

FAR-RIGHT SILENCING STRATEGIES

and what we can do about them

The far-right have spent the last few years dominating public discourse and cultural narratives. Through strategic, tactics and a ruthless use of digital platforms, they've spread disinformation and discredited democratic institutions. This coordinated effort from right-wing forces in the US, Europe, Russia and beyond has very real-life consequences for our democracies, freedoms and way of life.

Progressive forces are struggling in this new climate of political instability and chaos. **Freedoms that we took for granted are now very much at risk.**

As defenders of democracy and those who value our hard-won freedoms, we must stop playing from defensive positions and move to an offensive approach. That means understanding how the far-right operates: how they spread propaganda, radicalise narratives, and hollow out institutions.

Their tactics are not mysterious; they are methodical, repeatable, and increasingly visible across the US and the EU.

By decoding these plays, we stop reacting and start fighting back. Democracy won't defend itself. But we can.

HOW FALSE CLAIMS ARE MADE TO LOOK TRUE

1. A LIE IS BORN

A shocking claim is made

2. POSTED IN THE SHADOWS

Published on a small or fringe website

3. FITS A BIG FEAR

Plugs into an existing conspiracy or grievance

The false claim: The European Commission pays green NGOs to lobby on its behalf

The conspiracy theory: overnments work with academia and NGOs to promote a "green/leftist/woke" agenda

The truth: The Commission funds lots of things, including some NGOs, but the work of civil society remains independent **Pre-bunk if possible, state the facts** but don't expect facts to save you

4. MANY ACCUSATIONS AT ONCE

So many claims you don't know where to start

Civitas Christiana, a Dutch ultraconservative Catholic organization, spread disinformation and hate against Rutgers (the Netherlands centre of knowledge and expertise on sexual health, safety and wellbeing) to undermine their sexuality education work. They campaigned on social & mainstream media and offline to smear Rutgers. [Rutgers went to court](#) and won. The statements by Civitas were found to be false, harmful and unlawful.

5. COPY-PASTE EXPLOSION

One site copies another, the story seems to be everywhere

6. 'SECRET SOURCES' APPEAR

Unnamed insiders 'confirm' the story

7. GOES VIRAL ONLINE

Big accounts spread it fast

8. MEDIA REPEATS IT

Mainstream outlets report it

In Germany, the newspaper Welt picked up the conspiracy story of "NGO funding", and this was echoed by other news agencies.

What to do: [A complaint to the press authority](#). In December 2025 the German press council found Welt guilty of a "serious misleading of their readers and a grave violation of journalistic due diligence" because of their one-sided reporting of the story.

9. PICKED UP BY EXTREMIST POLITICIANS & ORGANISATIONS

Brought into parliaments and institutions

In Brussels, the anti-NGO campaign was started by MEPs from the European People's Party (EPP) several years ago. After the centre-right and far right won the European elections in 2024, the anti-NGO campaign picked up speed.

What to do: [Expose their hidden interests](#). The EPP MEP Monika Hohlmeier, a driving force behind the anti-NGO campaign, is also a member of the Supervisory Board at BayWa AG, a major German agricultural trader. PBQ, 09.02.26, for the online version include this link

She receives €75,000 annually from BayWa. BayWa itself has received millions from the LIFE Programme - the same fund Hohlmeier wants to see cancelled for NGOs

10. ENTERS OFFICIAL PAPERS

Written into reports and procedures

11. LOOKS LIKE PROOF

The lie becomes 'evidence'

Final Outcome

Silencing Effect
Fear, self-censorship,
demotivation

HOW TO FIGHT BACK

DON'T REPEAT THE CLAIM

Claims look like fact when they are continuously repeated. Even if you just want to fact check the claim and even if it is proven wrong, the original insinuation is reinforced because the topic stays in the news. **Correction reinforces the original claim.**

You can put out a statement with all the facts for journalists but remember: the truth is necessary, but it will not save you.

Instead, **have your own message**, don't just be a reaction against someone or something.

GO BEHIND THE SCENES

Explain the mechanics behind the campaign (rumours, grains of truth, a vicious internet business model that makes money with these lies).

Expose the interest behind the attack (e.g. in the NGO funding attacks, big business and corporate lobbyists want to silence critical voices).

Expose the people behind it, they often have very dubious records that journalists could write about.

COLLABORATE

Build a network, keep each other informed, coordinate on messaging, build influencer networks.

Defend each other (holding your head down while others are attacked will save you temporarily, but remember: you're next in line).

Look for allies outside your sector (for example other civil society organisations not yet targeted and maybe closer to your political opponents, who might be the next on the list to be attacked)

Want to join our alliance
to defend democracy?

SIGN UP HERE:

<https://www.greens-efa.eu/fighting-for-you/democracy-defence-hub/>