficiency was among the lowest in the world, with only around 25% of its energy demand covered by domestic production. The country imported 100% of its gas and coal consumption, nearly all of its oil, and around 80% of its electricity, including electricity supplied by the Kuchurgan power plant in Transnistria.

These import structures were highly concentrated and left the country heavily exposed to Russian energy leverage, both through direct gas supplies and through electricity generated from infrastructure operating outside the effective control of the Moldovan authorities. Since 2022, this dependence has significantly decreased as a result of closer integration with European energy markets, notably through increased gas and electricity imports from Romania and other EU member states.

Armenia, for its part, remains highly dependent on Russia in the energy sector, with nearly 85%



of its natural gas imports coming from Russia, making it an important lever of influence as well. This situation illustrates a broader trend observable in both countries: the gradual search for alternative partners in order to limit Moscow's leverage.

This rapprochement with the EU is seen negatively by Moscow, which views it as a challenge to its traditional sphere of influence. In this context, Russia uses a set of hybrid tools, ranging from economic and energy pressure to information influence campaigns and political interference, in order to slow down or counter the European progress of Moldova and Armenia, and to maintain its strategic position in both countries.

Frozen Conflicts as Persistent Instruments of Political Pressure

In both cases, unresolved territorial conflicts have served, or continue to serve, as potential levers of influence: the issue of Transnistria and Gagauzia in Moldova and Armenia's defeat to Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. These prolonged territorial conflicts constitute persistent sources of instability that can be instrumentalized by malicious actors during electoral periods. While these situations differ significantly in nature, timing, and degree of resolution, they nonetheless show how frozen conflict-related contexts can be used as tools of political pressure and regional influence.

Polarised Media Ecosystems and Fragile Information Markets

Similar patterns can also be observed in the information environments of both countries. Their media landscapes are marked by strong polarisation, where political divides heavily shape the production and circulation of information, contributing to a fragmented public sphere. At the same time, the structural weakness of domestic advertising markets limits the economic sustainability of media

outlets. In both contexts, small and fragmented advertising ecosystems generate insufficient and unstable revenues to support independent journalism at scale, constraining the development of viable long-term business models. As a result, many media organisations rely on a combination of commercial income, donor funding, and external financial support, which may increase financial vulnerability and, in some cases, create exposure to external influence dynamics. This fragility creates a recurring dependence on non-commercial funding sources, whether public, private, or internationally driven, which can in turn shape editorial priorities and amplify susceptibility to foreign information influence.

Diasporas as Political Actors

Diasporas also play an important role in the circulation of information, although their orientation and influence differ significantly between the two cases. The Moldovan diaspora plays a decisive role and is overwhelmingly pro-European. In the 2024 presidential election, around 82 to 83% of Moldovan voters abroad supported Maia Sandu, the pro-EU candidate, which proved decisive for her re-election. In total, nearly 330,000 votes were cast from abroad, representing about 19% of the total vote, a particularly significant electoral weight.

In the case of Armenia, the situation is different. While the Armenian diaspora is much larger and geographically more dispersed, with major communities in Russia, France, the United States, and the Middle East, its direct electoral influence is considerably more limited due to Armenia's stricter electoral framework: only Armenian citizens registered as residents in Armenia are entitled to vote in national elections. This significantly reduces the political impact of Armenians living permanently abroad on electoral outcomes.

The community in Russia is one of the main hubs, contributing to a specific political and economic influence. But unlike Moldova, the Armenian diaspora remains politically fragmented, with differing orientations depending on countries of residence, and generational divides, limiting its capacity to produce a unified electoral or political stance.

EU Responses to Information Interference: From Moldova to Armenia

From this perspective, information interference represents both a normative and a security challenge for the EU. In Armenia, it raises questions about the EU's ability to support a partner engaged in a process of democratic strengthening, notably through initiatives such as a 270 million euro programme [announced](#) in 2024, including components on cybersecurity, democratic resilience, and crisis management.

