friends of europe

EUROPE'S TOUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD
URGENT CHALLENGES IN A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT

REPORT

Co-sponsored by

NATO
OTAN

In cooperation with

wiis WOMEN IN
INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY BRUSSELS

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
IN FOREIGN POLICY

NEW, COMPLEX CHALLENGES
FORCE EUROPEAN DEFENCE RETHINK

Europe is re-evaluating the concepts and capabilities that underlie its defence, as its security challenges are exacerbated by turbulent developments in the Middle East and worsening relations with Russia.

That was the theme of Friends of Europe's annual Security Policy Summit on 28 November, which aimed to shift talk on European security from threats to opportunities. At the summit, entitled 'Europe's tough neighbourhood – urgent challenges in a complex environment', participants sought to identify roles and responsibilities at the strategic, tactical and operational levels in the framework of longer-term strategic thinking.

Calls for more action to combat cyberattacks have followed the increase in alleged Russian disinformation efforts and meddling in some NATO member states' elections. While these have not been overtly aggressive, they have played a role in exacerbating the unresolved conflict in Ukraine and the instability that has returned to the Western Balkans.

"People weren't talking about fake news before, and now we are talking about it all the time," said **Giles Portman**, Head of the East Stratcom Task Force at the European External Action Service (EEAS). "We have raised awareness and raised inoculation and immunity, but there is still a long way to go. There are bots, cyborgs, artificial intelligence and increasingly sophisticated fake imagery. We have been catching up with the game – but we need to get ahead of the game."

There are three things the European Union needs to do, he said. One is to analyse better the problem of fake news and disinformation, which is seen as increasingly important by both the European Parliament and the European Commission. "They recognise that this is not just an external problem, but something that is happening in the EU," Portman said. His task force is starting a working group on fake news, which will attempt to find some kind of agreement on best practice. "People get news from social media sites, so we need to continue to put across our narrative. That is what we have been doing, but we need to do more. You can eradicate disinformation, but you also need your own narrative."

The second necessity is to continue to support good-quality media. "If you look at the Press Freedom Index, you see where the problems are: not in the EU member states, but in the Eastern Neighbourhood. We need to support investigative journalists, managers and financers. This is a competitive space and they need the financial security." Thirdly, the EU is running a Russian-language website. "Russian is a special language for the EU," Portman said.

> **"People weren't talking about fake news before, and now we are talking about it all the time"**
>
> **Giles Portman**
> Head of the East Stratcom Task Force at the European External Action Service (EEAS)

"Russia's use of hybrid techniques creates uncertainty and unpredictability on security. Cyberattacks are becoming more frequent "

Zanda Kalnina-Lukaševica
Parliamentary State Secretary for European Affairs at the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Young Leader (EYL40)

Russia is widely suspected to be behind the use of these techniques in a sophisticated, hard-to-predict manner that is difficult to counter. The Baltic states, former Soviet republics which are now NATO members bordering Russia, are particularly concerned.

"Russia's use of hybrid techniques creates uncertainty and unpredictability on security in Europe," said **Zanda Kalnina-Lukaševica**, Parliamentary State Secretary for European Affairs at the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Young Leader (EYL40). "Digital technology and the Internet are playing a more and more important role in society and the economy," she said. "They advance our lives, but they also make us more vulnerable. Attacks on media have become commonplace, and we are becoming aware how much harm they do to our democracy. Cyberattacks are becoming more frequent."

BALTICS ON THE FRONTLINE

Latvia has experienced elements of hybrid attacks, and in 2016 it registered 600 politically motivated incidents Kalnina-Lukaševica said. "Latvia and Estonia are at the forefront of cyber capabilities and boosting resilience. We are increasing efforts to foster a whole-of-society approach. It is important to have a high level of awareness, from schoolchildren to high-level national security officers."

Russia denies engaging in this kind of hostile activity. "How weak is this society and democracy if Russia is producing devastating effects?" asked **Igor Kapyrin**, Deputy Director of the Department for European Cooperation at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "This is a big brainwashing machine. We were talking about freedom of press, and now we are talking about how to nourish journalists and social media – and what is a truth and what is a lie. If the proposal is to establish EU and NATO rules over the world, it is going to fail."

In Eastern Europe, Russia has been involved with cross-border cooperation arrangements with Latvia, Poland and Ukraine, Kapyrin said. It cooperates on environmental issues in the Arctic with the EU, Norway and Iceland. And there are contacts with NATO. "There is people-to-people contact going on without this frontline spirit," said Kapyrin. "Today everybody considers that Russia is attacking. But we are condemning these attacks officially. We ask for concrete details so we can investigate, but we are always told it is secret information."

