

European Union Security Initiative Policy Dialogue

27 May 2026

Venue: INSET (MAP Hotel), Stasinou 16D, 1060 Nicosia, Cyprus

- 8:45– 9:00 Registration
- 9:00 – 9:15 **Welcome remarks**
Michał Matlak, Director of Itech & Fellow at the European University Institute, Poland&Italy
Monika Sus, Professor at the Polish Academy of Sciences & Part-time professor European University Institute, Poland&Italy
Nicolas Kyriakides, Executive President, Cyprus Forum, Cyprus
- 9:15 – 9:30 **Opening remarks by Vasilis Palmas**, Minister of Defence, Cyprus
- 9:30 – 11:00 **Session 1: European Security Reloaded: New Ideas, Strategies and Challenges**
This panel takes stock of ideas currently circulating in Brussels and beyond about how to redesign Europe's security strategy and institutions, in light of President von der Leyen's call for a new European Security Strategy. It examines proposals emerging from EU institutions, member states, and think tanks, including concepts such as a European Security Council and new formats for crisis decision-making. The discussion will explore how these ideas respond to the war in Ukraine, US uncertainty and instability in Europe's neighbourhood, and ask which of them could realistically strengthen Europe's ability to act. Participants will assess what should be prioritised, what is politically feasible, and where institutional innovation might create more problems than it solves.
- Chair **Michał Matlak**, Itech & European University Institute
Speakers **Steven Blockmans**, Deputy Director, International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonia
Almut Möller, Director for European and Global Affairs, European Policy Centre, Belgium
Giuseppe Spatafora, Research Analyst, European Union Institute for Security Studies, France
Elena Rafti, Diplomatic Advisor to the Minister of Defence, Cyprus
- 11:00-11:15 Coffee break
- 11:15-12:45 **Session 2: European Security in The Age of Hybrid Threats and Coercion**
Europe has relied on the rules-based order, international law, and the security architecture to ensure its own security and stability. Although not everybody always played fair, the rules of the game were well-known and established. This is no longer the case. Malicious actors reinvent the playbook by resorting to hybrid attacks to avoid accountability and undermine the proper functioning of our societies. Economic and military coercion increasingly become the tools of choice rather than necessity. How can the EU ensure its own security while remaining a credible and capable global partner? Should the EU join a revisionist bandwagon or invest in maintaining the status quo and strengthening accountability?
- Chair **Patryk Pawlak**, Part-time professor, European University Institute & Fellow at Carnegie Europe, Italy

Speakers	Federica Mogherini , Former High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission, Italy Caitríona Heini , Executive Director, The Azure Forum for Contemporary Security Strategy, Ireland David Behar , Deputy Director, Centre for Analysis, Planning and Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France Antonis Theocharous , Director for Multilateral Relations, Security Policy and Global Agenda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cyprus
12:45-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-14:30	Session 3: High-level Policy Fireside chat
Speakers	Radosław Sikorski , Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland Giorgos Gerapetritis , Minister of Foreign Affairs, Greece (tbc)
Chair	Monika Sus , Polish Academy of Sciences & European University Institute Patryk Pawlak , European University Institute & Carnegie Europe
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee break
15:00 – 16:30	Session 4: Building Europe’s Defence Industrial Base: Implications for EU Security <i>This panel focuses on the European defence industry and the implementation of SAFE, which has become central to the EU’s evolving security and defence agenda. As defence industrial policy gains prominence, all member states will be increasingly involved in shaping and implementing this portfolio. The discussion addresses what these developments mean for smaller and geographically exposed member states. It will explore opportunities and challenges related to industrial participation, capability development, and integration into European defence value chains, as well as the broader strategic implications for EU security and resilience.</i>
Chair	Marek Świerczyński , Head of Security Desk, Polityka Insight, Poland
Speakers	Aleksandra Koziół , Senior researcher, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland Elena Lazarou , Director, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Greece Johannes Binder , Member of the President’s research team, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Germany Panayiotis Hadjipavlis , Defence Director and Head of the Armaments and Capabilities Directorate, Ministry of Defence, Cyprus
16:30 – 16:45	Closing remarks Michał Matlak , Director of Itech & Fellow at the European University Institute, Poland&Italy Monika Sus , Polish Academy of Sciences & European University Institute Nicolas Kyriakides , Cyprus Forum
20:00	Dinner Restaurant: Tsipouraki Mezedaki Address: Othellou 1, 1016 Nicosia

List of participants

David Behar, Centre for Analysis, Planning and Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

Johannes Binder, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Germany

Steven Blockmans, International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonia & Centre for European Policy Studies, Belgium

David Cadier, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire, France

Andrea Christou, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Trine Flockhart, European University Institute, Italy

Nectaria Georgiadou, Cyprus Forum, Cyprus

Panayiotis Hadjipavlis, Ministry of Defence, Cyprus

Sara Hamilton, Ambassador of Ireland to Cyprus (tbc)

Caitríona Heini, The Azure Forum for Contemporary Security Strategy, Ireland

Christophe Hillion, University of Oslo, Norway

Stephanie Hofmann, European University Institute, Italy (tbc)

Agnieszka Homanska, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland

Arkadiusz Kłębek, Embassy of the Republic of Poland to Cyprus

Angeliki Kourri, Cyprus Forum, Cyprus

Aleksandra Koziol, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland

Jan Kłapa, Itech, Poland

Nicolas Kyriakides, Cyprus Forum, Cyprus

Elena Lazarou, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Greece

Paweł Marczewski, Itech, Poland

Michał Matlak, Itech & European University Institute, Poland & Italy

Federica Mogherini, Former High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission, Italy

Almut Möller, European Policy Centre, Belgium

Vasilis Palmas, Ministry of Defence, Cyprus

Patryk Pawlak, European University Institute & Carnegie Europe, Italy

Łukasz Pawłowski, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland

Elena Rafti, Ministry of Defence, Cyprus

Radosław Sikorski, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland

Giuseppe Spatafora, European Union Institute for Security Studies, France

Monika Sus, Polish Academy of Sciences & European University Institute, Poland & Italy

Szymon Szaran, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland

Marek Szczepanowski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Cyprus

Marek Świerczyński, Polityka Insight, Poland

Antonis Theocharous, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cyprus

Harry Tzimitras, PRIO Cyprus Centre, Cyprus

Julian Vierlinger, European University Institute, Italy

Logistical information

Accommodation

The Classic Hotel Nicosia - Handwritten Collection, Rigenis 94, Nicosia 1010, Cyprus.

The distance from the hotel to the conference venue INSET (MAP Hotel), Stasinou 16D, 1060 Nicosia, Cyprus is less than 1 km, so you can easily walk.

Transportation from Larnaca airport to Nicosia

The most popular and cost-effective way to travel from the airport to the city centre is by using the [Kapnos Airport Shuttle](#), which runs every hour, takes approximately 40 minutes, and costs roughly €10. It will drop you off at the **Kapnos Station** on Kyrenias Avenue. From there, you can easily reach the city centre (and the hotel) either by taking local buses 23 or 42 or by taking a taxi. You can also take a taxi directly from the airport to the city centre. However, please note that we cannot reimburse taxi rides.

We organise one project-funded transfer between the airport and the hotel (approx. 1 hour) at times when many participants arrive/depart:

- 26 May: Larnaca Airport Meeting Point: 15:15 – transfer to Classic Hotel
- 28 May: Hotel Classic Pick-up: 14:15 – transfer to Larnaca Airport

Unfortunately, there is a significant discrepancy in arrival and departure times across the group, so this transfer will not be suitable for everyone. We hope for your understanding and kindly ask you to arrange your own transfer if you arrive or depart at different times.

Emergency contact

Jan Klapa +48 662 053 077

The EU Security Initiative Policy Dialogues

Concept

EUSI Policy Dialogues are the Initiative's flagship activity. They are held twice a year in cooperation with the member state holding the rotating EU Council Presidency. Their purpose is to ensure that independent research insights are directly linked to the concrete policy agenda of the Presidency Troika and to ongoing developments within EU institutions, while also incorporating the perspectives and priorities of the member states, whose positions are crucial for the development and effectiveness of EU foreign and security policy.

The EUSI Policy Dialogues are structured around three closely connected dimensions that provide the overarching framework for selecting specific discussion topics. The EUSI Policy Dialogues are built around three closely connected dimensions. The **strategic dimension** addresses how Europe should adapt its strategic posture, decision-making capacity, and military capabilities to respond effectively to the evolving geopolitical and security landscape. The **industrial dimension** focuses on the role of technology and innovation in enhancing European defence capabilities. The **democratic dimension** examines issues of legitimacy and governance, as well as the need for transparent public justification of new EU-level instruments and increased defence spending.

Participants include senior representatives from EU institutions and national governments, alongside academic and think tank experts and industry actors. By taking place in parallel with formal EU meetings, the dialogues offer an informal but structured space to test ideas, compare national perspectives, and encourage more coordinated European approaches. To support continuity and trust-based exchange, the Initiative has established an EUSI expert pool, bringing together a core group of experts who are invited to participate in the Policy Dialogues on a recurring basis. This sustained engagement helps build mutual trust, facilitates more candid and direct exchanges, and enables deeper, cumulative discussions across successive meetings.

Inaugural High-Level Forum in Warsaw, April 2025

The first EUSI Policy Dialogue took place in Warsaw on 2–3 April 2025 and served as the Initiative's inaugural meeting. Organised alongside the Polish Presidency calendar, the event was opened by Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz. Commissioner Andrius Kubilius delivered the keynote address, outlining EU-level thinking on Europe's capability needs and presenting initial ideas that would feed into the Commission's White Paper on European Defence. The Warsaw forum highlighted the importance of connecting EU initiatives with national capability planning and underlined the need for credible financing mechanisms. It also demonstrated the value of integrating technological expertise into strategic debates. This inaugural meeting established EUSI as a recurring platform embedded in the EU policy calendar.

EUSI Policy Dialogue in Copenhagen, December 2025

The second Policy Dialogue took place in Copenhagen on 8 December 2025 in partnership with the Royal Danish Defence College. It focused on drone production and regulation, hybrid threats, and cyber resilience, with discussions covering security priorities within the Polish–Danish–Cypriot Trio as well as Europe's drone, space, hybrid, and cyber challenges. It marked an important step in broadening the Initiative's geographic and institutional reach.

EUSI Policy Dialogue in Nicosia, May 2026

Looking ahead, the third EUSI Policy Dialogue will take place on 27 May 2026 in Nicosia, alongside the EU Foreign Ministers' meeting (Gymnich). The event is organised in partnership with the Cyprus Forum, continuing EUSI's mission to link strategic debates with regional perspectives and concrete EU policy processes. The dialogue will focus on strategies to counter hybrid threats, recent developments within the European defence industry, including the implementation of SAFE, and differences in threat perceptions across the EU and their implications for European security and defence. Discussions will draw on input papers prepared in advance by experts from the EUSI expert pool.

EUSI Policy Dialogue in Dublin, October-November 2026

A future EUSI Policy Dialogue is planned for Dublin in October–November 2026, in the context of Ireland's ongoing EU Council Presidency, and will continue EUSI's mission to link strategic debates with regional perspectives and concrete EU policy processes. The event will be organised in cooperation with the Irish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade and The Institute of International & European Affairs, with the exact dates and agenda to be confirmed.