EU-HYBNET

Newsletter - April 2023

Welcome to the sixth EU-HYBNET Newsletter focusing on the project activities in the past six months!

EU-HYBNET has now started its' third 17-months project working cycle in order to deliver for a third time analysis of pan-European security practitioners and other relevant actors (industry, SMEs, academia, NGOs) gaps and needs to counter hybrid threats; to analyse sound solutions for the identified challenges; and to promote the most promising solutions uptake. The Gaps and Needs analysis and whole project working flow was kicked off in 3rd Gaps and Needs event in Rome during March 2023.

Furthermore, the project's results from the past 12 months and insights on future means to counter hybrid threats were presented and discussed in EU-HYBNET's "Future Trends Workshop" and "Annual Workshop" in Bucharest in April. These two events offered a unique opportunity for project partners to engage with the EU-HYBNET network members and stakeholders in order to continue the fruitful cooperation with pan-European actors, support knowledge sharing and discover solutions that respond to future needs.

The EU-HYBNET Network has continued to grow steadily and this proves the importance of having a European platform for cooperation between practitioners, industry, SMEs, Academia and NGOs. EU-HYBNET is very pleased to offer this platform for cooperation and welcomes new actors to join the shared interest for future means to counter hybrid threats, also to plan post-EU-HYBNET project topics!

With best regards,

EU-HYBNET Coordinator Päivi Mattila/ Laurea

Hybrid threats domains and focus areas in EU-HYBNET

EU-HYBNET General Project Coordination, Management and Network Extension Activities

The goal of EU-HYBNET is to maximise impact and deliver results for pan-European stakeholders in the most fruitful way. In that regard the project's presence in relevant events is crucial.

EU-HYBNET has had the privilege to present its results in the latest European Commission (DG HOME) Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS) / Support for Security and Research for Security (SSRI) event which aligns fully with the project objectives. The "Networks of Practitioners" workshop was arranged together with the MEDEA project on 27 April in Brussels. EU-HYBNET joined the panel dedicated to "*Networks of Practitioners as bridges between the demand and supply sides: Achievements, Challenges and Lessons learned*". A press release describing the value of the event is available here.

The project has also been invited to other important events and communities in the coming months where EU-HYBNET will be pleased to disseminate the project's results and expand the network:

- CERIS/ Fighting Crime and Terrorism (FCT) event on 11th of May in Brussels. EU-HYBNET partners: Ministry for Ecological Transition (France) and Mihai Viteazul National Intelligence Academy (Romania) will join two panels focusing on *disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference.*
- National Bureau of Investigation (Finland) event in May.
- European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) CISE Stakeholders Group presentation on 21st June 2023. From EU-HYBNET's perspective, pan-European actors countering hybrid threats could benefit on similar information sharing environment as CISE.

Finally, EU-HYBNET had its second project review in November 2022 and good insights were shared how to increase the impact of the project. Dissemination efforts to engage with new audiences and to increase information sharing on project' results with the European Parliament followed from this review. The pan-European security practitioners needs for sound results and solutions stays in the focus of the project alike latest research results delivery.

Network Extension

Network extension is an integral part of the EU-HYBNET project. We are happy to share that the number of network members continue to grow steadily every year! A total of **118 organisations from 23 countries** are now represented in the network, which includes 24 practitioners, 32 research and/or education institutions, 16 NGOs, and 21 SMEs.

We also like to take the opportunity to thank our existing members and partners for their contribution and efforts for the project outcomes and increasing visibility of the project across the Europe!

EU-HYBNET welcomes the following new members to the network:

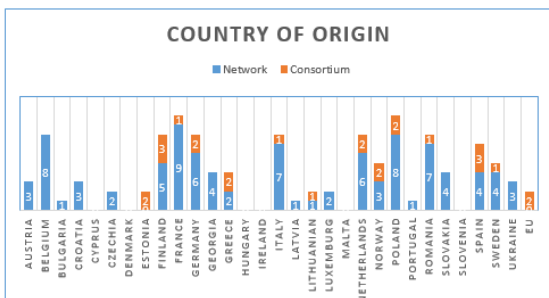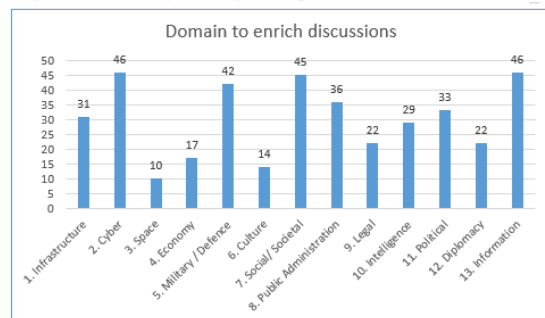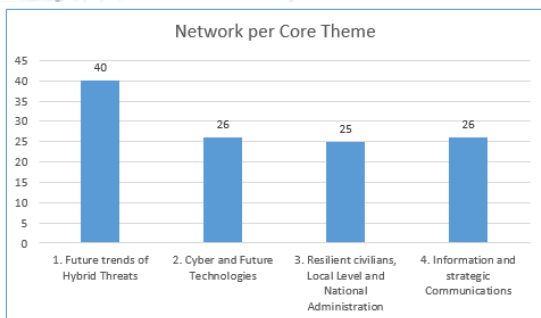| Name	Country	Type of organisation
SAPIENZA University of Rome - Department of Human Neuroscience - Interpersonal Violence Research Lab (InterViRe)	Italy	Academia
FORTH - Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas - Institute of Computer Science	Greece	Academia
Ridgeway Information EU B.V	Netherlands	SME
SINTEF Digital, Dept. of Software Engineering, Safety and Security	Norway	Academia
The Polish Financial Supervision Authority	Poland	Practitioner
University of Dubrovnik	Croatia	Academia
Marshall Center	Germany	Academia
Helmut-Schmidt-Universität / Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg	Germany	Academia
National Counterterrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime Agency	Czechia	Practitioner
Traversals Analytics and Intelligence GmbH	Germany	SME
DLTCode	Spain	SME
Stad Geel	Belgium	Practitioner

Join the network!

The project welcomes valuable European actors (practitioners, industry, SMEs and academic actors, NGOs) to join the growing European Network helping to counter against hybrid threats.

What are the benefits and how to join? Active network of various European actors is an integral part of the project activities collaborating with consortium partners to counter hybrid threats. As a network

member you are invited to contribute to our events (Gaps and Needs events, Future Trends Workshop, the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Workshop and many more. You'll have access to a member platform, and the possibility to influence the development of the domain, review high-level requirements, and present your own innovations and solutions to the community. More information about the EU-HYBNET Network can be found here.

We are actively seeking SMEs & Practitioners across Europe to join
– please help by circulating the application available here!

Our network manager regularly analyses the network, reflecting on the information provided in the applications. The analysis supports our aim to raise awareness of the project to the right target groups by inviting them to our events and presenting EU-HYBNET in other EU projects and EU organisation initiatives. The figures below present the state of our network at the end of April 2023:

Network per Core Theme

Domain to enrich discussions

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Category	Nr	MS	Consortium	All
Practitioner	24	14	10	34
NGO	16	12	2	18
Academic/RTO	32	15	11	43
Industry/ SME	21	9	2	21
In total	93	23	25	118

Gaps and needs of European actors against Hybrid Threats

3rd Gaps and Needs event took place in Rome 28th of March 2023. Event was organised in collaboration between Hybrid CoE, UCSC and EOS. A big thank you to our participating network members, whose valuable knowledge and insights provided the project once again with important data to work on!

The aim of the Gaps and Needs events are to identify the priority gaps and needs encountered by the European actors. This is achieved by feeding the outcome of these events to the workstream of the project to then identify the most promising innovations to fill the gaps and needs and recommending innovation uptake and standardisation approaches that harmonise with our Pan-European efforts (see below). The Gaps and Needs events are open for network members and consortium partners. Next and final Gaps and Needs event will be held in June 2024. More information will come closer to the event.

Surveys to Technologies, Research and Innovations

The assessment of innovations, which were previously selected and matched to the identified gaps and needs, was completed during the last period. Furthermore, a dedicated template was developed, that serves to link hybrid threats related problems and expected outcomes from the use of technological solutions/innovations. This template includes, among others, the manner in which the hybrid threats related problems manifest, and the way each problem is threatening European Security, and serves to link the work of WP2 (identification of practitioners' gaps and needs) with WP3 (assessment of innovations).

The results of the 2nd cycle innovation assessment were presented and thoroughly discussed at the 3rd Annual Workshop and the 3rd Future Trends Workshop held on April 19th-20th at Bucharest, Romania. Interesting discussions followed with invited speakers during the round table discussion panels. In addition, project participants had the opportunity to interact with innovation providers that gave interesting presentations at the corresponding session.

Recommendations for Innovations Uptake and Standardisation

EU-HYBNET has finalised the **2nd Report on the Procurement Environment**, analysing the current procurement practices of additional EU-Member States. In addition to the 15 countries covered in the 1st Cycle of the project, the current procurement practices of other 13 Member States (i.e., for Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia) were reviewed and mapped.

Following this review for all EU Member states, specific recommendations for EU-HYBNET innovation uptake strategy focused on:

- Market Consultation
- Availability of Templates
- Involvement of Skilled personnel (esp. from IT department)
- Adequate vulnerability assessment
- IPR Provisions
- Open requirements
- Compatibility with legacy systems
- Recommendation of an Open procurement procedure
- Adoption of Standards

EU-HYBNET partners also worked on an uptake and industrialisation strategy for four promising innovations to counter hybrid threats innovations:

- WINS/ What Information Needs to be Shared between CI entities to detect hybrid threats - methodology
- EESCM/ Enhanced and Extended Supply Chain Management - methodology
- MIMI/ A Market place for Information Manipulation and Interference Information – technological solution
- GECHO/ Gatekeeping ECHO chambers. A solution that monitors the online environment, identifies where and how interventions are needed, thereafter launching the appropriate actions to build resilience in vulnerable young people against possible entrapment in violent extremism and terrorism

On the topic of standardisation, EU-HYBNET is now working on its **2nd Report for standardisation recommendations**. Key recommendations arose from the project's first **Innovation and Standardisation Workshop** in June 2022:

- In media literacy, special attention is needed regarding the standards of issues and practical skills that should be transferred to various groups of recipients (e.g., Skills & ability to verify the source of information, critical analysis of information etc.).
- Need for standardization in the use of modern technologies (e.g., AI in public spaces, obligation to inform that the image presented is synthetic or the contact with the client is handled by AI).
- Standards and requirements for social media are needed. Social media companies should verify their traffic by verifying accounts operated by bots.

Finally, EU-HYBNET *Policy Brief No. 4: Fame on social media, a new currency of cybercrime?* was published and is available on the website.

Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Activities

As the project finalised its 2nd cycle and kicked-off the 3rd cycle in March 2023, project partners engaged in several continuous Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation activities to promote the results and vision of the EU-HYBNET project.

Dissemination through EU-HYBNET Events

In this period, priority was given to the organisation of project workshops that allowed the consortium to consult pan-European practitioners countering hybrid threats on existing gaps and needs, future trends and existing threats in the current geopolitical environment. In addition, these workshops served as an opportunity to strengthen the project network, disseminate the results of the 2nd cycle and reach out to new organisations.

To begin with, on 28 March 2023, the **3rd EU-HYBNET Gaps & Needs event** took place in Rome at the premises of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC). The event started EU-HYBNET's third project cycle with discussions on pan-European practitioners' and other relevant actors' (industry, academia, NGOs) gaps and needs to counter hybrid threats.

The results of this event will define the project's research and training focus for the next seventeen months. The long list of gaps and needs will now be evaluated by Hybrid CoE and the JRC. Results will soon be shared!

The Gaps and Needs event was followed by the **3ʳᵈ EU-HYBNET Future Trends Workshop and Annual Workshop** which were held on 19-20 April 2023 in Bucharest, Romania.

Building on the project findings from the last three years, the **3rd Future Trends Workshop** addressed "Hybrid Threats in the EU Neighbourhood – Implications for the future of EU security" and served as a platform of interaction for all stakeholders to discuss hybrid threats in the EU's neighbourhood, implications for the future of EU security and innovations to counter them. Participants had the opportunity to move past definitions and dive deeper in the topic of hybrid threats, their manifestations and the actions taken by the EU and its Member States to counter them. A press release detailing early conclusions of the workshop will be published [on our website](#), while a more detailed overview will be included in **D3.16 3rd Future Trends analysis Workshop Report (M37)**.

The **3ʳᵈ Annual Workshop** presented EU-HYBNET's findings and results in the past year, focusing on the identification of gaps and needs and the assessment of innovations conducted by our partners. These results have already been outlined in the previous sections of this newsletter. In the second part of the day, innovative solution providers and EU projects had the opportunity to pitch their technological and non-technological solutions to counter hybrid threats.

The workshop also included high-level keynote speeches that stressed the importance of cybersecurity when countering hybrid threats, as well as the impact of foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) on societal vulnerability. A press release detailing early conclusions of the workshop will be published [on our website](#), while a more detailed overview will be included in **D5.12 Annual Workshop Report 3 (M37)**.

Dissemination through project synergies and external events

EU-HYBNET's presence was active in **DG HOME CERIS workshops** held in the past six months:

- CERIS SSRI Workshop on "Capability-driven Approaches Across Security Sectors", 2 March 2023
- CERIS Workshop on Piloting and Validation of Innovative Border Management Solutions, 9 March 2023
- CERIS workshop on Europol's new role in Horizon Europe, 14 March 2023
- CERIS workshop on Artificial Intelligence in Security Research, 23 March 2023
- CERIS SSRI Workshop on "Networks of Practitioners": Exploitation of outcomes, capability requirements, and future perspectives, 27 April 2023 – presentation by project coordinator

Through the CERIS platform, project partners exchanged views with policymakers from the European institutions, as well as opened dialogues with other EU-funded civil security projects. EU-HYBNET supports the efforts of the European Commission to promote a capability-driven approach for EU security research, as it could support and improve the work of hybrid threats practitioners by ensuring they can reach the innovations and solutions they need. Project partners are also looking forward to further exploring cooperation with Europol through the CERIS platform as well as through its Innovation Lab and the EU Innovation Hub.

In addition, the project continued building cooperation and synergies with **other EU-funded projects** and strengthening existing relationships with projects such as [PROMENADE](#), [NO-FEAR](#), [NOTIONES](#), [INCLUDING,](#) [MEDEA](#), [PRECINCT](#), [ALIGNER, EU-CIP](#) and the [ECSCI Cluster](#).

Examples include:

- Keynote Speech by EU-HYBNET Ethics Manager Mr. Tuomas Tammilehto (Laurea) at NO-FEAR Workshop: An X-Ray of GDPR and Research Connected Issues, 29 March 2023
- Innovation pitches at the EU-HYBNET 3rd Annual Workshop were provided by CRITERIA, CYCLOPES, CRESCEnt and DOMINOES, 20 April 2023

The main focus of the DCE team in the next six months is on presenting the results of the project from the first two cycles as well as ongoing work in a streamlined and organised manner using also new visual materials, online means and presentations. Stay tuned for more!

Stay tuned!

In the coming months, EU-HYBNET partners will organise and participate in several events. Save the Dates!

- **11 May 2023:** EU-HYBNET will join two panels in the CERIS FCT workshop on Disinformation, fake news and hate speech.
- **May 2023:** EU-HYBNET presentation to the National Bureau of Investigation (Finland)
- **29 May – 1 June 2023:** EU-HYBNET has joined the Research and Innovation Symposium for European Security and Defence (RISE) as a co-organising project. EU-HYBNET will be present during the event with a stand and a presentation, while a paper will also be included in the conference proceedings.
- **Autumn 2023:** EU-HYBNET 3rd Innovation Knowledge Exchange & 2nd Innovation & Standardisation Workshop will take place in Valencia, Spain.

Make sure to stay up to date with everything EU-HYBNET by visiting our website following our social media channels!