Friends of Europe's recent global online brainstorm, Debating Security Plus, highlighted the challenges of cyber-related aspects of security "We set out a pathway for the short, medium and long terms," said moderator **Dharmendra Kanani**, Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe. "What does it take to build the right infrastructure? Digital technology and drones have completely changed the rules of the game. They are changing what we understand to be the future of defence and security."

Debating Security Plus produced repeated calls for a global convention on cyber security and defence. However, this might not work, said **Francesca Spidalieri**, Senior Fellow for Cyber Leadership at Salve Regina University's Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy. "So far, most of the efforts to establish norms and definitions in cyberspace have failed," she said. "The law of conflict should apply in cyberspace. Otherwise, I am sceptical. What are we trying to govern – the free flow of information?"

Nevertheless, she said that greater digital awareness and knowledge is needed in government. "We need to educate leaders across Europe," said Spidalieri. "Europe depends on the Internet and ICT for modernisation and

interconnection. So we need to realise that cyber security is not just an IT issue. It is a governance issue. I convert technical terms into business terms so that politicians and businesses understand how to balance business and security issues."

INSTABILITY TO THE SOUTH

To Europe's south, the destabilising effects of the Arab Spring in 2011 and the EU-led military intervention in Libya have contributed to mounting security difficulties. These have included terrorism and mass movements of people. At the same time, organised crime is increasingly providing terrorist networks with both the infrastructure to procure deadly weapons and the funds to finance terrorist activities, and the results are being felt in Europe.

"Europe cannot be at peace and cannot be prosperous without peace and prosperity in its neighbourhood," said moderator **Shada Islam**, Director of Europe and Geopolitics at Friends of Europe. "We need to change the way we cooperate – not just through traditional government but also through civil society, such as religious, business and other leaders."

The response has been complicated by the deterioration in Europe's and the US' relations with Turkey, their traditional ally in the Muslim world. There is now a growing awareness that security policy needs to be complemented by economic development assistance and engagement with non-governmental organisations.

"We have to look to more actors than just governments," said **Kati Piri**, Member of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET). "My criticism is that we are sending a soft message to the Turkish government and losing – or risk losing – the 80 million people in the country. At least we could show more solidarity with the people in these dark times. Of course, it is normal that you deal with the government, but we are losing track of the longer-term perspective."

In general, she said, non-governmental organisations need to keep up pressure on authorities. "Civil society needs to keep challenging the government," Piri said. "However, in different countries there are different limits, so for personal security some organisations have moved from Egypt to Tunisia."

One important role for civil society organisations is to conduct dialogue with young people. "In the countries I work in, civil society is the only platform that the young can use," said **Anas Talalqa**, Human Rights Advisor at the Inti Raymi Fund. "We are keeping the youth in the dark and then we ask why young people are joining ISIS. There should be help to form a dialogue with civil society."

Not all non-government contacts will be easy to deal with, but they still need to be listened to, said **Pekka Haavisto**, Member of the Finnish Parliament, Foreign Minister's Special Representative on Mediation and President of the European Institute of Peace. "Peace building includes civil society and it also includes the bad guys," he said. "Some people have no schooling and they have two options: to be a refugee and try to reach Europe or become a pirate. In Sudan, we have been told just to talk to moderates. But you cannot solve the problem by only talking to a few people. One member of the Taliban told me it needs help to fight radicalisation – because ISIS is coming to Afghanistan and recruiting. He said they wanted to be nationalist Islamists and not the internationalist kind."

The high media profile of migrant flows in Europe has changed the way foreign policy is conducted, Haavisto said. "Foreign policy has moved from foreign ministries in Europe to ministries of justice and interior. So when these people come to negotiate refugee agreements, we lose perspective."

"Peace building includes civil society and it also includes the bad guys. You cannot solve the problem by only talking to a few people"

Pekka Haavisto
Member of the Finnish Parliament, Foreign Minister's Special Representative on Mediation and President of the European Institute of Peace

"There is a tendency to lean towards the strongman paradigm to solve problems. But it was the strongman paradigm that caused the problems in the first place"

Mary Fitzgerald
Libya analyst, award-winning journalist and European Young Leader (EYL40)

There is still an instinct in the region to look for a powerful leader to maintain stability, said **Mary Fitzgerald**, a Libya analyst, award-winning journalist and European Young Leader (EYL40). "If you go back to 2011, the factors were repressive governments, dictatorships and a huge young population," she said. "Six years later those dynamics are still in place, and you now have a layer of dashed hopes on top. There is a tendency to lean towards the strongman paradigm to solve problems. But it was the strongman paradigm that caused the problems in the first place. Plus, the strongman paradigm today is not the strongman paradigm of 20 years ago, because of things like social media."

