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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this deliverables (D2.22) is to provide key insights regarding the main findings resulting from the "Empowering a Pan-European Network to Countering Hybrid Threats" (EU-HYBNET) project training effort, to provide a summary of training results and outcomes, as well as to identify improvements that could be incorporated into the next set of iterations of the Training and Exercises for the entire EU-HYBNET community. The EU-HYBNET training is the main activity in EU-HYBNET Project Task (T) 2.4 "Training and Exercises for Needs and Gaps".

This deliverable concludes the three cycles of the project, each including the training and exercising component. Most of the documents is similar to the previous relevant deliverables (D2.20 and D2.21), some parts are shortened as they provide similar information. Even though, this document contains not only information on the latest iteration, but also some evaluation of all three cycles.

The third EU-HYBNET training event was arranged in the Project month (M) 35 (18-19 January 2024, Vilnius). Event was organised as two days event of a hybrid format.

The report is structured to address two key aspects of the training initiative and aims to:

- Assess and evaluate the current training iteration.
- Serve as input to follow-on activities within Work Package 4.

At the same time, it summarises the reflections of participants, considering their feedback, insights, and provides a valuable overview of the overall EU-HYBNET training and exercise activity model.

Significantly, the EU-HYBNET Training concept is based on the reuse and adoption of existing training programs, resources, and knowledge within the different European Union Member States (EU MS) and the EU-HYBNET network. However, to avoid delivery of overlapping trainings, scenarios and materials, during each cycle T2.4 executed a survey to identify relevant materials available among project partners and network members.

DTAG methodology developed by EU-HYBNET partner's, TNO's was adjusted to EU-HYBNET Core Themes approach and successfully implemented during the 1st and the 2nd Training and Exercise events. The decision to use DTAG game was done in EU-HYBNET T2.3 "Training and Exercises Scenario Development" that also delivered frames to the EU-HYBNET training methodology and training scenario and the Vignette descriptions. Previous experience demonstrated that DTAG was well accepted by participants, who rated the experience as either good or excellent.

While designing the 3rd Training, we analysed both previous post event evaluation results and recommendations provided by the training participants that helped us more precisely determine how to improve the DTAG methodology by making it more acceptable to the wider auditorium of stakeholders.

Several key recommendations made by participants of the previous training events were:

- Simplification of the Scenario and the Vignettes.
- Scope the situation to more hybrid nature and not to focus on the given standalone situations.
- Less innovative solutions to be provided for discussions.
- Inclusion of competent Moderators into the training process should be continued.

All the above mentioned recommendations have been considered and implemented during the third cycle of Training event.

The registration process demonstrated the high and balanced interest in all Core Themes. In total 50 participants registered to the Training event. In addition, there were 6 participants that were not registered, but joined the event. 30 participants attended the class, most of them on site.

Besides the main objective of the Training to create and/or strengthen the capacities of European practitioners, industry, SME and academic actors to counter Hybrid Threats, Event should also provide inputs to innovation further innovations uptake process (WP4) and inputs to next cycle in a form of lessons learned.

Innovative solutions were ranked after final discussion. Two groups were formed: Future Trends of Hybrid Threats with Cyber with Future Technologies, as more technological oriented and Resilient Civilians: Local Level and National Administration with Information and Strategic Communication as more social oriented.

Innovations that received highest priority ranking during the event are:

- Future Trends and Cyber and Future Technologies:
 - o Starlight Disinformation-Misinformation Toolset
 - o We Verify, a video plugin to debunk fake videos on social media that spread conspiracy theories
 - ENGAGE (Engage Society for Risk Awareness and Resilience)
 - Code of Practice on Disinformation
- Resilient Civilians and Strategic Communication:
 - o SchoolNode (innovative solution that was not initially on the assessment list)
 - Al-enhanced disaster emergency communications
 - o Blockchain -based verification
 - 'Antidote' to hostile messaging delivered by private messaging apps

Innovations providing such capabilities are suggested to be considered for further analysis, uptake, and standardisation efforts.

The evaluation results revealed that 3rd cycle event was considered the most successful. There are some external reasons for the: participants were much better aware of hybrid threats as a phenomenon compare to the previous events and the methodology of the training was familiar, so more focus on the content was possible. Even though this was the final event within the project, some recommendations from all cycles can be relevant for other projects organising training of similar nature. Some of those recommendations are:

- Most of suggestions for improvement were related to Scenario during all cycles. Simplification made easier to understand and apply it during the event. But, on the other hand, in most Vignettes the complexity of hybrid threats was lost. Balancing of the scenario presenting it simple to understand with complexity of hybrid threats required additional explanations and discussions during the event.
- Prioritisation of innovations made during all cycles should be considered as recommendations only. In all cases it was too difficult to make a detailed proper assessment.
- Bigger emphasis on Red team was made during the 3rd cycle training event. It proved to be very valuable.
- Methodology selected well suites area of hybrid threats and linking innovative solutions to counter them. It is less suitable for proper in-depth assessment of innovations, but provides the directions of what is needed.

If similar methodology is to be selected for training in the context of hybrid threats there are some components that should be carefully addressed. Those include scenario to demonstrate hybrid threat landscape clearly, moderators, Red team and expectations of the outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

This document aims to present results of the work carried out in the context of Work Package (WP) 2 "Gaps and Needs of European Actors against Hybrid Threats", Task 2.4 "Training and Exercises" arranged according to the cycles of the EU-HYBNET project. The EU-HYBNET has four project cycles to conduct its key activities, the first, second and third cycle last each 17 months and the last cycle will last 6 months.

This deliverable concludes the three cycles of the project, each including the training and exercising component. Most of the documents is similar to the previous relevant deliverables (D2.20 and D2.21), some parts are shortened as they provide similar information. Even though, this document contains not only information on the latest iteration, but also some evaluation of all three cycles.

The training development was based on the results of other EU-HYBNET Tasks and their respective inputs.

As a first step of each cycle of EU-HYBNET project, the situational analysis was conducted in T2.1. "Needs and Gaps Analysis in Knowledge and Performance" during the Gaps and Needs workshops with security practitioners and other relevant actors (industry, academics, NGOs) from the EU-HYBNET Consortium, network members and Stakeholder Group. The aim was to identify the most critical gaps and needs in the context of the EU-HYBNET four Core Themes:

- Future Trends of Hybrid Threats
- Cyber and Future Technologies
- Resilient Civilians: Local Level and National Administration
- Information and Strategic Communication

A long and shortlist of gaps and needs was produced by T2.1 and T2.2 and new directions and further scanning activities were identified to address emerging research and innovation initiatives.

Following the work conducted with respect to identifying gaps and needs in countering hybrid threats, T3.2 "Technology and Innovations Watch" and T3.3 "Ongoing Research Projects Initiatives Watch" analysed and presented technologies, and technical/non-technical innovations for each of the EU-HYBNET project four Core Themes. Subsequently, a list of the most promising technologies and innovations was provided to T2.3 "Training and Exercises Scenario Development" for training and exercise purposes, and for development and delivery of appropriate Scenario and Vignettes.

