

Security Research Conference

Technology Solutions to Enhance Systems Interoperability

Conclusions

17-18 April 2008, Ankara, Turkey¹

The Security Research Conference was organised jointly by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and TUBİTAK² (the Scientific and Technological Council of Turkey) in Ankara on 17 and 18 April 2008 under the auspices of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The conference aimed at debating the challenges to be faced in Security Research and Technology for civil applications, hinting at possible solutions and identifying relevant areas of cooperation.

This document reports on the main findings and messages from the Conference, which are transmitted to the Slovenian EU Presidency with a view to provide additional input for the subsequent conference on Security Research planned by the French EU Presidency on 28-29 September in Paris.

During two days some 300 participants and speakers, coming from several European countries and representing different fields (research, government agencies, public authorities, industry stakeholders), attended the Conference. The delegation from the European Commission included representatives from six Directorate Generals (DG Justice, Freedom and Security, DG External Relations, DG Enlargement, DG Enterprise and Industry, DG Information Society and Media, JRC. The FRONTEX agency for Border Security was also represented.

The Programme of the Conference³ had been structured to maximize the interaction between policy makers, researchers, technology providers and end users, in the light of the opportunities offered by the existing support instruments. The first session was meant to identify major security challenges which Europe is facing. The policymaking Directorate Generals, the FRONTEX agency and the Slovenian EU Presidency identified some of the current priorities and areas where scientific and technical solutions are needed. Speakers from the European Commission presented available instruments directed at supporting security R&D projects involving partners from different countries, in particular via open calls in the 7th Framework Research Programme, projects in the field of Justice, Liberty and Security through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession as well as projects in the area of non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and trans-regional threats funded through the Instrument for Stability. Finally, the Joint Research Centre, which is the scientific and technical arm of the Commission, also presented its activities to support development, monitoring and implementation of the EU security policy, in particular through its Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen.

The Conference Concluding Round Table was co-chaired by Mr Roland Schenkel, Director General of the Joint Research Centre, and Mr Omer Anlagan, Vice President of TUBİTAK. The main findings and conclusions from the Conference are given below.

1. The Council of the European Union agreed on the ten priorities for the EU activities in the field of Justice, Liberty and Freedom at their meeting in the Haag in 2004⁴. This represents the reference policy framework for security research in Europe. In this context, the programme the current Slovenian Presidency of the EU⁵ has been presented which focuses on police cooperation, border security, fight against terrorism, data exchange and system interoperability.
2. Research and technology development (R&D) plays a central role in the field of security. Therefore European countries need to define, maintain and further develop their main security R&D competences and infrastructure and multiply the results and good practices. The quality interaction and cooperation between policy makers, technology developers and end users should be further encouraged.
3. Security research should consider environmental factors, such as climate change, which will likely affect European security and have an even stronger impact on developing countries with lower adaptation capacities, notably in Africa. This may increase the risk in Europe of natural disasters, droughts, forest fires and floods as well as to lead to higher migratory fluxes and new pandemics.
4. Security research should also consider challenges associated to "external" security, such as crisis response and prevention, fighting proliferation of WMD and organised crime, support capacity building in third countries for law enforcement and dissemination of best practices. The new EU Instrument for Stability offers opportunities for new collaborative actions in these fields.
5. It is important for R&D to take into account four key requirements for future technology systems: user friendliness, interoperability, adaptability and common standards. Besides the development of new technologies, there is also a need to integrate the systems and equipment which are already in use and upgrade their interoperability. The new technologies systems must have European dimension and should be designed to handle hundreds of millions of data entries, and not for individual countries.
6. Security research should also take into account societal needs and issues. Advances in security technologies bring along new concerns associated with privacy, data protection and acceptance of the public of the new technologies. Studies, public consultations and social responsibility of innovation should be promoted in order to identify shared values and concepts.
7. Advanced space technologies will provide great opportunity beyond the current GMES initiative. It is important to foster R&D of new platforms using space technologies combining navigation, telecommunication and earth observation.
8. Development of information technologies and their intelligent use play an important role in security research, e.g. biometrics, e-passports, data gathering and data mining applications, interoperability. Opportunities to discuss joint projects will be offered by the ICT conference under the French EU Presidency in Lyon on 25-27 November 2008.⁶
9. The European Commission offers several opportunities for funding security projects. In the field of security research, a second FP7 call is planned in June 2008. Besides this, the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) supports the implementation of projects focussed at aligning the Candidate Countries with the EU legislation in the field of security, justice and freedom. For Turkey alone, a total of 250 M€ has been allocated so far for a total of 38 projects in the field of security, justice and freedom. Besides funding research projects, there is a need to foster research capacity building in order to build up centres of excellence having the required critical mass.

10. Because of its geographical position and size, Turkey is an important partner for the security of the European continent. Turkey plays a role in the security of supply of natural resources, in particular oil and gas from the Persian Gulf, Black Sea and beyond, and it is a major reserve of water. It has experience in the fight against terrorism, trafficking of human beings, smuggling of drugs and weapons. Therefore, European researchers are encouraged to invite the Turkish public security authorities as end users in their research project proposals.
11. Since it joined the EU custom union in 1995, Turkey has been strongly cooperating with the EU authorities. For instance most of the heroin seized in Europe is actually caught in Turkey, which shows that investments in security in Turkey are beneficial for the security of Europe as well. Turkey is at the high edge of EU research in the field of biometrics, border control and cryptology and has good collaboration between research providers and end users (coast guard, customs, and border security guard). For the above-mentioned reasons, it is proposed to Turkish authorities to be more active in the European Security Research and Innovation Forum (ESRIF) in order to benefit from the best practices exchanged at this forum.

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² <http://www.fp7.org.tr/home.do;jsessionid=7F0E1E2F9AE8156CDABF0EC2AF9BC503?ot=10&lang=en&sid=0&pid=0>

³ <http://ipsc.jrc.cec.eu.int/eventdetail.php?id=1>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/doc/hague_programme_en.pdf

⁵ http://www.eu2008.si/includes/Downloads/Policy_Areas/BRO_URA_SLO_ANG_L_FRA.pdf

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/ict/2008/index_en.htm