

For Public Release

Briefing Note

To: Minister LeBlanc
From: [REDACTED]
CC: [REDACTED]
Date: November 23, 2023
Subject: Ministerial Engagement on Protecting Democracy

PURPOSE: To update you on the status of engagement and outreach on Protecting Democracy measures, particularly the roll-out of the Protecting Democracy Toolkits, the counter-disinformation guidebook (ie RESIST).

BACKGROUND:

This past June, PCO-DI recommended establishing a ministerial roundtable on Protecting Democracy. However, direction was given to not pursue a high-profile event—s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence [REDACTED]

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The following items were also reiterated in the LeBlanc-Charrette Report:

1. A Counter-Disinformation Guidebook for public servants (ie RESIST),
2. Protecting Democracy “PD Toolkits” to build resilience to disinfo and FI among public servants; elected officials; and community leaders (eg diaspora leaders, activists, nomination contestants);
3. Consolidation of an interdepartmental committee on FI & disinfo issues; and
4. A consolidated plan for cooperation and communication with provinces, territories and municipalities on protecting democracy best practices.

Since then, the Protecting Democracy Unit (PDU) has made significant progress on these elements and some others. However, the RESIST guidebook and PD toolkits remain outstanding. Interaction with other jurisdictions in Canada also remains somewhat ad hoc. The current goal is to launch them by early December. The PDU also plans to re-engage our partners in Principle 3 of the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, Microsoft and the Alliance for Securing Democracy.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence [REDACTED]

First, ministerial-level engagement is stronger when we demonstrate that we have our own house in order—ie we have actually implemented the measures we promote. Second, we need to demonstrate to the Foreign Interference Enquiry—before their interim report—that we continue to be proactive and are not sitting on past recommendations or mandates (eg from NSICOP, s. 39 - [REDACTED] etc.). Third, the PD Toolkits support Public Safety Canada’s efforts on the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry and the upcoming Canada Elections Act bill by providing a degree of public education to key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that PCO-DI officials s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence [REDACTED] then pursue the PDU’s outreach and engagement plan to promote the tools and measures above.

[APG]