The Training and Exercising results will be shared and elaborated on in WP4 "Recommendations for Innovations Uptake and Standardization" and T3.1 "Definition of Target Areas for Improvements and Innovations" to define the potential for standardisation and provide recommendations for uptake of the most suitable innovations (incl. industrialisation). In addition, D2.21 will provide inputs to the D2.24 "2nd Training and exercises Lessons Learned report".

All aforementioned cycles are based on the activities depicted in the figure below:

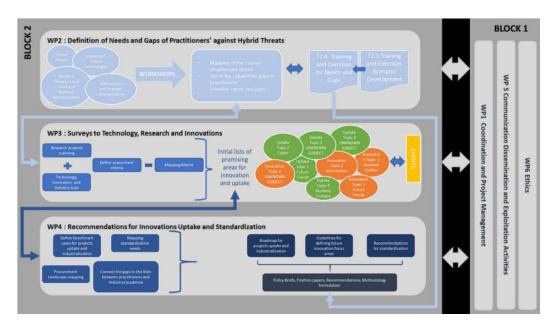


Figure 1 EU-HYBNET structure of Work Packages and Main Activities

More precisely, T2.4 has been dedicated to performing the following activities:

- 1. Survey of available training and exercise programmes at various EU MS and organisations
- 2. Planning and launching of training events for EU-HYBNET members and Associated partners
- 3. Employ an established Training Methodology
- 4. Design training evaluation forms
- 5. Provide Inputs to D2.24 Training and exercises Lessons Learned report
- 6. Produce a one-hour video for trainings in lecture format

Although D2.21 will not specifically deliver results to meet the majority of EU-HYBNET objectives (OB), nonetheless, this document strongly supports those EU-HYBNET Tasks that aim to deliver results focused on the following objectives:

- OB 6.4: To empower European practitioners, industry, SME and academic actors' capacity to counter hybrid threats by offering relevant trainings and materials
- OB 7.1: To share information on EU-HYBNET activities and training possibilities among European stakeholders
- OB 4.1: To compile recommendations for uptake/industrialisation of innovation outputs (incl. social/non-technical); and provide opportunities for greater involvement from public procurement bodies upstream in the innovation cycle
- OB 4.4: To facilitate policy dialogues on future European research and innovation focus areas supporting innovation uptake
- OB2.1: To identify needs and gaps in areas of knowledge/performance (research, innovations, training) of practitioners (priority), industry, SMEs and academic actors
- OB 2.2: To define innovations that can overcome the identified gaps and needs in certain focus areas in order to enhance practitioners (priority), industry, SME and academic actors capabilities
- OB 2.4: To develop a roadmap of the requirements for on-going research and innovation necessary to build the preferred system of the future for confronting hybrid threats

These Objectives closely follow related training activities, as well as innovation testing and selection processes.

STRUCTURE OF THE DELIVERABLE

This document includes the following sections:

- Section 1 introduces the methodology used in implementation of Training and Exercising Event.
- Section 2 provides a summary on collected training and other relevant materials, that can be used for training.
- Section 3 is dedicated to the participation, including main registration and participation indicators.
- Section 4 lists material shared with participant as pre-reading.
- Section 5 presents innovations prioritisation results and serves as an input to WP4.
- Section 6 presents results of the training evaluation, including comments provided.
- Section 7 is a closing section and is dedicated to main findings and lessons learned.

1. METHODOLOGY APPLIED

The overall objective of the EU-HYBNET Training and Exercising is to create and/or strengthen the capacities of European practitioners, industry, SME and academic actors to counter Hybrid Threats.

A Disruptive Technology Assessment Game (DTAG) was used to test the technical/social/human/organizational solutions and their impact on an operating environment during both previous cycles Training and Exercising Event. For the 3rd cycle DTAG methodology was adjusted, reflecting experience, and Lessons Learned from the first two cycles.

A DTAG is a seminar type wargame, used to assess potential innovations and their impact on the operating environment, in this instance a hybrid campaign. The wider description of the DTAG was provided in previous deliverables, so in this document only a very short remainder is presented

As such, the DTAG aims to:

- Provide a basis for understanding how to operationalize the potential use of the innovations and solutions to counter hybrid threats through the analysis of the Innovations.
- Explore the potential impact of the Innovations in an operational hybrid setting.
- Identify the potential vulnerabilities in the (use of) the Innovations that adversaries might exploit, thereby mitigating the intended effects of the Innovations.
- Generate additional insights into how potential counter-measures against adversaries could alter our perspectives on the potential use of the suggested innovations and solutions.

The DTAG uses a Scenario and various Vignettes developed in EU-HYBNET T2.3 D2.19 "Training and Exercise, Scenario delivery" to sketch hybrid challenges within a realistic near-future operational environment. Scenario and Vignettes are described in the D2.19, the relevant sections of the deliverable are presented in the Annex I and were distributed to participants as pre-reading material.

During the Event participants are asked to freely assess the overall situation and to test the innovations presented for them as possible promising solutions. The aim is to hold a free discussion on the challenges and dilemmas that are underlying to the scenario Vignettes and to have discussion how the selected innovations could support the pan-European security practitioners to plan and conduct their counter measures to the challenges, Hybrid Threats.

It requires participant to exercise critical thinking and a creative approach, also to analyse and suggest new features to the selected and tested innovations.

The Training Agenda covered the introduction session with a brief overview of the training flow and introduction to Scenario helping the participants grasp and retain the information. Before the breakout sessions, focused on interactive discussions involved participants to share their experience and plan response campaigns a "mind setting" plenary session was held. Agenda of the Event is presented in the Annex II.

During the 2nd cycle event some presentations of innovative solutions were made life. This proved to be one of the ways to make the training flow more coherent. During the 3rd cycle instead of innovations, two panel presentations were made. Both focused on hybrid threats - one on a broader picture, another much more specific, but well known issue. CORE model of hybrid threats was presented and wide scope of threats was covered. Those included Russia, China, Palestina, Africa. This brought participants much wider understanding of global context and moved thinking in the mode of hybrid treats. The other presentation was on content moderation in social media. This gave participants a feeling on how easily global context could be misrepresented in media platforms. This panel introductory session was names as "mind setting" and aimed to make participants thing on different aspects of hybrid threats.

Further Core Theme based teams have been elaborating how the innovative solutions presented could improve response to different challenges described in Scenario and Vignettes. Teams have been asked to develop initial campaigns plans to structure the reaction to the situations described in the Vignettes in the context of the general Scenario. In the next stage innovative solutions were introduced and teams continue discussions is search for the most feasible innovative solution for selected vignette and to envision how it could be operationalized. It resulted in updated response campaigns, plans giving the basis to learn how innovations could be helpful in Hybrid Threat scenarios, similar to the ones provided in the exercise. During the 3rd round special attention was given for the Red team component. Red team, in the form of "devils advocate" is included in the methodology, but in previous cycles it was not used enough. During the 3rd event there were strong Red teams formed to challenge presentations of planed campaigns at each stage.

All of the above have been captured into solutions assessments by Core Theme leaders, moderators of the sessions. The outcomes of the innovations' validation and assessment are elaborated further in the report.

Finally, each participant has been provided with assessment form to give their structured feedback as well comments and other reflections. They also have been asked to provide relevant improvement points or additional expectations they would see relevant and important. In addition, participants were asked some questions during the event using Mentimeter¹ tool.

If to compare methodology used during the 1st, 2nd and the 3rd cycles, there were some adjustments done. Main changes included:

- Original DTAG methodology describes situation in three steps: Scenario, Vignette and Inject. Starting the 2nd cycle only Scenario and Vignettes were used to avoid the overload of information framing the situation.
- Scenario was continuously simplified. It also was tailored to realistic situation, where participants can associate events described with real situations across EU that have happened recently.
- Reduction of innovative solutions for assessment was made in each cycle. Also preselected innovations
 were attached directly to Vignettes and those linked to Core Themes. In the 3rd cycle only 2-3 solutions
 were attached to Vignette.
- Different content for plenary session was selected. Presentation of certain innovative solutions is a good practice, but understanding of the solutions functionalities remains incomplete even after presentations. "Mind setting" session worked best from all cycles.
- Keeping same methodological approach with some adjustments through the project is the correct way
 of training organisation as participants get to understand the flow and each next time process was easier
 manage.
- The Event was moved from on-line in the 1st cycle to more and more on-site. The 3rd cycle had majority of participants on site and this made a significant difference compare to previous cycles.
- Proper use of Red team made the 3rd cycle event mush more engaging and impactful.

¹ https://www.mentimeter.com

2. REVIEW OF AVAILABLE TRAINING AND OTHER RELEVANT MATERIALS

Many EU-HYBNET consortium partners and network members are training providers, covering subject of Hybrid Threats. In order to avoid delivery of overlapping scenarios and training delivery EU-HYBNET T2.4 initiated a survey that aimed to identify and analyse other available trainings.

To accomplish this, T2.4 disseminated to the questionary between EU-HYBNET consortium partners and network members. Similar survey, using same questionnaire, was organised during the 1st and 2nd cycles of the project implementation. 3rd cycle survey was executed during October – November 2023.

Project partners and network members were invited to provide information on their training and education programs that can be relevant to Hybrid Threats domain. Requested information on sharable resources included trainings, research papers, scenarios and presentations relevant for the subject.

During the 3rd cycle survey relevant materials were provided by four partners:

Training programs:

• Laurea - The Landscape of Hybrid Threats

Presentations:

• Traversals Analytics and Intelligence GmbH - Traversals Data Fusion Platform

Training:

• UI1 University (Spain) - Protection of cognitive domain. Key aspects for human centric protection against foreign influence and disinformation operations

Exercises:

- "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy Scenario-based exercise Fire at Sea: Strategic Communication in Crisis Situations Scenario
- Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy Scenario-based exercise Alternative scenarios in analyzing different security issues (the civil implication in the European governance, the permanent European army, the conspiracy theories or the Al use in EU)
- Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy Simulation exercise Cooperation, Problem solving and Strategic Planning in the Black Sea Region conducted at the Training Program Security in the Black Sea Region. Shared challenges, sustainable future. Europe and its neighbourhood (SBSR)

In keeping with project goals and implementing the principle of non-overlapping components, the EU-HYBNET training was designed around the unique aspects of the Hybrid Threats domain and focused especially on innovative solutions mapped to gaps and needs identified in EU-HYBNET project T2.1 and T2.2.

Training materials collected from partners and network members were not prioritized for any training cycle. This collection allowed to avoid duplication and provided better understanding of available materials and active actors in the field.

3. TARGET AUDIENCE AND PARTICIPATION

The training was organized with a specific focus on EU-HYBNET consortium partners and network members. Participants represented a wide range of stakeholder groups (academia, RTO, industry, SMS, end-user organizations). The list of participants organizations can be found in the Annex III.

A total of 50 individuals registered for the Training and Exercising Event. 19 of them registered as participants on site and 27 registered to participate online (4 not indicated). In addition, there were unregistered participants. Those included mainly organizer and some Core Theme leaders. 7 joint the training without registration.

Initial selection of primary interest Core Themes, presented in the table below, was focused on Future trends if Hybrid Threats.

Core Theme	No. of participants
Future Trends of Hybrid Threats	21
Cyber & Future Technologies	7
Resilient Civilians, Local Level National Administration	6
Information and Strategic Communication	16

Table 1 Core Theme selection in registration.

Later, based on secondary interest, registered participants were re-shuffled to balance the groups. Redistribution ended in having 11-14 participants in each of the Core Theme based discussion group.

The onboarding process for participants took almost two months. The registration process was started in late November. It proceeded slowly and was impacted by vacation period. The process was activated several times, by providing additional information and updates on the event. Last participants were registered a week before the training dates.

Actual participation in Training and Exercising Event was lower than registered participants. The same issue was observed during both previous cycles. Reasons for such reduction are not clear, and most cases are very individual (changes in schedule, logistic or health issues, etc.). There were maximum 34 participants present during the Event. 12 of them joint online and 22 were present on site.

The Event was organised in a hybrid format, encouraging participant to be present in person. As discussions and learning from each other are key elements in the methodology applied. Networking is also very important component of the project. As usual, it was challenging to productively involve online participants. During similar training events online participation can be optional only for presentation or passive listening roles.

4. PRE-READING MATERIALS

Participants have been provided with a hand-out package of pre-reading materials 7 days before the Event. Participants pre-reading materials were reduced in complexity and this time included only one document containing:

- Scenario and Vignettes including the detailed description of background scenario and all proposed vignettes, describing situation in more details.
- Innovations proposed for discussions including description of innovative solutions and suggested aspects to be discussed during the Training. Document also provided linking of innovations to Vignettes and Core Themes.

Materials originate from D2.19.

The Moderators have several preparation meetings. During this cycle more freedom for Core Theme moderators was granted, so they can add innovative solutions or other aspects to the discussion. For example, in Information and Strategic Communication Core Theme the subject of anticipatory approaches to disinformation/FIMI through indications and warning was added.

5. PRIORETISATION OF INNOVATIONS

The training was designed to include assessment of innovations by discussing which of these might be considered for formal uptake by practitioner organizations. During the 1st project cycle prioritization and evaluation of innovations was made at the end of the Training Event. Survey, using specifically designed questionary was organized. Due to a very limited response rate, different approach was applied during the 2nd project cycle. Assessment was done during discussion. In the last cycle assessment was done in a similar manner, bus also supported by Mentimeter tool. This provided possibilities to grasp priorities in a more structured way during the training event.