This approach partly draws on mechanisms already implemented in Moldova, where the EU deployed, for the first time, a dedicated EU mission [deployed](#) in the electoral context, during the dual vote of autumn 2024 (the presidential election and the referendum on EU accession, in October 2024), against a backdrop of heightened concerns over foreign interference.

Thus, without erasing the structural differences between the two countries, these elements highlight the existence of a common set of challenges, at the intersection of European integration dynamics, Russian influence strategies, and internal information vulnerabilities.

Common Russian methods : reuse of similar narratives and identical dissemination tools

Convergence in Russian Operational Patterns

Beyond national contexts, convergences can be observed in the methods used by Russia in its information manipulation operations in Armenia and Moldova. These similarities are particularly reflected in the circulation of standardised “information toolkits,” which are then adapted to the local realities of each country. The 4th report of the EEAS on threats related to foreign information manipulation and interference, published in March 2026, [explains](#) that the analysis of Russian FIMI campaigns targeting the upcoming Armenian parliamentary elections shows strong similarities with those conducted against Moldova during the 2025 presidential elections.

Both countries have experienced a significant intensification of information attacks in the run-up to their respective elections. Over the past year, the intensity of FIMI activities targeting both Moldova and Armenia has been primarily driven by [IMS](#) (Information Manipulation Systems), in particular the operations [Overload](#) and [Storm-1516](#), and, on certain occasions, Undercut and RRN/Media Brands.

Convergent Narrative Logics and Adaptation of FIMI Campaigns

In Moldova, ahead of the elections, the so-called “[Matryoshka](#)” network carried out a large-scale disinformation campaign based on the massive dissemination of manipulated content, notably videos, directly targeting President [Maia Sandu](#). These materials portrayed her as a figure [threatening](#) national sovereignty, while associating the European project with scenarios of economic decline and migration crises. This type of narrative finds echoes, in adapted forms, in the Armenian

context. While not strictly identical, they rely on similar logics: personalisation of attacks against political leaders, use of anxiety-driven narratives around sovereignty, and questioning of the benefits of rapprochement with the EU. Monitoring studies of information campaigns show that these narratives fit into broader patterns already observed in other contexts, particularly in [Ukraine](#). Allegations of corruption or illicit enrichment have [circulated](#) in a similar way against Nikol Pashinyan and Maia Sandu, often through similar platforms and operational methods.

In both cases, the campaigns [converge](#) around four main axes of discredit: moral depravity, corruption, Western interference, and loss of sovereignty. Moldovan and Armenian leaders are targeted through sensational, often unsubstantiated accusations concerning morally reprehensible behaviour, as well as alleged misappropriation of public funds and personal enrichment, often attributed to their political or family circles. Sovereignty and national identity erosion driven narratives mobilise issues of national belonging and geopolitical orientation by framing them within sensitive regional contexts: [Romanian](#) influence in [Moldova](#), and Turkish and Azerbaijani influence in [Armenia](#). These narratives exploit historically sensitive relations and polarising geopolitical issues to deepen existing divisions.

Narratives also [instrumentalize](#) Western political support and prospects of EU integration: while these are opportunities for democratic stabilization, they are framed simultaneously as targets for narrative warfare. In this logic, they seek to portray the leaders as dependent on external actors, whether the EU, NATO, or member states such as France, at the expense of their own populations.



Territorial Disputes as Structuring Elements of Influence Narratives

In both countries, information narratives are deeply anchored in disputed territorial issues, which provide powerful symbolic and political leverage for influence operations. In Moldova, the issue of Transnistria and Gagauzia has notably been used to disseminate narratives of [imminent war](#), with Kremlin-aligned [Telegram](#) channels playing a central role in amplifying claims that closer European integration would trigger military escalation or direct confrontation with Russia.