Europeans, too, can fall into this trap. "In looking for short-term fixes to problems in the southern neighbourhood, we tip into the idea that it is a strongman that's needed," she said. "When somebody like Khalifa Haftar – head of the Libyan National Army – is courted by key EU member states, that is a problem. That emboldens Haftar, and he still hasn't come to the table or shown willingness to compromise. In Libya you would imagine a convergence of approaches among EU member states because of its importance for Europe. But there is divergence, and there are complaints that there are too many cooks in the Libya kitchen – and they have failed to produce anything edible up to this point."

MORE EFFORT NEEDED

Looming over all discussion of European security is the question of how much Europeans are prepared to do themselves. US Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates warned Europeans at a 2011 debate in Brussels that it was high time they stop relying on the US. Six years after Gates' remarks, this line continues to be echoed by the current US administration and few European NATO allies are meeting its target of spending 2% of GDP on defence.

The new environment has been coupled in recent years by signals from the US that Europe is less of a priority – and that it should do more to guarantee its own defence. "Now the world looks a scarier place," said **James Morrison**, Head of Cabinet to European Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King. "The threat is increasingly not just military – though I would not write it off – but a cyber threat, where the threat surface is massive. I think the collective view is that we need to take more responsibility for our own security, and that the means of mitigating the threat rely more on collective action."

The Treaty of Lisbon lets member states establish permanent structured cooperation in defence (PESCO) within the EU framework, so that they can invest in shared projects, or enhance the operational readiness of their armed forces. In November, 23 member states signed a joint notification on PESCO.

"The decision to invoke this provision in the treaty marks a shift in European security and defence," said Morrison. "You see a trend towards more structure in focusing on capability gaps. Now with PESCO we are encouraging them to stand by those commitments. Why is this happening now and not in 2009? Because the threat landscape is different. 2009 was before the world was seriously falling apart, and we could still count on the peace dividend."

In future, the means of mitigating threats will rely more on collective action, Morrison said. "PESCO allows you to identify areas where you want to develop capabilities and cooperate more closely and be held to account. You can move into areas like cyber capabilities, where the cost of development is quite high. So it is an excellent framework for a structured programme. There is a lot of duplication of capabilities, and we also have gaps."

HOW FAR WILL THE EU GO?

NATO-EU cooperation has been a strategic priority, especially since NATO's 2016 summit in Warsaw, said **Jan Havránek**, Policy Adviser to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. "NATO is adapting to threats and challenges, but it has to work with partners and cannot go it alone," he said. "It needs individual allies to do work in terms of defence spending. It needs institutions such as the EU and the UN to work with. So NATO-EU is a natural, complementary effort. We welcome PESCO because anything that can bolster security can bolster NATO."

He said that PESCO was an evolution of the EU's pooling and sharing initiative, which came out of the 2009 financial crisis. "I see this as a game changer for European security. It is vital for NATO to be able to move troops around Europe and also for non-EU allies like the US and Canada."

Still, up to now, the EU's security efforts have been unimpressive, said **Paul Taylor**, Senior Fellow at Friends of Europe, Contributing Editor for Politico and author of 'Jumping over its shadow: Germany and the future of European defence'; a publication that contains a to-do list for EU defence by 2023, including projects under PESCO, a Franco-German pact to develop weapons systems, higher defence spending and more joint procurement.

"European defence has been a serial disappointer," Taylor said. "What has changed now are the threats: Russia, Daesh, the post-Arab Spring, climate change and the demographic problems of the Sahel. There is also financial pressure within Europe itself. France can no longer afford to do as much as it has been doing in defence. Germany can no longer afford politically to do as little. The great British foot is now off the brake, and it is keen to cooperate in things that it has been against. Trump means that the US commitment to NATO is no longer as strong as it was."

These moves come in spite of a lack of enthusiasm for the military among the European public. "Western societies have fatigue about military interventions," said Taylor. "Few have solved problems. Some have arrested them, but some not. So we need a more holistic approach involving civil society: development assistance and managed migration. But ultimately, do we nevertheless need armed forces and the possibility to resort to the use of force? The answer from the EU was: yes. Can you deal with Daesh only with soft power? The member states thought not. So, there is more of an emphasis now on the military side of defence. The EU is seen from outside as a touchy-feely, soft power, not as a muscular organisation that sees all problems as nails and only has a hammer. The question is whether it is going to have a hammer at all?"