During the preparation phase different Vignettes were linked to Core Themes. Innovative solutions were linked to the Vignettes, assuming that they can provide additional value in the situation bound by it.

Each Core Theme group discussed attributed Vignettes. After the first phase (situation assessment) participants were introduced to relevant innovations. List of innovations varied according to Vignette. Participants were asked to discuss all innovations presented and select the most relevant (1 or 2) for the given situation.

Such prioritization does not provide a proper quantitative indication of their ranking but should be considered as qualitative indication of preference of a given group of participants. Dissemination level of this deliverable is Public, so details of discussion within groups are not provided. Those can be requested by trusted partners and will be delivered as inputs for the further 3rd cycle work in WP4.

Further in this section priorities from different groups are presented.

CORE THEME: FUTURE TRENDS OF HYBRID THREATS

There were 2 Vignettes attributed to this Core theme.

Vignettes:

 Wide spread of online harassment and acts of violence in LATARUM against POLDONIAN ethnic groups related to STEPLAND escalates to riots.

> Police and rescue agencies are trying to control and use their resources more efficiently while managing the situation.

The President of LATARUM has allegedly declare in videos that a referendum will be called regarding the self-determination and autonomy of <u>Poldovian</u> residents in the North area of the country.

These videos are considered fake.



Respective innovations presented were:

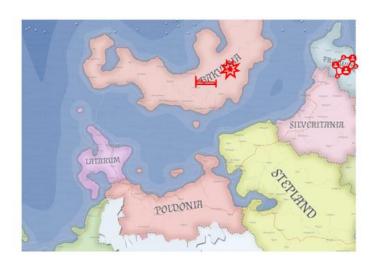
Vignette 2	Vignette 2
Mobile application to pinpoint acts of harassment/violence on the street and online	We Verify, a video plugin to debunk fake videos on social media that spread conspiracy theories
SMIDGE	DesinfoEND

CORE THEME: CYBER & FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES

There were 2 Vignettes attributed to this Core theme.

Vignettes:

- Hospitals and emergency services are targeted, physical attacks with IED on their premises affect their ability to provide rapid and efficient assistance in the event of an emergency in BAKVERIA.
- No specific regulatory framework exists in FREEWICK regarding Disinformation by major online platforms. Social media giants present a manipulative danger combined with the media ownership status; at the same time the situation remains hardly reachable from regulatory perspective.



Respective innovations presented were:

Vignette 2	Vignette 2
Advanced Surveillance Systems with Perimeter security	Starlight Disinformation-Misinformation Toolset
Code of Practice on Disinformation	Innovative Cluster for Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies, INCLUDING
ENGAGE (Engage Society for Risk Awareness and Resilience)	

After innovations were presented, prioritization discussion was held. Priorities from both groups are summarised in the figure below.

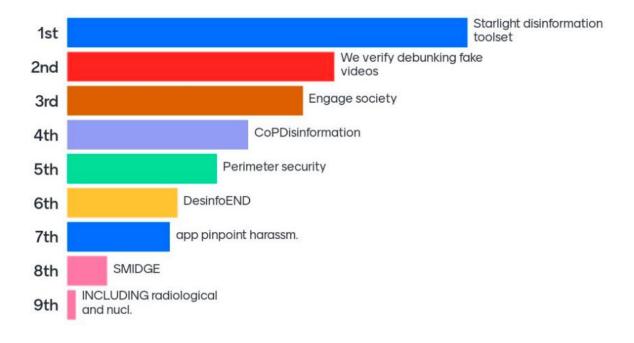


Figure 2 Response to the question "Which innovations were most useful for the given situation?".

CORE THEME: RESILIENT CIVILIANS, LOCAL LEVEL NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

There were 2 Vignettes attributed to this Core theme.

Vignettes:

 Telecoms operators in <u>Silveritanian</u> Hospitals are facing a chaos. During the Mega fire crisis the number of emergency calls has proven to be exponential, from 1 per minute to over 100 per minute.

Creating a massive telephonic congestion, the population is no longer capable to reach by phone the emergency services, report their positions and the evolution of their situation. This lack of communication increases the workload of Search & Rescue, which in the aftermath have to go place by place instead of focusing on population's reported positions.

 The internal integrity of the <u>Silveritanian</u> Hospitals is under attack by hostile messaging, and disinformation, via Viber and Telegram messaging to the staff, that the higher management is unreliable and incompetent to handle the situation.

Not only the employees of the Hospitals but also outside stake holders are targets of hostile messaging and this put additional pressure to the organization and creates serious problems for the organization that causes its integral structure disintegrating.



Respective innovations presented were:

Vignette 2	Vignette 2	
Al-enhanced disaster emergency communications - innovation	'Antidote' to hostile messaging delivered by private messaging apps	
The Countering Foreign Interference (CFI) project	EUCISE2020/ European test bed for the maritime Common Information Sharing Environment in the 2020 perspective	
	STOP-IT - Strategic, Tactical, Operational Protection of water Infrastructure against cyber-physical Threats	

CORE THEME: INFORMATION AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

There were 2 Vignettes attributed to this Core theme.

Vignettes:

 The impact of increasing levels of visual misinformation by STEPLAND regarding the illegal actions of its Airforce and Navy changes the social and political climate.

It undermines democratic processes, distorts the public and fuels social unrest. False or manipulated images can incite violence, trigger outrage and provoke conflict by exploiting people's emotions. The spread of visual misinformation also poses challenges for media companies and technology platforms responsible for moderating content.

 News media industry in FREEWICK has been severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis. This has led to a merger and acquisitions policy that ended into almost all media outlets in the country belonging to a very powerful financially individual.

Evidently questions are raised on the objectivity of these media and the control exercised over them.



Respective innovations presented were:

Vignette 2	Vignette 2
Blockchain -based verification -innovation	Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) tool
Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) tool	ReMeD RESILIENT MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE
Remed resilient media for democracy in the	INJECT Innovative Journalism: Enhanced Creativity
DIGITAL AGE	Tools -project

After innovations were presented, prioritization discussion was held. Priorities from both groups are summarised in the figure below.

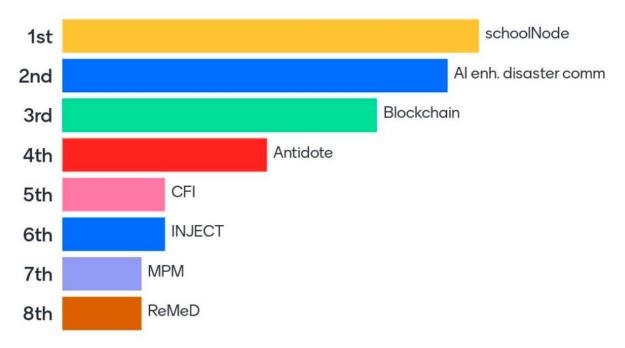


Figure 3 Response to the question "Which innovations were most useful for the given situation?".

