

EU-HYBNET held its 4th Annual Workshop, #AW2024 and General Assembly

On the 24th of April 2024, the EU-HYBNET consortium successfully held its **4th Annual Workshop** in Valencia, Spain. The workshop was attended over 82 in person and 27 online representatives of the EU-HYBNET consortium and network, as well as other pan-European stakeholders from industry, SMEs, practitioners, NGOs and policymaking organisations.

This workshop is one of the EU-HYBNET's annual flagship events; it offers an opportunity for hybrid threats stakeholders not only to learn about the project's research and results and discuss them with the consortium, but also to provide their feedback and share their needs. The consortium also invites providers of innovative security solutions present them and asks the audience to assess their excellence, impact and potential for successful implementation.



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The Annual Workshop was split in three parts: it began with three high-level keynote speeches that provided the perspective of the EEAS and DG SAFE on two very common manifestations of hybrid threats:

- **From analysis to (re)action – a framework for networked defence:** Our first keynote speaker, Ms. Chiara Pacenti from the European External Action Service (EEAS)/Strategic Communication, delivered an insightful speech outlining a framework for networked counter measures to Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) alongside other hybrid threats. Ms. Pacenti emphasized that actions against FIMI should be approached as a network effort, requiring coordination and collaboration across the community. Each member of this community must assess their role and potential contributions to activating effective responses against FIMI and related threats.
- **The EU approach to countering hybrid threats:** Mr Torben Fell from the EEAS/Security Defence Policy illustrated the EU approach to countering hybrid threats. The keynote speech highlighted elements like a whole-of-society approach and the shared means that the EEAS has with Member States. Cooperation with various actors was also highlighted as key to enhancing situational awareness, boosting resilience in various domains, and providing support for joint measures.
- **European elections 2024 and hybrid threats:** The 3rd keynote was given by representative of European Parliament, Mr. Manuel Rodríguez from DG SAFE on European elections 2024 and hybrid threats, discussing the case of cyber attacks and disinformation in the elections and the actions carried out in safeguarding the MEPs from cyber attacks. Mr Rodríguez outlined Russia and China's efforts in influencing the upcoming European elections through FIMI. The speech concluded that cooperation is key in safeguarding our open and free elections and contrasting FIMI and other hybrid threats.

In the second part of the morning, EU-HYBNET partners presented their latest findings and results from the past 12 months (e.g., the identification of practitioners' gaps and needs to counter hybrid threats and



promising solutions for the noticed needs, the training developed to test the innovative solutions, the selection and the assessment of related innovations and the recommendations for promising innovation uptake and standardisation) through a round table discussion.

Roundtable experts discussed innovations mapped to EUHYBNET's core themes, such as "WeVerify" – a video plugin to debunk fake videos on social media in order to contrast future trends in Hybrid threats and the EC funded project's Starlight Disinformation-misinformation toolset to contrast online manipulation and attacks to democracy within the context of cyber and future technologies. The Roundtable also discussed the importance of contrasting emerging threats and finding solutions to them such as doxing, SLAPP lawsuits.

To complete the day, eight pitches dealing with Innovations and solutions to counter hybrid threats by organizations and EC funded projects were presented to the audience:

- The first pitch presented by Mr Marios Thoma from CyberEcoCul Global Services dealt with Denial-of-service, DDOS attacks, and attacks on infrastructures critical to population livelihood.
- The 2nd pitch presented by Ms Marina Galiano Botella, from CSIRT-CV examined smart cities and the use of technologies to improve the life of citizens by checking the threats against these systems & how their vulnerabilities can be exploited and solutions e.g. specialised training
- The third pitch, presented by Mr Vazha Sopromadze from The University of Georgia Security, Policy and Nationalism Center, focused on a Resilience Assessment Tool (R/VAT) to assess real threats coming from hybrid activities, in particular to counter Russian disruptive acts.
- Mr David Arroyo from The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) presented the pitch on ATENEA and other tools for tracking hybrid threats. Mr Arroyo focused on the importance of tracking clickbait and marketing techniques as well as comparing request maps to compare social media platforms to detect disinformation.
- Ms Emilia Gugliandolo, the project coordinator of EC funded project EU-CIP "European Knowledge Hub and Policy Testbed for Critical Infrastructure Protection", from ENGINEERING presented the pitch introducing the European Knowledge Hub and Policy Testbed for Critical Infrastructure Protection" (EU-CIP) and its results.
- Ms Laure Brévignon-Dodin, from Ministry of the Interior in France, presented EC funded project "Toward Sustainable Foresight Capabilities for Increased Civil Security" project, AHEAD. AHEAD, a project led by Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) will take a comprehensive approach when designing and implementing a sustainable framework and foresight means for anticipating future civil security needs. This approach will consider both major future trends and specific local contexts in order to provide outputs such as actionable foresight in 5 security topics.
- Mr Bledar Feta from Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy presented the EC funded project "Gaming Ecosystem as a Multi-Layered Security Threat", GEMS. The project aims to combat radicalisation in game spaces, a community currently forgotten by research. The social aspects are profoundly addressed in the project in order to deliver tangible project results answering to the complex challenges in radicalization means in gaming environment.
- The last pitch was presented by Mt Tatout and Ms Duval from the Ministry of Ecological Transition in France on the PAVED project. This project and working group composed of experts in different disciplines (law, social sciences, cybernetics AI, etc.) focuses on acute risks posed by information disorders to infrastructure and economic key operators.

The presentations and demonstrations delivered in this session tie in with both the keynote speeches and the project results, as Innovations and solutions to counter hybrid threats to the clearly recognized need of



solutions and research and joint actions in variety of fields in order to have impactful measures to hybrid threats.

Thanks to our partners Valencia Local Police, Laurea University of Applied Sciences and European Organization for Security for organising the event, and to all of our EU-HYBNET partners, network members and stakeholders who joined the event and helped fuel the discussions.

If you would like to stay updated on the work and conclusions of the project and attend future events, you're welcome to [join the EU-HYBNET network](#); you can read the associated information and apply on our [website](#). For further information on EU-HYBNET, you can follow the project on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