But in Armenia, according to the [DFRLab](#), territorial integrity plays a more immediate and central role in political discourse than in Moldova. The loss of Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023 and the displacement of more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians, created a profound political vulnerability. [Critics](#) of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan have consistently drawn on this event, using it to frame the territorial outcome as strategic miscalculation and to reinforce broader narratives challenging the government's legitimacy as well as the direction of Armenia's geopolitical reorientation.

Religious and Moral Value-Based Narratives

These narratives frequently extend to religious issues, associating leaders with alleged attacks on traditional values. At times, Nikol Pashinyan has even been [accused](#) of seeking to replace Christian symbols with Islamic ones.

A key dimension of this ecosystem is the exploitation of the actual Church-state controversy in Armenia. [Tensions](#) between Prime Minister Pashinyan and the Armenian Apostolic Church have been leveraged by Russian and pro-Russian actors to reinforce claims that the government's policies threaten traditional values and religious identity. For

instance, Russian media and affiliated figures [framed](#) the arrests of Church-linked figures in 2025 (such as Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, accused by Armenian authorities of involvement in coup-related plots) as religious persecution, while portraying Pashinyan as targeting the Church, [described](#) as "the last pillar" of Armenian identity.

In Armenia, unlike in Moldova, where parts of the Orthodox ecclesiastical structure [maintain](#) institutional ties closely coordinated with the Russian religious and political sphere, the Armenian Apostolic Church is not subordinated to the Russian Orthodox Church and cannot be understood as inherently aligned with Russian interests. Rather than reflecting direct ecclesiastical influence, the Armenian case is characterised by the instrumentalisation of the Church-state controversy itself. Media narratives and political messaging amplified by Russian and pro-Russian actors have framed tensions between the government and the Church as evidence of a broader erosion of Christian norms and traditional values under Prime Minister Pashinyan's leadership, thereby transforming a domestic political dispute into a discursive vehicle for conservative and anti-European narratives among more traditional segments of the population.

In contrast, in Moldova, religious networks served as an additional influence vector. The DFRLab-documented Matushka network [operated](#) through Orthodox parishes, church-affiliated youth groups, and coordinated social media channels on Facebook, TikTok, and Telegram, blending religious content with political messaging. In Armenia, the direct and structured mobilisation of religious institutions remains difficult to assess due to limited documentation. If such dynamics do occur, they appear to be more context-specific and episodic than reflective of a systematic or institutionalised pattern.



Nikol Pashinyan has also been [targeted](#) by narratives linked to LGBTQ+ themes, used to question his respect for traditional values and social norms. In comparison, ahead of Moldovan elections, Maia Sandu was portrayed as [violating](#) traditional values through narratives associated with LGBTQ+ issues. Overall, these narratives frame elections not only as political choices, but also as existential risks for national identity and religious foundations. These themes are thus instrumentalised to present electoral processes as hinging on a broader choice of alignment between Russia and the European Union.

Platform Ecosystems and Cross-Border Information Operations

Although all these narratives draw on local dynamics and fears, they are often [disseminated](#) in Western European languages rather than in Romanian, Armenian, or Russian. This suggests that FIMI content is aimed at a broader audience than just Moldovan or Armenian voters. The objective of discrediting the leaders of both countries in the eyes of a wider European public appears to be an attempt to reinforce prejudices and divisions within the EU and among neighbouring populations.

These campaigns, in both Armenia and Moldova, also [rely](#) on increasingly sophisticated technological tools, including the [use](#) of content generated or amplified by artificial intelligence, as well as coordinated bot networks capable of rapidly disseminating messages at scale. The recurrence of certain formats such as manipulated videos, fake testimonials and fabricated media outlets helps create a sense of familiarity and strengthens the perceived credibility of the content.

Beyond information attacks alone, attempts at manipulation have taken a broader range of

forms, including the illegal financing of political parties and cyberattacks.

