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EUTOPIA European University

Facultatea de Studii Europene
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EUXGLOB

icde initiativa pentru cultură democratică europeană

EUXGLOB VI International conference

Europe's Strategic Shield: Defence, Security and Democratic Resilience on the EU and NATO Eastern Frontier

Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj, Faculty of European Studies
EUXGLOB Centre in partnership with ICDE
Cluj-Napoca, December 3-4, 2026 (hybrid format)

Thursday, December 3

9:00-11:00 Opening session (plenary), Room Simone Veil*

Chair: Assoc. prof. Raluca Moldovan, UBB

Teams Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3284579677028886?p=Wqw6LDj26KEZop5FBD

Prof. Adrian Corpădean, UBB, Dean, Faculty of European Studies, *Welcome address*

Professor Valentin Naumescu, Faculty of European Studies, UBB, *Introductory remarks to the 6th edition of EUXGLOB*

Keynote speech (30 minutes): **Professor Corneliu Bjola**, Oxford University, *Hybrid Influence Operations: Navigating the Cognitive Frontlines of Information Warfare*

Keynote speech (30 minutes): **Professor Paul Timmers**, Catholic University Leuven, *Images of Sovereignty – Sprache, Weltanschauung, Zeitgeist*

Discussions

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11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

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11:30 – 13:30 Panel 1, Room Robert Schuman

Chair: Prof. Corneliu Bjola, Oxford University

Teams Link:
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* All times indicated are Bucharest Time.

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Professor Valentin Naumescu, **PhD Candidate Horațiu Bontea**, UBB, *The Last Call for the Window of Opportunity: Explaining Divergent EU Accession Trajectories in the Western Balkans*

Dr. Dorin Popescu, president, Black Sea House Association, *Shielding the Eastern Flank: EU-NATO Complementarity and Democratic Resilience in a Fragmented Black Sea Security Architecture*

Assoc. prof. Raluca Moldovan, UBB, *The Answer Will Be Generated: AI, Information Warfare and the Cracks in Europe's Strategic Shield*

Assoc. Professor Ana Pantea, UBB (online), *Beyond the Frozen Conflict: Identity, Geopolitical Narratives, and Moldova's Resilience in the Shadow of War*

Dr. Yunis Gurbanov, Senior adviser, Centre for International Relations Analysis, Baku, *Beyond NATO's Eastern Frontier: The South Caucasus and Caspian Dimension of European Security*

Discussions

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11:30-13:30 Panel 2, Room Simone Veil

Chair: Ms. Eliza Vaș, National University of Political Sciences and Public Administration

Teams Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3785659664196583?p=iM5FbY95OtRD4wkC2I

Dr. Ourania Dimiraki, senior lecturer, University of Bedfordshire, *Hard Times for Hegemony? U.S. External Economic Influence in Times of Geopolitical Uncertainty*

Dr. Abdullah Murat Tuncer, consultant, AnkaPedia (online), *Is NATO a Guarantee or a Threat?*

Assist. prof. Siranush Melikyan, Yerevan State University, *From Vulnerability to Resilience: Rethinking the South Caucasus as an Emerging European Security Frontier*

Dr. Tatia Khuntua, Caucasus International University, Regional analyst, *The Black Sea as a Strategic System: European Security, NATO and Regional Geopolitical Competition after 2022*

Assoc. prof. Alina Andreica, UBB, *AI Regulations – A Global Overview and Geopolitical Issues*

Assoc. prof. Florentina Chirodea, assoc. prof. Ioana Bordeianu, dr. Mihai Sandu, University of Oradea, *Reconfiguring European Energy Security through the Shift from Fossil Fuel Vulnerabilities to Technological Dependency*

Discussions

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13:30 – 14:45 Lunch, Pyramid Restaurant

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14:45 – 15:00 Book launch: *The EU and NATO Working Together: Fighting the War on Disinformation in Central and Eastern Europe. Proceedings of the Fifth Edition of the International Conference The European Union's External Relations and the Perspectives of the Global Order (EUXGLOB),* edited by Valentin Naumescu, Raluca Moldovan, Horațiu Bontea and Adrian I. Bogdan.

Presenter: Prof. Corneliu Bjola

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15:00 – 17:00, **Panel 3**, Room Robert Schuman

Chair: Prof. Paul Timmers, Catholic University Leuven

Teams Link:
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Ms. Eliza Vaș, National University of Political Sciences and Public Administration, *Are the Eastern Flank Countries Ready for a Preparedness Union? A comparative view from the Member States*

Mr. Jeffaya Amadeo Basen, Visiting Researcher (Think Visegrad), Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, **Ms. Julia Konikowska**, MA student, University of Vilnius (online), *The Resilience Paradox: Securitisation, Memory Politics and Russian-Speaking Minorities on NATO's Eastern Frontier: Cases of Estonia and Latvia*

Assoc. prof. Georgiana Ciceo, UBB, *A Shared Language, Different Meanings? The Concept of Resilience in EU-NATO Relations*

Mr. George Gima, PhD candidate, UBB, Romanian MP (online), *Security in the Black Sea – Romania's Challenges and Opportunities*

Assoc. lect. Ariadna Petri, OSCE Academy Bishkek, *Beyond Strategic Resilience: Human Security and the Societal Foundations of Europe's Eastern Shield*

Discussions

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15:00 – 17:00, **Panel 4**, Room Simone Veil

Chair: PhD student Horațiu Bontea

Teams Link:
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Dr. Joanna Pastuszak-Cybulska, researcher, University of the Commission of National Education in Kraków (online), *Inclusive National Security on NATO's Eastern Flank: Information Accessibility and the Resilience of Deaf Communities in Poland*

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Ms. Emanuela Maria Grigorescu, MA student, UBB, *From Intercultural Dialogue to Critical Memory: University Programmes as Civil Society Actors in Central and Eastern Europe*

Lect. Edina Lilla Meszaros, University of Oradea (online), *Building Resilience in Adversity: Romania's Policy Framework Against Russian Hybrid Operations*

Mr. Adrian Roșca, PhD candidate, Charles University Prague, *The Case Study of the Republic of Moldova: Instrumentalizing History and Statehood*

Mr. Heqi Sun, Mr. Eugeniusz Kuznicow-Wyszyński, Ms. Anna Kuznicow-Wyszyńska, PhD candidates, University of Warsaw, *Poland's European Integration Experience and Moldova's EU Accession Path: A Comparative Analysis of Opportunities, Challenges and Reform Dynamics*

Mr. Ali Mert Aytekin, MA graduate, University of Warsaw (online), *Türkiye as a Strategic Actor on NATO's Eastern Flank: The Black Sea, Regional Security and Alliance Cooperation*

Discussions

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17:00 – 17:20 Coffee break

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17.20 – 19.20, Panel 5, Room Robert Schuman

Chair: Dr. Dorin Popescu, Black Sea House

Teams Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3284579677028886?p=Wqw6LDj26KEZop5FBD

Assist. prof. Piotr Pacek, Defence University Warsaw (online), *Cognitive Security and Resilience against Information and Psychological Operations: A Systemic Approach to Hybrid Threats on the EU and NATO Eastern Frontier*

Mr. Oleg Zubchenok, PhD candidate, Kyiv School of Economics (online), *Sevastopol as a Black Sea Strategic Fortress: Military Urbanism, Demographic Transformation and Russia's Power Projection, 2014–2025*

Mr. Ștefan Ioan Cianga, PhD candidate, UBB, *Mapping Systemic Uncertainty: The Foreign Policy Behaviour of the 2nd Trump Administration as a Catalyst for Tillyan Dynamics at the EU Level*

Lect. Dorin Dolghi, University of Oradea, *Cognitive Resilience as an Asset to European Strategic Autonomy*

Prof. Gabriela Ciot, **PhD candidate Cătălina Tudorie**, UBB, *The Spillover Effects of the Middle East Conflicts on Maritime Security and Energy Resilience in the Black Sea Region*

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Lect. Marius Mitrache, West University of Timisoara, *Securing Europe's Eastern Frontier: Baltic and Black Sea Minilateral Coalitions and the New Geopolitics of Defence*

Discussions

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17.20 – 19.20, Panel 6, Room Simone Veil

Chair: PhD candidate Mădălina Tiurbe

Teams Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3785659664196583?p=iM5FbY95OtRD4wkC2I

Ms. Andra Mădălina Ursu, PhD candidate, National Intelligence Academy Mihai Viteazul, Bucharest, *Radical Discourse in Motion: Multimodal Expression and Platformized Circulation in European Digital Ecosystems*

Mr. Bill Christopher Arputharaj, PhD candidate, School of National Security Studies, Central University of Gujarat (online), *Hypersonic Threats and NATO's Black Sea Security Architecture*

Ms. Radka Dufek Michailova, PhD candidate, Charles University, Prague, *Europe's Strategic Shield and the Politics of Extraction: Democratic Legitimacy, Lithium and Community Resistance in the Western Balkans*

Ms. Claudia Gabrian, PhD candidate, UBB, *AI-Enabled Cyber Threats: Assessing the Impact of Generative AI on Phishing and Social Engineering*

Dr. Heshima Safari Tsaphnath Panea, Program Manager, Fondation Anansoft, *Building Public Resilience Against Hybrid Threats: Civil Society, Resource Security, and Democratic Defence on the Eastern Flank*

Mr. Khalil Aghapouramin, Eastern Mediterranean University (online), **prof. Mustafa Dagbasi**, Cyprus International University (online), *Who Is Accountable for Securing Energy? Democratic Oversight at the EU–NATO Interface on Europe's Eastern Flank*

Discussions

19:20-21.20 Dinner, Pyramid Restaurant

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Friday, December 4

9:00-9:50 Plenary, Room Robert Schuman

Chair: Assoc. prof. Raluca Moldovan, UBB

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Keynote speech (30 minutes): **Prof. Daniel Göler,** Passau University (online), *Bilateral Security and Defence Cooperation Agreements in Europe beyond NATO and the EU*

Discussions

9:50 – 11:50 Panel 7, Room Robert Schuman

Chair: Assoc. prof. Raluca Moldovan, UBB

Teams Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3284579677028886?p=Wqw6LDj26KEZop5FBD

Lect. Lazar Radenovic, Singidunum University, Belgrade, Serbia (online), *Algorithmic Shaping of Behaviour in the Digital Information Environment: Challenges to Cognitive Security and Societal Resilience*

Assoc. prof. Noela Mahmutaj, University of Tirana (online), *Geopolitical Change as an Accelerator of EU Enlargement? Assessing Albania's Accession Process after 2022*

Mr. Georgios Vasileiadis, PhD candidate, University of Thessaly (online), *Distributed Deterrence in the Eastern Mediterranean: U.S. Strategic Realignment, Greece–Turkey Dynamics and the 3+1 Framework*

Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, PhD candidate, Central University of Gujarat (online), *European Defence and Strategic Autonomy: Institutional Agency, Industrial Scale, and the Limits of Conventional Burden-Sharing*

Lect. Dacian Duna, Faculty of History and Philosophy, UBB, *The Geopolitical Paradox of European Strategic Autonomy: Regime Preservation, National Sovereignty and the Limits of Defence Integration*

Mr. Samay Patel, PhD candidate, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA (online), *Beyond the Cost-Exchange Ratio: When Do Cheap Drones Produce Strategic Cost-Imposition?*

Discussions

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9:50 – 11:50 **Panel 8**, Room Nelson Mandela

Chair: Assoc. prof. Alina Andreica, UBB

Teams Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3785659664196583?p=iM5FbY95OtRD4wkC2I

Assoc. prof. Florin Duma, UBB, *The Transformation of the Energy System from a Strength into a Weakness of the Romanian Economy, and How this Trend Can Be Reversed*

Lect. Florentina Ștefania Neagu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies (online), *The Black Sea as a Strategic Economic Hub: Romania's Role in European Security and Regional Connectivity*

Mr. Stylianos Morfovasilis, MA student, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki (online), *More Capabilities, More Power? Europe's Defence Transformation and the Problem of Credible Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Frontier*

Mr. Matei Blănaru, PhD Candidate, University of Bucharest, *Imaginary Geography and National Security Implications*

Dr. Serghi Petrov, Institute of Political Science, Bulgaria (online), *Ontological Security in an Age of Information and War*

Mr. Piotr Derejczyk, PhD candidate, Nicolaus Copernicus Superior School Warsaw, *A New Route from the Varangians to the Greeks? The Three Seas Initiative and NATO's Eastern Flank after the Nordic Enlargement*

Discussions

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11:50 – 12:10 Coffee break

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12:10 – 14:10 Panel 9, Robert Schuman Room

Chair: Assoc. prof. Georgiana Ciceo, UBB

Teams Link:
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Dr. Nicolae Țîbrigan, The Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations "Ion I.C. Brătianu" of Romanian Academy (online), *Measuring Cognitive Resilience on the EU and NATO Eastern Frontier: Developing the Cognitive Resilience Index (CRI)*

Assoc. lect. Eliza Monica Motorga, West University of Timișoara, Romania (online), *The psychology of disinformation: cognitive vulnerability, social trust, and democratic resilience on Europe's eastern frontier*

Dr. Agnieszka Veronika İnan, lecturer, Atılım University, Ankara (online), *Poland's Evolving Security Role on NATO's Eastern Flank*

Lect. Jacob Cornelis Bazen, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands, *Energy Security and Energy Transition in the Netherlands: Grid Congestion as Limiting Factor*

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Dr. Nicholas Zalewski, Postdoctoral researcher at Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II (online), *NATO's Eastern Frontier: Resilience During Hybrid Warfare*

Prof. Saodat Ubaydullaeva, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies (online), *Interconnectivity of Regional Security in Central Asia: Cooperation and Prospects*

Discussions

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12:10 – 14:10 Panel 10, Room Nelson Mandela

Chair: PhD candidate Horațiu Bontea, UBB

Teams Link:
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Ms. Aysen Sapundzhi, independent researcher, Center for Economic Strategy and Competitiveness, Sofia University, Bulgaria (online), *From Fragmented Capabilities to Strategic Information Integrity: Building Bulgaria's OMSAI Cluster*

Mr. David Măhălean, Ms. Raluca Gati, MA graduates, UBB, *Taming the Unknown*

Mr. Marco Zampaglione, MA student, Centre for Higher Defence Studies Rome, **Mr. Emanuel Moroca**, MA student, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, *Energy Security as Geopolitical Power: Evaluating Critical Infrastructure Resilience to Strengthen Europe's Strategic Autonomy*

Ms. Maria Teodora Hodorog, PhD candidate, UBB, (online), *From Indo-Pacific Defence Partner to Black Sea Security Contributor: Republic of Korea's Potential Role in European Maritime Security*

Ms. Mădălina Tiurbe, PhD candidate, UBB, *The Positioning of France towards the Russian-Ukrainian War: Between Strategic Autonomy, European Security and Transatlantic Solidarity*

Ms. Adina Ioana Hoza, PhD candidate, UBB (online), *Framing the Threat, Framing the Fix: Disinformation Narratives and Media Literacy as Cognitive Defence in Romania*

Discussions

14.10– 15.30 Lunch, Pyramid Restaurant

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15:30 – 17:30 Panel 11, Room Robert Schuman

Chair: Assoc. prof. Raluca Molovan, UBB

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Mr. Jan Machnacz, PhD candidate, University of Warsaw (online), *Dependencies and Tensions in the Transformation of Russia-Belarus Military Relations*

Ms. Marianna Filipchuk, PhD candidate, SGH Warsaw School of Economics (online), *State Resilience in Wartime Ukraine: Conceptual Dimensions and War as a Critical Juncture*

Mr. Dumitru Cătălin Vasile, Mr. Mihai Vlad Turcu, PhD candidates, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (online), *Presence without Tonnage in a Scenario of an Unmanned Sea*

Ms. Susanyi Hera-Erin, MA student, Public Policy and Institutional Management, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași (online), *The Paradox of Security: Reconciling Institutional Protection with Individual Responsibility*

Ms. Mariam Tchankuridze, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia, *The August 2008 Russo-Georgian War in the Context of European Security*

Assoc. prof. Tal Pavel, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați (online), *Spyware, Democratic Accountability and National Security: The Serbian Case*

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15:30 – 17:30 Panel 12, Room Nelson Mandela

Chair: PhD candidate Ștefan Cianga, UBB

Teams Link:
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Mr. Jácint Szijártó, PhD candidate, Doctoral School of Public Administration Sciences, Ludovika University of Public Service, Hungary (online), *Hungarian–German Divergences over Ukraine's EU and NATO Aspirations, 2010–2026*

Ms. Iuliana Mocanaș, student, UBB (online), *European Defence and Societal Democratic Resilience in the Era of Hybrid Threats.*

Mr. Tudor Sergiu Pilca, Ms. Antonia Vig, MA students, UBB, *Sanctions to Transactions: How Russia's War Rewired the Idea of Transatlantic Economic Coercion and Exposed Europe's Energy Chokepoints*

Mr. Cristian Sandu, MA student, UBB, *Strategic Consolidation: Romania's National Layer in Black Sea Security*

Mr. Maharram Akbarov, MA student, University of Warsaw (online), *Substituting or Redistributing Dependency? The Caspian–Black Sea Energy Route and the Limits of the EU's Eastern Flank Diversification*

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17.30 – 17.40, Room Robert Schuman - Closing remarks