

## EU-HYBNET 1<sup>st</sup> Innovation and Standardisation Workshop, #ISW

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, EU-HYBNET held its 1<sup>st</sup> Innovation and Standardisation Workshop #ISW in hybrid format from The Hague. This action followed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Workshop (IKEW) on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

During the workshop, consortium partners and external participants (practitioners, industry, academia and NGOs) discussed standardisation recommendations for innovations to counter hybrid threats in two thematic areas:

1. **Standardisation measures in the context of critical infrastructure protection and innovations to enhance information sharing;**
2. **Innovations in disinformation and media literacy.**

The 1<sup>st</sup> ISW was opened by the EU-HYBNET Project Coordinator Dr. Päivi Mattila, Director of Security Research Program, Laurea University of Applied Sciences and Mr. Rashel Talukder, Managing Director of the Polish Platform for Homeland Security (PPHS).

Maria Avdeeva, Research Director at the European Expert Association, gave the first keynote speech live from Kharkiv, Ukraine on “*Countering Russian disinformation during the war against Ukraine*”, and stated that **disinformation channels controlled by Russia are not new, but have been very instrumental in the recent invasion.**

The second keynote speaker Prof. Aleksandar Jovanović, Chief Executive Officer at the Steinbeis European Risk and Resilience Institute, focused on the current “*Standardisation Landscape and Critical Infrastructure Protection*”, highlighting the short timeframe of validity of relevant standards.

Participants were later divided into two working groups that took place physically and online.

During **Working Group 1 – Standardisation measures in the context of critical infrastructure protection and innovations to enhance information sharing**, standardisation experts and pan-European security practitioners presented their views on current standards, needs and future possibilities for standardisation in the field of critical infrastructure protection in light of the challenges deriving from hybrid threats.

- Prof. Aleksandr Joanovic discussed best practices for standardization in EU projects - highlighting a lack of standardisation experts and the short timeframe of validity for relevant standards as key issues. **Recommendations were made for project consortia to start standardisation work early and build expertise by including for example national standardisation bodies in EU projects.**
- Monica Cardarilli (JRC) presented the actions and policy measures that European Commission and its Joint Research Centre are taking to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure against hybrid threats. Building and participating in networks such as the European Reference Network for Critical Infrastructure Protection (**ERNICIP**) **was identified** as an important step to enhance technical collaboration among all relevant stakeholders. **This supports the sharing of best practices and guidelines between stakeholders and the overall improvement, protection and resilience of critical infrastructures in Europe.**
- Dr. Rolf Blom (RISE) and Isto Mattila (LAU) discussed how to establish and standardise a common information sharing and analysis environment (CISAE) for critical infrastructure protection against hybrid threats; one of EU-HYBNET’s identified innovations. **To ensure CISAE uptake, a governance**

**body, a framework agreement with information sharing principles, as well as interoperability principles and data exchange formats need to be defined in advance.**

- A panel discussion followed, with Dr. George Karagiannis, Deputy Secretary General for Civil Protection in Greece, noting that we are passing from a framework of protection of critical infrastructure to one of resilience, and Dr. Aikaterini Poustourli, Standardisation Expert, Member of EURAS, **stressed the first step as a need to examine which of the existing standards in the field could correspond to future needs.**
- Yves Rougier from the French Ministry for an Ecological Transition and Territory Cohesion presented his perspective on resilience against hybrid threats and highlighted the importance of clear definitions. **Participants concluded that hybrid threats are not clearly defined in a way that would allow for an EU-wide regulation on standardisation.**
- Stefan Pickl (COMPTESSA) presented on the importance of coordination and preparation in critical infrastructure protection. **A risk management process based on experimental design data farming and big data analytics could further assist this work in the future.**
- The session closed with presentations of standardisation activities of other H2020 projects: [PRAETORIAN](#) and [7SHIELD](#).

During **Working Group 2 – Innovations in disinformation and media literacy**, participants discussed standardisation best practices and innovative solutions answering security practitioners' needs to counter information manipulation and interference, disinformation and media literacy.

