

PROGRAMME

SCHUMAN SECURITY & DEFENCE FORUM 2026

RELIABLE SECURITY &
DEFENCE PARTNERSHIPS
IN TIMES OF GROWING
THREATS & UNCERTAINTY



17 - 18
NOVEMBER
BRUSSELS

17 NOV
**CONCERT
NOBLE**

CLOSED DOOR MINISTERIAL DINNER

18:00–19:00

19:00–21:30

MINISTERIAL DINNER

WELCOME

Kaja KALLAS | High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

DISCUSSION

In a world of geopolitical competition, with increasingly interconnected security environments, localised crises and conflicts can affect countries across the globe. The EU and its partners need to be better prepared to face both conventional security threats like conflicts, as well as emerging challenges and the weaponisation of non-security domains. In this uncertain and troubled context, reliable partnerships are more needed than ever.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What security threats are common to the EU and its partners? How do threats and challenges affect partners across different regions?
- What are the EU and its partners already doing to respond to these threats and challenges? What is working well and what areas require more attention?
- How can the EU and its partners strengthen cooperation in response to common security threats and challenges?

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AMONG PARTICIPANTS

MASTER OF CEREMONY

Steven EVERTS | Director, EU Institute for Security Studies

1 A side event for think-tankers and academia will take place on 17 November in the afternoon, followed by a cocktail/dinner for think-tankers, academia and accompanying members of the official delegations.

18 NOV
**EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT**

SCHUMAN SECURITY & DEFENCE FORUM

08:00–09:00 **WELCOME COFFEE**

09:00–09:05 **WELCOMING REMARKS**

Roberta METSOLA | President of the European Parliament

09:05–09:20 **KEYNOTE SPEECH**

Kaja KALLAS | High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

09:20–10:30 **PLENARY SESSION**

GLOBAL SECURITY IN FLUX: RELIABLE PARTNERSHIPS FOR A MORE SECURE FUTURE

The geopolitical landscape is rapidly evolving, with conventional and emerging threats testing global stability. From cyber threats to maritime security, these challenges demand coordinated responses. The European Security Strategy will provide a framework for addressing the current security environment, but its success also hinges on strong partnerships. As the European Union seeks to reinforce its role as a capable, predictable and reliable partner, the ability to forge and sustain partnerships remains crucial. The strength of these partnerships and their capacity to deliver tangible benefits for our respective citizens will determine whether collective preparedness, resilience and action can outpace the threats we face.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can the EU and its partners build and sustain reliable, mutually beneficial security and defence partnerships in an increasingly fragmented and unpredictable geopolitical environment?
 - What makes a security and defence partnership truly effective – and how can this translate political commitments into tangible capabilities, resilience and security outcomes for citizens?
 - How can the EU and its partners strengthen cooperation, trust and collective preparedness to respond more effectively to current and emerging security threats?
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ROUNDTABLE 1: FROM CONFLICT TO TERROR: UNDERSTANDING AN EVOLVING SECURITY NEXUS

The proliferation of armed conflicts, geopolitical fragmentation and growing instability are reshaping the global terrorist threat. Armed groups are not only using terrorist means, but have also been assuming the identity and adopting the narratives, tactics and organisational models of international terrorist groups in protracted wars. Furthermore, the lines between terrorism, insurgency, organised crime are becoming increasingly blurred, complicating efforts to assess and address such evolving threats.

In this context, counter-terrorism responses are increasingly intertwined with broader conflict prevention, crisis management and resilience efforts, requiring greater coordination between security, humanitarian, development and governance actors. The persistence of unresolved conflicts and grievances often further enable extremist groups to exploit local instability while projecting their influence beyond national borders. Strengthening institutional resilience, addressing the underlying drivers of instability and improving international cooperation therefore remain essential to preventing terrorist groups from exploiting fragile environments and emerging global vulnerabilities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How are conflicts transforming the terrorist threat and, vice-versa, how is terrorism transforming conflicts locally?
 - How could counter-terrorism strategies better address the complex dynamics between conflict, instability and long-term security?
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ROUNDTABLE 2: CYBER THREATS AND THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Over the past years, the international discussion on cybersecurity has matured significantly. States have developed a stronger understanding of responsible behaviour in cyberspace, while practical cooperation to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber threats has expanded across governments, industry, and international partners. Yet the cyber threat landscape continues to evolve rapidly, driven by increasingly sophisticated state and non-state actors and by the emergence of transformative technologies.

Cyber operations are now a central feature of strategic competition. Critical infrastructure, defence networks, supply chains, and democratic institutions face persistent cyber campaigns that are growing in scale, sophistication, and operational tempo. In this context, the rise of highly capable artificial intelligence (AI) models represents a potentially significant inflection point; its risks significantly empowering offensive state and non-state actors in scanning IT systems, detecting and exploiting or weaponizing cyber vulnerabilities at machine speed, and lower costs. Dependency on foreign frontier AI models also represents a growing risk.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- With cyber threats increasingly shaping geopolitical competition, national security and economic resilience, what should be the highest foreign and security policy priority for governments to strengthen international cyber stability over the next years?
 - How should governments adapt their foreign and security policies to address this new reality, while the distinction between state and non-state actors becomes increasingly blurred, with private companies, cybersecurity firms, researchers, civil society and cybercriminal groups all shaping the cyber landscape?
 - What is the greatest strategic opportunity and the greatest strategic risk that AI presents for international cybersecurity, as AI rapidly transforms both cyber defence and cyber offence?
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ROUNDTABLE 3: BUILDING MUTUAL RESILIENCE AGAINST HYBRID THREATS

Countries are facing an increasingly complex and sophisticated spectrum of hybrid threats. State and non-state actors are employing coordinated campaigns that often combine political, cyber, economic, informational, technological, and covert instruments. In addition to the security risk, they pose a threat to democracy, targeting its core values and aiming to fracture society, erode public trust and undermine political decision-making. Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference is a particular challenge, amplifying polarisation and undermining confidence in public institutions. As generative AI further reduces the cost and increases the scale and plausibility of deceptive content, strengthening societal resilience against information manipulation has become a critical national security imperative.

The EU has significantly reinforced its hybrid toolbox to address broader threats and gained direct operational experience in countering these threats among their partners. At the same time, many partners - particularly those on the frontline - have developed valuable expertise and practical experience. As our security is deeply intertwined, working together with partners is key to countering hybrid threats, sharing best practices and assessing how to sustain and connect short-term response and long-term resilience building.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How to best adapt national security and foreign policy approaches to respond to an evolving and increasingly sophisticated threat landscape? Where to prioritise to achieve the greatest impact?
- How can partners better coordinate information and intelligence sharing, situational awareness, crisis response and strategic communication to strengthen collective resilience while respecting national sovereignty?
- How can democratic societies protect the integrity of the information environment while safeguarding freedom of expression and other fundamental rights, as disinformation and foreign information manipulation have become central elements of hybrid campaigns?

12:30–14:00

LUNCHEON

14:00–15:20

BREAKOUT ROUNDTABLES

ROUNDTABLE 4: DEFENCE SUPPLY CHAINS - LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS DISRUPTIONS, CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES AND GLOBAL CRISIS

Geopolitical tensions, technological competition, and growing demand for defence capabilities are exposing vulnerabilities across global defence supply chains. From critical raw materials and advanced semiconductors to munitions production and logistics networks, countries face increasing risks from disruptions, bottlenecks and strategic dependencies. This affects the supply of technologies, and key components that underpin strategic and critical sectors such as the defence industry. At the same time, energy crises, such as oil supply shocks caused by wars, strain global economies and defence capabilities, manifesting vulnerable dependencies. In this context, the climate crisis further spurs conflicts over critical assets and undermines supply chain stability. In this context, no single nation can address critical supply chain dependencies alone; networks of partnerships can contribute to enhancing supply chain resilience, diversification, and responsiveness.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the main challenges and opportunities for defence supply chains, notably with regard to operability?
 - How can we build more agile, diversified, and interoperable supply chains that can meet the security challenges of today and tomorrow? Also considering the need for 'energy on the battle field'.
 - How can partnerships be leveraged to mitigate disruptions in critical defence supply chains?
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ROUNDTABLE 5: SPACE - A STRATEGIC DOMAIN UNDER THREAT

