
Left opt for election scaremongering? Report claims 'US dark money' meddling in Europe

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A new alarming report claims American Christian conservative groups funneled millions to fund “shocking” meddling in European politics. Seems like a big scoop, or just a ploy to sway European Parliament elections?

The [report](#) released by the UK-based political website openDemocracy this week spares no black paint to produce a picture of gross interference in European affairs. The perpetrators are conservative Christian charities, which, the records show, pumped at least \$50 million into European countries.

All the right names that can scare a left-leaning reader are duly mentioned. Donald Trump? Check. Vladimir Putin? Check. Steve Bannon? Check, three times. Also listed are billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, the DeVos family, including Blackwater founder Erik Prince, and the evangelical preacher Franklin Graham – who notably travelled to Russia earlier this month, the report stressed for some arcane reason.

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[franklin graham #Collusion](#)? I’m in Russia right now—Moscow to be exact—and I’m meeting with the Russian churches on how we can share with more young people about faith in Jesus Christ! That’s not “collusion,” but it is collaboration for the sake of souls. [#GoodNews](#)

Of course the US public records over the past decade, which openDemocracy used as

the source for the figure, don't identify the recipients. But the readers may well assume that they had the most nefarious goals in mind.

"The scale of this meddling by US extremists is shocking, but sadly no surprise to us. Every day European societies face concerted attacks by outside forces seeking to impose reproductive coercion," commented Caroline Hickson, regional director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation's European Network. *"This is utterly at odds with the European values of democracy and human rights."*

The authors make no secret that they compiled their work ahead of the European Parliament elections, which will be held throughout EU member states in late May. Right-wing and Eurosceptic parties are widely expected to score big wins at the ballot. Some 40 incumbent MEPs penned a letter calling for action to investigate *"US Christian fundamentalists"* and their influence on Europe.

[@AlynSmith](#) Staggering research from ?[@openDemocracy](#)? on just how vulnerable our politics are to well funded organised malign influences. Proud to have organised a cross party MEP call for action.

'Pot calling kettle black, just like with Russia'

The report seems to be an exercise in scaremongering, painting private donations made by a conservative foundation as something untoward, John Laughland, British conservative author and historian, told RT.

"Some of the organizations that they mention I personally know. This is just ridiculous. There are MEPs and European political parties that receive money from American sources, including liberals," he said.

[_Also on rt.com Brussels cries 'conspiracy' over Hungary's ads showing smiling Soros behind EU immigration agenda...](#)

The notion of 'dark money' being used to 'interfere' in European affairs has been around in some political circles for quite some time. The only difference with this report is that the parties accused of interfering are private charities rather than a foreign nation like Russia, the most popular target for such accusations in the past few years.

Perceiving 'dark money' behind political opponents is a kind of conspiratorial thinking that some people in the left-wing camp demonstrate, Laughland added. *"They think that any kind of movement or current of ideas that is not their current of ideas is either because people are stupid or because they are paid,"* he said.

The complaints about "Russian election interference" made by the EU and the US, which have a long record of their own meddling in foreign nations, looks like a vivid example of pot calling kettle black, he said. The left complaining about the right receiving foreign money while receiving foreign money themselves would look similarly hypocritical.

'Don't turn this into a Bannon v Soros culture war'

British Journalist Neil Clark, pointed out that while \$50 million may seem like a large sum

of money even spent over ten years, it dwarfs compared to the billions and billions floating around in European politics. A significant portion of that money goes to liberal causes funded by wealthy sponsors like Hungarian-born billionaire George Soros, the best-known person of that ilk.

The impact that his Open Society Foundations made on Europe, especially in the eastern part during post-Soviet transition, is undeniable. Incidentally, the foundation is one of the primary sponsors of openDemocracy itself, alongside US-based groups like National Endowment for Democracy, and the Ford Foundation.

[_Also on rt.com Eurosceptic parties set to double seats in EU Parliament after May elections – poll...](#)

Clark warned against piling up a dozen Christian conservative groups into one vaguely neo-Nazi-shaped boogeyman, which is what the report seems to have done. More so, if the goal was to turn it into a campaigning point for the May elections.

“The issue that the left should be fighting on is economic. Employment, rising poverty in Europe, austerity – these are the issues they should be focusing on, and not culture wars,” he told RT. “And this report to me seems as if it wants to encourage culture wars... Basically, Steve Bannon versus George Soros.”



Steve Bannon attends the National Front party convention in France. ©REUTERS / Pascal Rossignol

If left parties do go down that path, it may backfire, Clark said. There are plenty of Christians living in Europe, who vote left. Starting a war with American Christian conservatives would not win votes in Europe.