> **"I think the collective view is that we need to take more responsibility for our own security, and that the means of mitigating the threat rely more on collective action"**
>
> **James Morrison**
> Head of Cabinet to European Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King

"It has been believed that buying weapons together is one of the major conduits to create greater cooperation. So far it has not necessarily had that kind of impact"

Aude Fleurant
Director of the Arms and Military Expenditure Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

LITTLE IMPACT SO FAR

Joint procurement of equipment by European militaries has long been seen as important. Since 2010, the EU's official approach to defence cooperation has been pooling and sharing. Projects promoted by the European Defence Agency include the development of a European remote-piloted aircraft system, an air-to-air refuelling capacity and a next-generation governmental satellite communication system. However, the approach has not yet yielded significant results, partly due to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of governments, and partly due to the long time it takes to develop new weapons and systems.

"Some joint projects have been very successful, but many have been unsuccessful," said **Aude Fleurant**, Director of the Arms and Military Expenditure Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). "It has been believed that buying weapons together is one of the major conduits to create greater cooperation. So far it has not necessarily had that kind of impact. Political will can be an issue, particularly for countries with large production faculties of their own, such as France, Germany and Sweden. So, fragmentation along borders is still very high for some countries."

Another complicating factor is US weapons producers. They are so large and have such a global presence that they will continue to have a large role in the European weapons industry. "Canada buys a lot of its weapons from US sources, for example," said Fleurant. "There seems to be a semi-free market between Canada and the US. The US produces everything; they are completely autonomous. A lot of US weapons companies are present in Europe and large producers here – General Dynamics, for example. So indirectly, the US will play a role because European countries buy US weapons."

SOLUTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

By looking eastwards, southwards and inwards, speakers and participants were able not only to identify challenges to European security and defence, but also solutions and opportunities for growth. As developments on all sides create the need for innovative responses, it is clear that Europe is on the right track to improving its ability to withstand both external and internal threats. At the same time, however, there is still much more work to be done.

WE ARE PARTNERS
WE ARE TRANSPARENT

Campaign on Defence and Security

WHAT?

The WeAreNATO campaign highlights how **unity** and **solidarity** between Allies contributes to protecting **peace and security** for citizens across the Alliance. The communications campaign will depict the central role and importance of NATO in maintaining Euro-Atlantic security and the ways in which the Alliance uses diplomacy, military strength, and technological advancements to secure peace.

WHY?

Research shows that despite broad support for the Alliance across member countries, there is a **lack of understanding and clarity** of what NATO does and the level of cooperation that exists between members and partners.

WeAreNATO will reinforce the NATO brand and highlight the value of the organisation among key audiences in member countries. In turn, this will lead to **better informed citizens** who understand the importance of investing in their security and the necessity for strong political support of the Alliance.

WHO?

The WeAreNATO campaign is an **Alliance-wide effort**, coordinated by NATO headquarters. NATO will work with Allies to design and run national WeAreNATO campaigns.

WHEN?

The WeAreNATO campaign should be viewed as an ongoing **series of communications** activities with the aim of increasing awareness about NATO in home audiences over time.

HOW?

There are a number of ways you can get involved in the campaign. You can join the debates that we'll be having about what NATO is and what it does. We look forward to **drawing on your expertise to enrich these debates**. If you use the **hashtag #WeAreNATO** when you write about NATO, your contribution will join the many others in the social media debate. For those of you who already work on projects with NATO, this campaign will provide a **framework for future cooperation**. Finally, we'd be really interested to hear your thoughts, questions and feedback on the campaign and how it works for you.

Should you have any questions related to the campaign, please reach out to us at **pdd.seminars@hq.nato.int** and we would be glad to assist you.
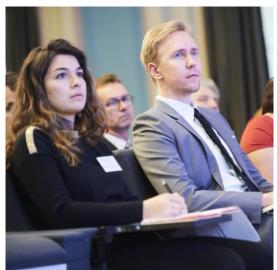
#SecuritySummit

LOOKING SOUTHWARDS

> "NATO is adapting to threats and challenges, but it has to work with partners and cannot go it alone"
>
> Jan Havránek
> Policy Adviser to NATO Secretary General
> Jens Stoltenberg

SHARE THE PHOTOS

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST