

**Committee:** Special Political



**Topic:** Influence of social media on elections

**Background information:**

Social media may have large impact on elections, either by persuading the public to vote for one party or idea through the use of propaganda or via misinformation about who is edging ahead in social media polls. Therefore, ideas and resolutions need to be put forward in order to control and monitor the fairness of elections, as social media has the potential to destroy democracy if not handled correctly. There are examples of this happening, but it cannot be backed up by legitimate evidence and so it is hard to say that this is absolute fact. In the United States, social media sites—such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube—are currently being used by two out of three people, and search engines are used daily. It can therefore be seen why social medias can cause a lot of damage in elections.

Facebook had a huge role on the Brexit vote in 2016. The UK parliament requested for Mark Zuckerberg to come to the UK to discuss what advertisements were being spread on his website, but unfortunately he refused. There is a limit for the amount of money one side in an election can spend on running in an election, but on Youtube and Facebook the prices spent on ads are blacklisted and so this limit for spending money is deemed useless. This was detrimental in the Brexit referendum because the Leave campaign were propping up fake facts about Brexit endlessly without any regulation or any limit to the money spent. Furthermore, the Brexit campaign laundered money on Facebook, this was deemed illegal and was reported to the police. It was backed by an unknown source of income which allegedly spent more than #1 million for the Brexit campaign on top of the other money spent. The crimes and fake news between Facebook and Brexit go on endlessly and therefore are a major example of how more regulation online is needed in elections.

US presidential election also had a huge influence from social media, for the first time ever in an American presidential election campaign people were able to express their views and talk about who people should vote for. This new feature in the election was also additional free propaganda for the presidential candidates. Their followers would express why one candidate could be seen as more beneficial to the country than another and so could turn an election result that way. Donald Trump used twitter as a main source to fuel his campaign, often

calling out opposing candidates (mainly Hillary Clinton) for their claims and ridiculing them.

An example being:



Minutes later, Clinton responded.



Resolutions therefore should be aimed at increasing regulation on prices spent on advertisement and propaganda as well as limiting the amount of traffic from one political side.

### **Definition of key terms.**

**Social Media** websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

**Propaganda** information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.

**Election** a formal and organized choice by vote of a person for a political office or other position

## Timeline of Events

<b>4th February 2004</b>	Facebook released on the Harvard network
<b>9th April 2012</b>	Facebook buys Instagram for \$1 billion
<b>23rd June 2016</b>	Brexit referendum date
<b>8th November 2016</b>	US presidential elections.