6. EVALUATION OF TRAINING & EXERCISING EVENT

There were two types of evaluation made during the 3rd cycle. Some general evaluation was made using Mentimeter tool, those results are presented at the first part of this section. Further the evaluation of the training using questionnaire similar to previous cycles is presented.

There were three questions asked about the general impression of the training event and results are resented in the following figures.

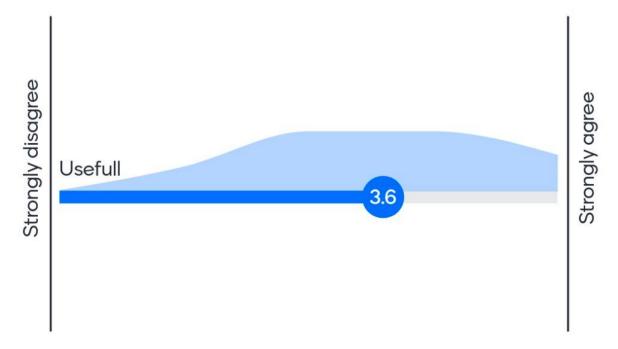


Figure 4 Response to the question "To what extend is this game-format useful to test innovations?".

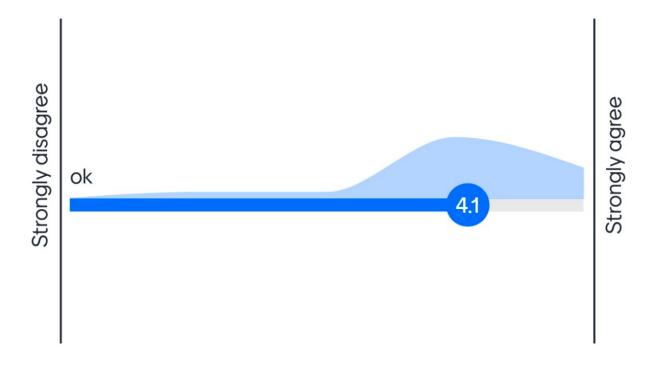


Figure 5 Response to the question "How would you rate this event?".

The last question asked participants to evaluate the event using one word. Those are most of responses:

- Super
- Let's repeat
- Interesting (3)
- Inspiring (3)
- Involving
- Success
- Useful (2)
- Informative
- Dynamic
- Cross disciplinary

Particular comments were made on use of red-team/blue-team format and wider involvement of project partners and network members.

Further results of evaluation questionnaire are presented. The questionnaire contains 4 groups of questions (as it was similar to the one used in previous cycles to maintain comparability):

- Group 1: Evaluation of content of the training
- Group 2: Evaluation of the guidance through the training
- Group 3: Evaluation of the organization of the training
- Group 4: Other (evaluation of individual experiences)

Example of the questionnaire is provided in Annex IV while the feedback is summarized in this section.

Overall, the response from participants was positive. The participants rated the experience mainly as either good or excellent, 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale (where "5" indicates extremely valuable and "1" indicates not valuable). Written comments on the evaluations were also positive, indicating that the participants appreciated the learning opportunity. Similar evaluations were received during previous cycle (quantitative scores provided in brackets for comparison).

19 responses were received. This is a much higher response rate compare to previous cycles. Responses were gathered at the very end of the training, this approach allowed to receive such a high response. Results of the evaluation are presented in the Table below.

	Number	
Assessment criteria	of	Cumulative score
	responses	
The	e Content of	the Training and Exercise event evaluation
Relevance of the training	19	4.11 (4.50 ² ; 4,38 ³)
Uniqueness of the training		
compared to other	19	3.89 (3.75; 3,88)
trainings on hybrid threats		
Relevance of the scenario	19	4.10 (4.00; 4,13)
Clarity of the scenario	19	3.79 (3.88; 3,75)
Other relevant topics (if any) to be added for the upcoming trainings	5	 Advanced mythologies to tackle disinformation during political crisis Perhaps proposing a guideline for participants Legal And regulatory Team

² Evaluation results from the 2st cycle presented in brackets.

³ Evaluation results from the 1st cycle presented in brackets.

		 Perhaps demos of some existing solutions to play around 	
		 Evaluating possible solutions was very useful. Would be interesting to have pitches of solutions / innovations be done by the creators but understand that it would have taken more time. 	
Comments	10	 That was really interesting event Very nice and interactive. I appreciated the red team-blue team format. Exciting and motivated idea. Looking for repeating this experience. Nicely organised and a great experience! The group discussions should be longer. Was really interesting Interesting and useful training Highly important and inspiring and useful event! Wonderful work by L3CE and TNO also KEMEA and others involved to deliver the needed information! The red Team provided added value for the even compared to last year TE. Globally it was a very well organized training and place for exchange and knowing ourselves better. 	
Is there a need for any improvement of the content of the training and exercise? If yes, please, specify.	11	 exchange and knowing ourselves better. Make vignettes more detailed. Make sure all consortium partners are present at the event More interacting actors would have increased the real-world situations met. More people to come on-site. The exercises could be better prepared to make sure more of the participants actually participate. More time for interaction between core teams Perhaps a bit longer time for discussions in teams? I think a basic scenario is sufficient to discuss the possible pro's and con's of implementing certain solutions. More in death explanation of the practical exercise. Should spend much more time on each innovation. I hope there will be a summary of advantage and disadvantage for each. Could / should the scenario have been more detailed in the geopolitical field? (personal question). 	
Evaluat	ion of suppo	rt provided by Moderator through the training	
Completeness of information provided	19	4.37 (4.38; 4,63)	
Balance between theoretical and practical aspects on the subject	19	4.06 (3.88; 4,38)	
Support provided by moderator	19	4.53 (4.38; 4,88)	
The moderator was well prepared for the training	19	4.53 (4.38; 4,88)	
The moderator was an expert on the subject and provided all clarification needed	19	4.53 (4.25; 4,75)	
Comments	2	 Wider teams would be great A difficulty is to set up tech innovation in the perspective of adoption dissemination and trust, in the context of the menace. 	