The EU, like many partners, recognises the growing strategic importance of space. The EU has firmly established space as a strategic domain, prioritising Space Security & Defence as a cornerstone of its broader security and defence architecture. As a critical enabler for communications, crisis monitoring, and situational awareness, space assets underpin our societal resilience and global security - with billions of users relying on EU space systems daily. With the geopolitical competition intensifying, space assets are however increasingly vulnerable to cyberattacks, electronic warfare, anti-satellite capabilities, and other emerging threats.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is our shared threat perception?
- How can we best leverage space capabilities in view of ongoing and emerging crises and conflicts? as well as a strategic enabler for security and defence and for societal resilience at large?
- How can we strengthen the resilience of our space assets and deter adversaries from disrupting or denying (the use of) our space assets?
- How can we forge closer ties in supporting each other and in strengthening interoperability, as well as in promoting responsible behaviour in space, notably on multilateral level?

ROUNDTABLE 6: MARITIME SECURITY - UPHOLDING FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION, PROTECTING SUBMARINE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TACKLING SHADOW FLEETS

The maritime domain is critical for our collective security and prosperity. Our global economy depends on sea lines of communication and on underwater data and energy connectivity for trade and for development; our oceans are a major source of income, particularly for coastal states, and of energy generation - essential for the green transition.

Yet this critical domain is increasingly contested, with geopolitical rivalries, regional conflict and competition for resources putting pressure on the internationally agreed rules in the maritime domain, principally the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), with freedom of navigation at its core. Shadow fleets, such as that supporting Russia's war economy, undermine international maritime governance and jeopardise safety of navigation and the marine environment. In this context, it remains critical to uphold UNCLOS and ensure freedom of navigation, effective maritime governance, and the sustainable development of the maritime domain. In this context, effective partnerships and support for regional maritime security architectures play a critical role in promoting security in the maritime domain.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can we work together to strengthen and uphold international maritime governance and freedom of navigation, in line with UNCLOS?
- How can we make best use of emerging technologies in the maritime domain as well as collectively respond to the challenges they pose?
- How can we deepen our ties to address the increasingly complex challenges to submarine infrastructure and promote norms of responsible state behaviour?
- How can states more effectively enforce maritime governance and tackle the operations of the shadow fleet, in line with UNCLOS?

15:20–15:40

COFFEE BREAK

THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER - BETWEEN RECOMPOSITION AND REFORM, STRENGTHENING PEACEKEEPING AND HUMAN SECURITY

As the world has entered a period of significant recomposition, the international rules-based order is under unprecedented stress, with some calling for a necessary adaption or a major reshuffle, while others even advocate for its dismantlement. In today's era of rapid technological change and evolving threats, the need for a holistic approach to security has never been clearer. Yet, security is not just about borders or capabilities - it is about people. Strengthening human security is also essential to ensure that no one is left behind, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable international order. Multilateral peacekeeping and peacebuilding engagement plays a key role in this regard. At a moment when UN peacekeeping is reducing footprint in view of a sustained liquidity crisis, protection of civilians remains central. In accordance with the United Nations Charter, the strategic integration of humanitarian diplomacy is an avenue to place human priorities at the centre of peace and security for all.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can we ensure a better strategy and long-term vision on global peacekeeping efforts?
- How can we ensure that humanitarian priorities are fully taken into account during peacekeeping- and peacebuilding efforts? and to use them more strategically to support confidence-building measures, dialogue and more durable ceasefire and peace agreements?
- How can we strengthen the cooperation with multilateral institutions on humanitarian diplomacy in crisis response and conflict prevention?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Kaja KALLAS | High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission
