# UK PM confirms election interference by the Kremlin during the Brexit referendum

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Cloudy weather over UK's security

## Andy Burnham has confirmed the Russian interference

For the first time since 2016, the British prime minister has confirmed Russian interference in the Brexit referendum. The news, which was first published on Saturday in "The Rest is Politics" podcast, once again reiterated the scale of the russian operation against European States. Fur-

thermore, Burnham warns that in light of that discovery, European states such as Germany and France should remain more vigilant in the face of their upcoming elections. At the same time, the announcement itself is a major blow to the conservatives and their former prime minister Boris Johnson, whose government had spent years negotiating British withdrawal from the European Union. A continuation of the trend which has started since 2014, when, as part of the Russian hybrid operations, the foreign military intelligence (GRU) and a number of state moguls, including the infamous late Yevgeny Prigozhin, have invested in so-called troll factories and fake news campaigns. As well as direct attacks on British soil, such as the chemical poisoning of the GRU defector Sergei Skripal in Salisbury in 2018. As such, a recent discovery can be seen as part of a continuing influence operation by the Kremlin in the countries of Western Europe.

## Washington continues to seek rapprochement with Moscow

At the same time, this development comes at a time when Washington continues to seek rapprochement with Moscow. And such may fuel another wave of political bickering regarding the alleged role in the success of the electoral campaign of the Republican Party and President Donald J. Trump in the 2016 presidential election. An election which he was able to win by landslide, partly due to a strong personal in-house brand of populism and an alleged russian influence campaign on social media dedicated to polarising American society regarding topics such as migration, economic wellbeing, and the role of religion in America.

Since 2016, Trump has continued to maintain a strong bilateral relationship between the USA and the UK, both on an official and personal level, as many members of the ruling Conservative Party have historically supported close ties with the Republican Party. An alliance which went in many ways beyond special relations when Trump, despite a historically neutral approach to the internal European Debates regarding European integration have pledged full support for Brexit. As well as engaging in the debates regarding the benefits the United Kingdom would get from the country's withdrawal from the Single Market. Claims which have been pretty controversial in the coming years, as despite promises to provide more beneficial treatment to UK companies, Trump has conditioned this approach on the UK alignment of the regulatory standards for food and medicines with the USA. And which with the notable exception of the AUKUS security deal have shown how limited the British options are inn ability to extend trade relationships between its traditional trade partners outside the EU.

## Question of interference continues

As we approach the next presidential elections in France, the question of interference continues to be seen as a crucial both in national and international debate. The question of whether states should tolerate the impact

on domestic policy and how it impact electoral preferences of the voters remain open.