Is there a need for any improvement of the moderation of the training and exercise? If yes, please, specify.	1	 Scenario introduction can be done more explicit maybe with some interpretations already
	Evaluation	of Organization aspects of the training
Prereading materials (sufficiency and clarity)	19	4.16 (4.50; 3,5)
Training materials (sufficiency and clarity)	19	4.21 (4.25; 3,88)
Was time sufficient to get into productive dialog and was time well structured	19	4.05 (4.38; 3,75)
Possibility to interact, discuss, share with other participants	19	4.58 (4.50; 4,63)
Suitability of Platform used	19	4.21 (4.13; 4,38)
Comments	3	 Good experience for those online also. Maybe pre online meeting for the set up / scenario. Ms teams is good useful but have also limitations.
Is there a need for any improvement of the organization of the training and exercise? If yes, please, specify.	3	 Some IT technical issues. More people on-site Could try to better facilitate participation of all participants.
	Evaluation of	your general impression of the training
Evaluation of my (as a participant) involvement in the training	19	3.89 (4.50; 4,13)
Evaluation of my knowledge on the training subject before the training	19	3.82 (4.38; 2,88)
Evaluation of my knowledge on the training subject after the training	19	4.32 (4.50; 3,63)
Would you recommend this training	19	4.47 (4.63; 4,38)
Other general comments	1	 I already apply the methodology with some of my students.

Table 2 Training evaluation results.

Most of components scored similar or close points compare to the previous cycles. Some comments highlight the need for more detailed elaboration of the scenario and vignettes. This is mainly about providing more clear picture of the hybrid aspects of the situation. It is worth pointing out the general awareness of hybrid threats among participants which is more balanced. This is not indicated by the evaluation of knowledge on training subject, but it was clear by observing the process, discussions and presentations.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Participants acknowledged the important value of the training and the fact that they gained new knowledge and a broader understanding on the complexity of hybrid threats. Networking, being an important part of the project, was also not neglected. General comments were also positive.

More detailed findings and comments are provided below. These are based on evaluation results and observations reported by the training participants and organizers during the training planning, execution and post evaluation. Findings provided cover the 3rd cycle training event and provides some reflections on all tree cycles.

Finding 1:

Simplified pre-reading materials were evaluated positively. Significant time was also spent during the training to present the general scenario. Such modification reflects the findings from the 1st cycle and was continued during both following cycles.

Finding 2:

Most of suggestions for improvement were related to Scenario during all cycles. Simplification made easier to understand and apply it during the event. But, on the other hand, in most Vignettes the complexity of hybrid threats was lost. Vignettes were more focussed on a standalone event. Balancing of the scenario presenting it simple to understand with complexity of hybrid threats required additional explanations and discussions during the event. This component was better addressed during the 3rd cycle.

Finding 3

During the implementation of all cycles there were numerous registrants who were 'no-shows' without prior notice. It was less impactful during the 3rd cycle, as presence on-site was sufficient. Still if similar methodology is to be applied for training in other projects, required participation on site and limiting possibilities to observe process online can be one of the ways to solve this problem. Or in some cases only on-site presence can be required.

Finding 4

Considering that evaluation of the innovations and assess their impact on hybrid threats was on of key aspects, the participants were lacking explicit descriptions of the innovations in order effectively understand the innovation's potential and its future uptake possibilities. This is especially applies to low TRL or not-technological innovations. Actions to address this gap were made during the 2nd cycle by having 3 innovations presented live and having methodology of innovations in use presentation. Participants got better understanding, but not enough for proper evaluation. Possibility to have scenario tailored hand-on exercising could be the best way to get knowledge on how innovative solutions can add value. But in the given circumstances (variety of participants, time and resources available) it was not feasible to organise.

Thus, during the 3rd cycle different approach was followed by having the "mind-setting" plenary session. It does not add to the assessment of innovations, but allows better focus on hybrid threats.

Finding 5

Prioritisation of innovations made during all cycles should be considered as recommendations only. In all cases it was too difficult to make a detailed proper assessment. It was made based on the a very general understanding of innovative functionalities that can be provided. It was also agreed that in crisis situations some solutions can

be less useful as they are complex and provide some analytical outputs that should be processed further. Even said that, the assessment results point at the direction of what is needed by practitioners.

Finding 6

Bigger emphasis on red team was made during the 3rd cycle training event. It proved to be very valuable. It made all discussions more alive, created some opposition. It addition it provided a completely new aspect for consideration of participants. While in a given situation participants tend to solve certain problem and their efforts are focused mainly on reactive measures. Red team members are focused on further proactive escalation and looking at the reactive measures only as a potential new vulnerability. This "discovery" was one of the key takeaways from the training.

Finding 7

The presence of a competent Moderator proved to be one of the key success factors of the training in all cycles. Moderators are one of key success factors for such training methodology.

It can be concluded that Training and Exercising Event was successfully implemented during all tree cycles of the project. Continues improvement of the selected methodological approach made each iteration more impactful. As participants of the training had very different background, expectations and views on hybrid threats it is not possible to assess individual impact, individual takeaways are very different. But it can be said that each participant was able to find new ideas, approaches and knowledge in each iteration.

Methodology selected well suites area of hybrid threats and linking innovative solutions to counter them. It is less suitable for proper in-depth assessment of innovations, but provides the directions of what is needed.

If similar methodology is to be selected for training in the context of hybrid threats there are some components that should be carefully addressed:

- Scenario to be made to demonstrate the hybrid threats and time to be dedicated to comprehend the situation;
- Moderators are essential part of training success;
- Use of Red team and having right people in this team makes significant impact;
- Methodology works well for gaining new knowledge and understanding of innovations landscape and their possible impact, but less suitable for substantiated assessment.

ANNEX I. SCENARIO AND VIGNETTES

The ultimate goal of building scenarios, whether they originate from models, stakeholder participation, or as it is often the case both, is to assess outcomes from alternative future trajectories, through model analysis and planning with stakeholders, to inform decision making. A more specific goal is to assess the response of the involved practitioners to alternative future trajectories, based on model analysis or expert knowledge. The scenarios should include the different views of the stakeholders on possible alternative future developments that are hard to predict and the assumptions behind the scenarios must be made transparent. The scenarios need to represent different kind of challenges and alternatives to deal with them.

The EU-HYBNET scenario and vignettes portray a crisis situation, giving opportunities to hybrid threat actors in leveraging societal and other vulnerabilities in order to further their strategic objectives while acting under the threshold of detection and circumventing political attribution, using a variety of means that have the characteristic to offset and upend anticipations and predictions of policymaking, crisis management and contingency management.

The scenario is about six different entities that are interacting in the same geopolitical context, while different attack surfaces are developed suitable to deploy hybrid ops vectors on all four Core Themes:

- FUTURE TRENDS OF HYBRID THREATS
- CYBER AND FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES.
- RESILIENT CIVILIANS, LOCAL LEVEL AND ADMINISTRATION
- INFORMATION AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

1.1. Main actors

The main actors in the EU-HYBNET training and exercise scenario are:

- a. STEPLAND is a militarily strong country, exporting hydrocarbons and financially stable, with a rather autocratic regime.
- b. POLDONIA is a republic, financially strong in confrontation with STEPLAND, that on many occasions led to major border incidents.
- c. The LATARUM Republic is an independent country, formerly part of POLDONIA, with many Poldonians residing, commercially and culturally linked to STEPLAND.
 - d. BAKVERIA is a strong oil producing republic, with many ports and LNG offshore facilities.
- e. SILVERITANIA is a newly established independent country under military, diplomatic and financial pressure from STEPLAND who wishes to incorporate it.
 - f. FREEWICK is a republic in alliance and financial partnership with BAKVERIA

1.2. Situational setup

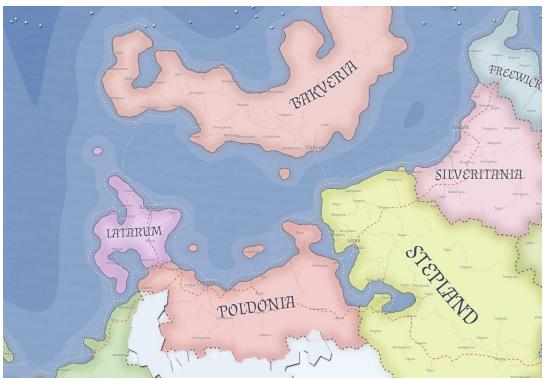
The situational setup in the EU-HYBNET training and exercise scenario is following:

- STEPLAND is spreading online disinformation targeting incitement of POLDONIAN minority residing in LATARUM.
 - Disinformation in LATARUM includes fake news and fake videos
- Critical infrastructure in BAKVERIA is attacked, public safety is also at risk with bombing attacks. Physical attacks on important infrastructure lead to social unrest and fear. Compromising access to basic needs such as emergency and health services can increase population insecurity and hardship.

- A Mega Forest Fire in SILVERITANIA is challenging the ability of the state to handle the incident. It is attributed probably to malignant arsons and is causing a huge number of victims to be dispatched in hospitals. Hospitals efficiency and effectiveness is challenged.
- STEPLANDs Airforce is constantly violating the Bakverian Airspace while its navy is violating Bakveria's territorial waters. STEPLAND denies all allegations presenting videos to support its grounds.

1.3. Map

The above mentioned scenario activities and actors are taking place in the region and context described in the map below:



1.4. Vignettes

The EU-HYBNET training and exercise scenario vignettes are following:

- 1. Wide spread of online harassment and acts of violence in LATARUM against POLDONIAN ethnic groups related to STEPLAND escalates to riots. Police and rescue agencies are trying to control and use their resources more efficiently while managing the situation.
- 2. The President of LATARUM has allegedly declare in videos that a referendum will be called regarding the self-determination and autonomy of Poldovian residents in the North area of the country. These videos are considered fake.
- 3. Hospitals and emergency services are targeted, physical attacks with IED on their premises affect their ability to provide rapid and efficient assistance in the event of an emergency in BAKVERIA.
- 4. Telecoms operators in Silveritanian Hospitals are facing a chaos. During the Mega fire crisis the number of emergency calls has proven to be exponential, from 1 per minute to over 100 per minute, becoming impossible to sort out by emergency dispatchers, especially with the average emergency call lasting from 3 to 15 minutes dealt by just a few emergency dispatchers. Creating a massive telephonic congestion, the population is no longer capable to reach by

- phone the emergency services, report their positions and the evolution of their situation. This lack of communication increases the workload of Search & Rescue, which in the aftermath have to go place by place instead of focusing on population's reported positions.
- 5. The internal integrity of the Silveritanian Hospitals is under attack by hostile messaging, and disinformation, via Viber and Telegram messaging to the staff, that the higher management is unreliable and incompetent to handle the situation. Not only the employees of the Hospitals but also outside stake holders are targets of hostile messaging and this put additional pressure to the organization and creates serious problems for the organization that causes its integral structure disintegrating.
- 6. The impact of increasing levels of visual misinformation by STEPLAND regarding the illegal actions of its Airforce and Navy changes the social and political climate. It undermines democratic processes, distorts the public and fuels social unrest. False or manipulated images can incite violence, trigger outrage and provoke conflict by exploiting people's emotions. The spread of visual misinformation also poses challenges for media companies and technology platforms responsible for moderating content.
- 7. News media industry in FREEWICK has been severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis. This has led to a merger and acquisitions policy that ended into almost all media outlets in the country belonging to a very powerful financially individual. Evidently questions are raised on the objectivity of these media and the control exercised over them
- 8. No specific regulatory framework exists in FREEWICK regarding Disinformation by major online platforms. Social media giants present a manipulative danger combined with the media ownership status, at the same time the situation remains hardly reachable from regulatory perspective.

1.5. Scenario conclusion

The EU-HYBNET training and exercise event participants are asked to freely assess the overall situation and to test the innovations presented for them as possible promising solutions.

The aim of the training is to hold a free discussion on the challenges and dilemmas that are underlying to the scenario injects and to have discussion how the selected innovations could support the pan-European security practitioners to plan and conduct their counter measures to the challenges, Hybrid Threats. It requires participant to exercise critical thinking and a creative approach, also to analyse and suggest new features to the selected and tested innovations. In order to "test the innovations", the training event will provide an exhaustive list of innovations, research monitoring results explored under WP3 in order to provide food for thought to participants regarding the possible ways to address the problems posed by the scenario. This shall not concern the minute applicability of specific innovations to a given situation but rather an exploration and debate and to deliver research material for EU-HYBNET WP3 T3.1 "Definition of Target Areas for Improvements and Innovations" and WP4 "Recommendations for Innovations Uptake and Standardization" to provide recommendations for most promising innovations uptake for pan-European security practitioners' needs.

ANNEX II. AGENDA OF THE EVENT

EU-HYBNET 3rd Training and Exercise Event 18-19 January, 2024, Vilnius Didlaukio g. 55, Lithuania

Agenda

Day 1, January 18 (Thursday)

Link for on-line participants in MS Teams platform:

LIN K

Meeting ID: 385 942 426 504 Passcode: jN2PkC

Time	Item		
12:00 - 12:20	Welcome and Introduction		
12:20 - 13:00	Description of the event flow		
13:00 – 14:00	"Mind setting" plenary session:		
	 Julien Théron, EC Joint Research Center, CORE model (fresh look at hybrid threats) 		
	Jorge Gomes, VOST Europe, Content moderation on media platforms (how this are the boundled).		
14:00-14:20	this can be handled) Break		
14:20-14:45	Introduction to Scenario		
14:45-15:00	Q & A and Logistics to Breakout rooms		
	Breakout rooms:		
	1. "Future trends of Hybrid Threats" <u>LINK</u>	104	
	2. "Cyber & Future Technologies" LINK	102	
	3. "Information and Strategic Communication" LINK	101	
	4. "Resilient Civilians, Local Level National Administration" LINK	407	
15:00-16:15	Breakout rooms:	101, 102,	
	Campaign planning	104, 407	
	Presentation of the campaign plan		
16:15-16:30	Break		
16:30-17:30	Presentation of results of Core Themes	102	
17:30-17:45	Closing remarks	102	

Day 2, January 19 (Friday)