- LTC Tomasz Gergelewicz, Polish Academic Centre for Strategic Communication, **highlighted that anti-disinformation campaigns help build societal resilience.**
- Daniel Fritz (EEAS) discussed how to apply threat-informed defence principles to detect and measure disinformation. **EEAS is providing a framework for identifying disinformation, including taxonomy and relevant standards.**
- Prof. Aleksandra Przegalinska (Kozminski University) commented on the **paradox of artificial intelligence as a tool which is used both for generating and combating deepfakes.**
- Emma Goodman, European Digital Media Observatory, stressed the importance of **media literacy as a tool that can help populations counter disinformation.**
- Solvita Denisa-Liepniece (BCME) added that through media literacy we can increase cognitive resilience in society. Once cognitive resilience is built within a population, then the population is much less susceptible to disinformation campaigns. **Cognitive resilience must also be introduced and built as early as possible.**
- Liisa Talonpoika, Ambassador for Hybrid Affairs at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, gave the final presentation on Finnish best practices to increase media literacy and counter disinformation.
- Participants then had the opportunity to discuss the need for standardisation in this field and ask questions. **The main conclusion of the session was the importance of strengthening media literacy among the public to ensure that people are able to identify disinformation campaigns.**

In the second part of the workshop, there was a discussion between speakers and participants. The main conclusions from the discussion include:

1. New standards should be created when there is a need to standardise an issue. A need resulting from practice and real challenges.
2. It is important to ensure compliance with already existing standards. There are many standards that are well documented but not put into practice.
3. The discussion participants pointed the particular attention required to issues concerning the impact assessment of the undertaken activities. Such an assessment would be the basis for continuing the undertaken activities, intensifying, ceasing or modifying. The impact assessment focuses primarily on issues related to media literacy.
4. In the field of media literacy, special attention should be paid to the standards of issues and practical skills that should be transferred to various groups of recipients. It is primarily about the ability to verify the source of information, critical analysis of information, as well as basic behaviours, e.g. not sharing unverified content, not duplicating unproven information, etc.
5. Media literacy should be treated as a long-term investment, supporting social resistance to manipulation of a political, social and economic nature. It is particularly important to pay attention to manipulations from other countries or especially from outside the EU, which want to have a negative impact on public opinion in the EU member states. The democratic system and tolerance for diversity of opinion in EU countries is particularly sensitive to manipulation, disinformation and the spread of fake news. The challenge for the EU countries is to maintain freedom of expression and counteract disinformation at the same time.
6. The use of modern technologies, e.g. in the field of AI in public spaces, also requires standardisation. For example, the obligation to inform that the image presented is synthetic or the contact with the client is handled by AI.
7. It is also important to develop standards and requirements for social media. They should verify the traffic on their media by verifying accounts operated by bots.
8. It is important to strengthen the activity of fact checking platforms. It is especially important to build credibility. Fact checking platforms should also be run and / or supported by social media operators. Fact checking with particular emphasis on the detection of deep fakes, which the recipient is not able to recognise using the methods available to the individual.
9. It is also worth creating databases presenting the narratives most often used in disinformation. The database should also inventory the vulnerabilities occurring in the European community, national communities and local communities.
10. Countermeasure standards should also include the issue of cooperation between actors from various areas. Counteracting disinformation requires the cooperation of the public sector, the education system, civil society organizations, the media, business and informal groups of citizens. Multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary work operates in a fragmented field at a European level and at a national level, involving diverse stakeholders, policy makers, educational bodies, regulators, researchers, schools, libraries, campaigners, NGOs, news organisations (particularly public service media), tech companies, and more.
11. The so-called cognitive welfare also needs to be standardised. This system is based on disinformation alerts. Just as there is a rapid alert system that warns you about dangerous weather phenomena – storms etc. The same should apply to the system of alerts against disinformation and fake news in the public space.

The 1<sup>st</sup> EU-HYBNET Innovation and Standardisation Workshop was a successful event and provided a space for exchange of opinions and methods between the audience, the consortium and the keynote speakers. The key conclusions of this workshop, which will be outlined in D4.9 2nd Report for standardisation recommendations (M36), will shape EU-HYBNET's future work in the field of standardisation based on the gaps and needs identified during the event.

**If you are interested in joining EU-HYBNET's network, you can read the associated information and apply on the project's [website](#). For further information on EU-HYBNET, you can follow the project through [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).**