FIMI campaigns also rely on transnational information infrastructures that shape their dissemination and effectiveness. In both Armenia and Moldova, Russian-speaking digital spaces and global platforms play a structuring role in the circulation of content, with a particular centrality of [Telegram](#) as a fast, weakly regulated dissemination channel widely used by political, media, and information actors. These ecosystems enable the near-simultaneous spread of narratives across different national spaces, bypassing traditional media and domestic regulatory frameworks. This infrastructural dimension strengthens the reach of influence operations by facilitating their local adaptation while maintaining transnational coherence in the narratives being circulated, particularly between the post-Soviet space and diasporic audiences.

TikTok has also emerged as an important vector of influence. Moldovan authorities [requested](#) the blocking of 443 TikTok channels, representing approximately 1.2 million followers and 4.5 million views, but around 95% of the reported content remained online after most takedown requests were rejected by the platform. While X has been used in [Moldova](#), it has played a particularly significant role as an amplification vector for disinformation campaigns in [Armenia](#).

Context-Dependent Effects of FIMI in Moldova and Armenia

If Russian FIMI campaigns in Moldova and Armenia rely on similar narratives and dissemination tools, their effects appear to differ [depending](#) on national contexts. In Moldova, they tend to prioritise the polarisation of the political space, the shaping of electoral behaviour, and the weakening of trust in democratic institutions, in a context where the

European question structures public debate and where EU integration is often framed as a threat to sovereignty and democratic processes.

In Armenia, by contrast, these campaigns are more closely associated with the exploitation of security anxieties and internal divisions linked to the country's post-2020 geopolitical reorientation, with narratives centred on sovereignty, national security, relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, and the legitimacy of rapprochement with the European Union. Overall, while the underlying logics and tools are similar, their effects are shaped by distinct political, security, and societal contexts.

If these common methods facilitate comparison between the two countries, they should be understood as adaptable frameworks rather than uniform models. Their effectiveness lies precisely in their ability to embed themselves in specific political, social, and informational contexts, which explains the variations observed in their implementation and reception. The campaigns conducted in Moldova and Armenia thus show strong convergence, both in the themes mobilised and in the dissemination tools used. They rely on similar narratives and comparable information circulation mechanisms, combining coordinated networks with digital platforms.



Differentiated Resilience Capacities: Comparing Moldova and Armenia's Response Trajectories

Moldova: a long-term process of building resilience against FIMI and moving closer to European integration

Beyond the similarities observed in the methods and narratives employed, Moldova and Armenia differ in their levels of resilience to FIMI campaigns. This difference concerns their institutional, political, and societal capacity to absorb, identify, and mitigate the effects of information interference. Moldova is engaged in a more advanced process of institutionalising this resilience, gradually developed in response to the political and security crises that have shaped the region since 2014 and further reinforced in the context of recent elections and the war in Ukraine.

This dynamic has translated into the development of coordination mechanisms between public institutions, intelligence services, judicial actors, independent media, and European partners, as well as into the gradual strengthening of local actors' capacity to respond to Russian influence strategies.

Institutional and Legal Strengthening of Anti-Disinformation Mechanisms

Moldova has long been engaged in a process of rapprochement with the European Union and has progressively developed institutional responses aimed at strengthening its resilience to foreign interference and information manipulation. In this context, the country has reinforced judicial and law enforcement mechanisms designed to counter illicit political financing, as well as to improve cooperation between intelligence services, judicial authorities, and anti-corruption institutions. This dynamic has notably resulted in enhanced coordination between specialised agencies and

law enforcement bodies, alongside the gradual establishment of a legal framework dedicated to public integrity.

These measures have contributed to improving the capacity to anticipate and respond to destabilisation attempts, while also gradually supporting the strengthening of trust in institutions, although such trust remains uneven and continues to constitute a structural challenge across different segments of society. But despite the Moldovan government's efforts to counter foreign operations through legal and regulatory means, enforcement limitations on major platforms have allowed coordinated networks to persist during and after the electoral cycle.

While measures implemented by the Moldovan government have produced tangible results in countering foreign interference, they have also been subject to some criticism. In its 2023 assessment, Freedom House notes that Moldova experienced complex and, at times, controversial political developments, marked by a series of far-reaching measures justified by external threats.

Civil Society, EU Assistance, and Constraints on Institutional Trust

In parallel, Moldovan civil society and independent media have conducted high-profile investigations, including documentaries and undercover reporting, which have exposed Russian influence networks and contributed to a broader cultural pushback against disinformation. These efforts have been accompanied by the promotion of a pro-democratic narrative of national unity, favouring a logic of internal cohesion rather than a strictly "anti-Russian" positioning. Some measures have proved effective, while



journalistic investigations have helped uncover the internal functioning of Russian influence networks.

The EU has supported Moldova in the context of the 2024 electoral cycle, as mentioned above, through a combination of technical and strategic engagement. This includes assistance in strengthening cybersecurity capacities, energy security, and resilience to foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), as well as enhanced cooperation on monitoring and countering disinformation. In parallel, EU engagement has also involved strategic communication and public diplomacy efforts aimed at reinforcing Moldova's democratic resilience and supporting the integrity of the electoral process.

Electoral Polarisation and the Role of the Diaspora

Despite these advances, Moldovan society remains highly polarised. The most recent elections highlighted relatively limited domestic mobilisation in favour of pro-European forces, in contrast with the decisive role played by the diaspora. Foreign narratives nevertheless succeeded in penetrating the domestic information space despite the State's efforts to counter external interference. Broader anti-Western narratives also contributed to mobilising segments of the domestic pro-Russian opposition, through fear of war, financial incentives, and the questioning of electoral outcomes.

The decisive role of the diaspora was subsequently instrumentalised in Russian-aligned narratives, which questioned the domestic legitimacy of Maia Sandu's victory by emphasizing the disproportionate influence of external voters and framing her political support as being driven primarily by the Moldovan diaspora, allegedly more exposed to Western environments and therefore detached

from domestic political realities.

Transnistria as a Structural Vector of Russian Influence

Moreover, the issue of Transnistria continues to represent a structural factor of fragility and tension. This secessionist region, which remains politically and economically aligned with Russia and hosts a Russian military presence in a disputed format, is outside the control of the authorities in Chişinău and constitutes a lasting lever of influence for Moscow. Transnistria currently hosts approximately 1,500 Russian troops. The presence of Russian forces on the territory, together with the associated economic and energy dependencies, sustains a form of latent instability and constrains Moldova's strategic room for manoeuvre, particularly in its rapprochement with the European Union.

Moldova as a Reference Point for Armenian Resilience Development

This more advanced experience makes Moldova a reference case for Armenia, particularly in terms of institutional coordination and the establishment of structural mechanisms to counter disinformation.

However, the direct transposition of this model remains limited, insofar as Armenia is at a different stage in the development of its capacity to respond to FIMI and is embedded in a specific socio-political and geopolitical environment. Diaspora mobilisation also follows different logics, while vulnerabilities and leverage points differ significantly. Strategies of resilience against Russian interference must therefore be adapted to local realities, while drawing on the lessons learned from the Moldovan experience.



Armenia: a recent trajectory towards the EU and context-specific geopolitical challenges

Unlike Moldova, Armenia follows a more recent and less linear trajectory of rapprochement with the EU, characterised more by a logic of diversification than by a clearly stated objective of integration. This evolution is largely explained by its specific geopolitical situation, marked by strong security and economic dependence on Russia, as well as its position within a volatile regional environment. Armenia must indeed navigate persistent tensions with Azerbaijan, complex relations with Turkey, and structural dependencies inherited from the post-Soviet period.

Strategic Constraint: Rebalancing Armenia's Under Post-2020 Trajectory

Compared to Moldova, Armenia's experience of Russian interference and disinformation is relatively recent. This phenomenon has intensified since 2020 and accelerated from 2023 onwards, in a context of growing disillusionment towards Russia, perceived as insufficiently supportive in the face of Azerbaijani incursions on Armenian territory and the lack of intervention from the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which, despite Armenia's membership, did not act in response to these violations of its territorial integrity. This sequence has contributed to a marked deterioration in Russia's image among segments of the Armenian population and has also deepened mistrust within the Armenian government, which has increasingly questioned the reliability of Moscow as Armenia's primary security guarantor. Against this backdrop, anti-Western messaging has also intensified, particularly in the run-up to the 2026 parliamentary elections.

The Armenian government seeks to maintain a balanced position vis-à-vis Russia, on which it

remains heavily dependent in both security and economic terms. This dependence is notably illustrated by the continued presence of the Russian military base in Gyumri, which remains a central component of Armenia's security architecture. At the same time, economic interdependence remains significant, with bilateral trade turnover having increased considerably since 2022 despite growing political tensions between Yerevan and Moscow.

This stands in contrast to Moldova, which has actively sought to reduce its trade dependence on Russia through a gradual economic reorientation toward the European Union. This makes any structural rupture more difficult for Armenia in the short term. In this context, Russian-aligned narratives have increasingly emphasized the potential economic costs of a Western pivot, warning of rising energy prices and declining exports, and attributing such risks to Western pressure rather than to Russia's own structural leverage over Armenian markets.

This orientation is also reflected at the societal level. According to an International Republican Institute survey conducted in February 2026, only 17% of respondents favoured an exclusively pro-European and Western orientation, while 32% supported integration with the European Union while maintaining relations with Russia. Conversely, 24% of respondents expressed support for a pro-Russian orientation while preserving ties with the EU and the West, while only 9% favoured an exclusively pro-Russian orientation.

These results reflect a majority preference for balanced foreign policy options rather than exclusive alignment. In this context, rapprochement with the EU appears less as a logic of rupture than as a strategy of balancing external partnerships, aimed at increasing strategic autonomy without fundamentally disrupting existing equilibria.



This gradual approach reflects the specific constraints shaping Armenian foreign policy, where alignment choices remain closely conditioned by security imperatives and regional stability concerns. This configuration contrasts with Moldova, where the pro-European orientation is significantly more pronounced, with approximately 60 to 63% of the population supporting accession to the European Union according to recent [surveys](#) by EU Neighbours East, reflecting a more clearly structured polarisation around the European option.

Moldova, a Comparative Benchmark for Armenian Trajectories

Moldova thus illustrates the potential risks facing Armenia: a sharper polarisation between European and Russian orientations could develop in the medium term, in a context where Moscow seeks to maintain and reinforce its influence. This pressure is all the more significant in Armenia given Russia's substantial strategic interests, as well as the historical, security, and economic leverage it retains, enabling it to influence both political life and societal perceptions.

As numerous reports have shown, information influence campaigns in Armenia were initiated earlier than in the Moldovan case, beginning more than a year [before](#) the elections, reflecting a greater degree of anticipation on Moscow's part. This timing also suggests a form of Russian strategic learning, as methods tested in Moldova appear to have been subsequently adjusted and refined. Armenia thus emerges not only as a new target of Russian FIMI operations, but also as a testing ground for the adaptation of informational practices already deployed in other post-Soviet spaces. This anticipation may reflect both lessons drawn from the Moldovan experience and the particular strategic importance Armenia holds for Russia within its regional environment.

A Multi-Actor and Regionally Competitive Information Environment

Unlike Moldova, Armenia must [contend](#) with a plurality of actors involved in disinformation campaigns, notably Azerbaijan and [Turkey](#), in addition to Russian influence dynamics. Multiple coordinated campaigns involving both Russian and Azerbaijani actors have been documented in the run-up to the June 2026 parliamentary elections, relying on media impersonation, multilingual dissemination, and cross-platform amplification, with notable narrative convergence between these different actors. These operations unfold within a particularly competitive regional information environment, where narratives hostile to Armenia concern territorial, security, and identity-related issues.

This overlap of influences complicates the reading of information dynamics by multiplying sources of pressure and making it difficult to identify a single matrix of interference, unlike cases such as Moldova where Russian influence appears more structurally centralised. For instance, the involvement of foreign “journalists” closely linked to pro-Kremlin networks, such as [Okay Deprem](#), a contributor to the Turkish media outlet Oda TV and former resident of Luhansk, who has been repeatedly implicated in the dissemination of false information about Armenian authorities ; illustrates the role of transnational information actors in amplifying these narratives.

In this context, information pressure does not operate in isolation but tends to intersect across these different actors: certain narratives circulate in convergent ways between Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey, particularly in efforts to delegitimise the European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) or discredit specific political reforms, thereby producing a cross-amplification effect. These narratives spread and reinforce one another through social media as well as certain local



and Russian-speaking media outlets, generating processes of repetition and amplification. The circulation of these recurring and partially coordinated narratives thus contributes to densifying the Armenian information space, making it structurally more opaque, fragmented, and difficult to manage.

Institutional Learning and Early-Stage Resilience Building

Armenia's response to Russian information influence remains more recent and still under construction. Unlike Moldova, Armenia entered this period with more limited institutional mechanisms for countering disinformation. Since 2023, the authorities have launched several initiatives aimed at structuring an institutional response, notably through the adoption of the "Concept for Countering Disinformation 2024–2026", the creation of a strategic communication department, and the development of information-space monitoring capacities. However, these mechanisms remain only partially institutionalised and continue to depend significantly on the support of international partners and civil society.

This difference in institutional maturity directly shapes the two countries' capacity to absorb the effects of Russian information operations: in Moldova, disinformation campaigns operate within an environment already sensitised to foreign interference, whereas in Armenia, where institutional learning is still ongoing and structural vulnerabilities remain significant, FIMI operations are more likely to amplify geopolitical uncertainty and deepen internal divisions. Requests by the Armenian government for EU assistance reflect an evolution in public policy and an acknowledgment of the effects of sustained external pressure.

| CONCLUSION

The comparison between Armenia and Moldova thus appears both relevant and limited.

Relevant, as it highlights relatively convergent methods in Russian information manipulation strategies, based on similar narratives, common tools, and influence logics that can be transposed from one context to another.

Limited, however, insofar as these similarities should not obscure the profoundly different political, geopolitical, and societal environments that make any automatic transposition of observed dynamics difficult, particularly with regard to electoral trajectories and internal political developments.

In Moldova, pro-European forces have managed to prevail at the ballot box despite large-scale disinformation campaigns.

In Armenia, opinion polls also show, at this stage, limited support for openly pro-Russian electoral positions, as well as a generally deteriorated perception of Russia. In both cases, Russian information influence does not therefore translate mechanically into immediate political gains.

This does not mean, however, that these strategies are ineffective. In the short term, they may contribute to supporting or weakening certain political actors in an electoral context, but their objectives are primarily situated within a longer-term timeframe. The aim is not only to influence a vote, but to sustain dynamics of polarisation, erode trust in institutions, and complicate trajectories of rapprochement with the European Union.

Over time, these mechanisms may deepen internal divisions and durably shape public perceptions, thereby creating a more favourable environment for Russian interests.

In this context, the fight against information interference appears, in both countries, as a process still under construction. The Moldovan experience highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach involving society as a whole, including institutions, civil society, and independent media, in order to strengthen the resilience of the information space.

At the same time, this process underscores the need to strike a careful balance between countering foreign information interference and preserving democratic norms, particularly freedom of expression and media pluralism. In Armenia, where upcoming political milestones will be particularly decisive, these issues arise with particular urgency.

Thus, rather than focusing on strict parallels, the value of the comparison lies in its capacity to identify common trends while accounting for local specificities.

It is through this balance between broader perspective and contextualisation that a more nuanced understanding of disinformation dynamics in both countries can be developed.

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