Link for on-line participants in MS Teams platform:

LINK

Meeting ID: 385 942 426 504 Passcode: jN2PkC

Time	Item	Room
10:00-10:15	Welcome and Introduction	102
	Breakout rooms: 1. "Future trends of Hybrid Threats" LINK 2. "Cyber & Future Technologies" LINK 3. "Information and Strategic Communication" LINK 4. "Resilient Civilians, Local Level National Administration" LINK	104 102 101 407
10:15-11:30	Breakout rooms (Session I for the 1 st vignette): Introduction to innovations Campaign planning Presentation of the campaign plan	101, 102, 104, 407
11:30-11:45	Break	
11:45-13:00	Breakout rooms (Session II for the 2 nd vignette): Introduction to innovations Campaign planning Presentation of the campaign plan	101, 102, 104, 407
13:00-13:20	Break	
13:20-14:20	Presentation of results of Core Themes	102
14:20-15:00	Feedback session and closing remarks	102

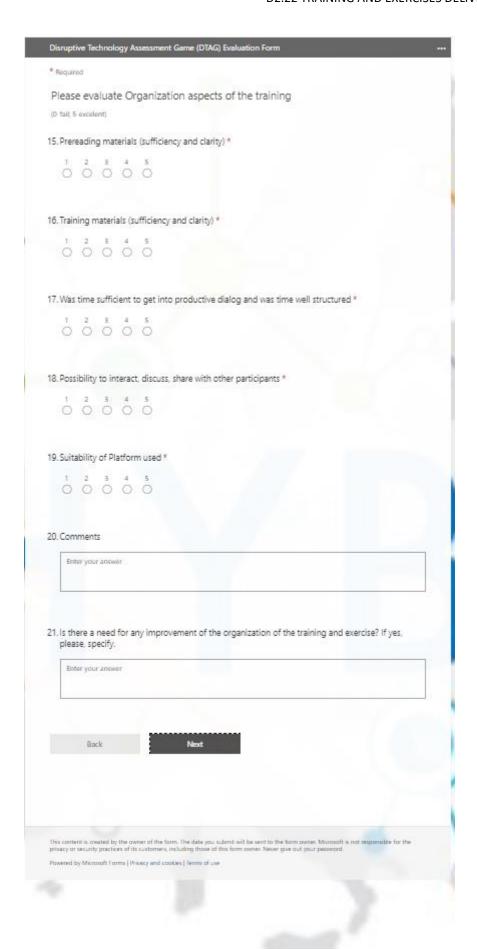
ANNEX III. THE LIST OF REGISTERED ORGANIZATIONS

No.	Organisation	No of participants	
1	"Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy	2	
2	ANATASE	1	
3	Center for Security Studies (KEMEA)	3	
4	Centre for Countering Hybrid Threaths, Mol Slovakia	1	
5	COMTESSA, UniBW Munchen	1	
6	DataSenseLabs Ltd.	1	
7	DSB	1	
8	EOS	1	
9	EUAM UKRAINE	1	
10	EC JRC	1	
11	European Parliament, DG Safety and Security	1	
12	Hybrid CoE	2	
13	Hybrid Warfare Research Institute	1	
14	IN2	1	
15	L3CE	4	
16	Laurea	3	
17	INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION, SECURITY AND LAW OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF LAW SCIENCES OF UKRAINE	1	
18	Maldita.es	1	
19	Ministère de la transition ecologique / service du haut fonctionnaire de défense et sécurité	1	
20	MINISTÈRE TRANSITION ÉCOLOGIQUE et COHÉSION DES TERRITOIRES	1	
21	Ministry of the Interior Finland	1	
22	MVNIA	1	
23	National Defense University	1	
24	National Polytechnic University of Science and Technology Bucharest	1	
25	National Security Analysis Center	1	
26	NORSECON AB	1	
27	PPHS	1	
28	Sapienza University of Rome	1	
29	The Internal Security Agency	2	
30	The University of Georgia, School of Social Sciences	1	
31	Tilt	1	
32	Traversals Analytics and Intelligence GmbH	1	
33	UiT The Arctic University of Norway	1	
34	UI1 University ES	1	
35	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	1	
36	VOST Europe	1	

ANNEX IV. TRAINING AND EXERCISING EVENTEVALUATION FORM

Evaluation of Training o	end exercising even	t			
		_			
Required					
	the Content o	f the Training ar	nd Exercise event	t	
(0-fail; 5-excelent)					
1. Relevance of the					
0 0 0	0 0				
2. Uniqueness of the	e training compar	red to other training	gs on hybrid threats ^s	*	
0 0 0	4 5				
3. Relevance of the	scenario *				
1 2 3	4 5				
0 0 0 .	0 0				
4. Clarity of the scer	nario *				
1 2 3					
0 0 0 0	0 0				
E Other relevant to	nier (if any) to be	added for the upper	omina traininas		
5. Other relevant to	pics (if any) to be	added for the upco	oming trainings		
Enter your answer					
6. Comments					
Enter your answer					
,					
7. Is there a need fo	r any improveme	ent of the content of	f the training and exe	ercise? If yes, ple	ase,
specify.					
Enter your answer					

* Required					
Please evaluate support provided by Moderator through the training					
(0 falt 5-excelent)					
8. Completeness of information provided *					
1 2 3 4 5					
9. Balance between theoretical and practical aspects on the subject *					
1 2 3 4 5					
00000					
10. Support provided by moderator *					
1 2 3 4 5					
11. The moderator was well prepared for the training *					
1 2 3 4 5					
0 0 0 0 0					
1 2 3 4 5					
13. Comments					
Enter your answer.					
14. Is there a need for any improvement of the moderation of the training and exercise? If yes, please, specify.					
Enter your answer.					
Back Next					
- STATE TRUM					



PI	eas	e eva	aluat	e vo	ur general impression of the training	
		-excel		- 10	- J	
					a participant) involvement in the training *	
	0	0	0	4	5	
22	Eval	ıatior	ofm	w kne	wledge on the training subject before the training *	
	Ö	Ō	Ō	4	Ō	
24.	Evalu	uation	of m	ny kno	wledge on the training subject after the training *	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	\circ	0	0	0	0	
25.	Wou	ld yo	u rec	omme	nd this training *	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	O.II					
26.	Otne	er ger	ierai (omm	ents	
	Ent	er you	ransw	er		
3						
		Ba	ck		Submit	
					Secretary St.	

GLOSSARY AND ACRONIMS

Term	Definition / Description
EC	The European Commission
EU-HYBNET	Empowering a Pan-European Network to Counter Hybrid Threats -project
WP	Work Package
Т	Task
D	Deliverables
MS	Milestone
ОВ	Objectives
KPI	Key performance indicator
M	Project month
ML	Machine learning
MSs	Member States
IoS	Ideas of Systems
DTAG	Disruptive Technology Assessment Game