The EU and Hybrid Threats:
Coping Strategies and Multilevel Responses

A workshop organised by

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Location: Sciences Po Grenoble–UGA, Amphi F
Date: Friday 20 November 2026, morning and afternoon

At the intersection of peace and war, the twenty-first century has seen traditional diplomatic, military and informational instruments of power blend with newer, more sophisticated tools of influence. Financial pressure, disinformation, intelligence operations, cyber-attacks, or strategic use of law and economy have all contributed to the multiplication of hybrid threats — actions combining coercion and subversion that occur below the threshold of open conflict.
Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, electoral interference in Western democracies and sabotage operations linked to the war in Ukraine, these threats have intensified, making a coherent European response framework increasingly urgent. How is the EU, in coordination with its member states and partner organizations, coping with such multifaceted risks? Which doctrines, instruments, and partnerships are being developed to address the evolving hybrid landscape? What factors determine the nature and intensity of responses to hybrid threats? Are these responses consistent and effective?
Drawing on perspectives from security studies, international relations, law and political science, this workshop aims to explore the European Union's multilevel approach to hybrid threats, focusing both on internal EU coordination and external collaboration.

The workshop is part of **DemoCIS** (Democracies, Citizenship, and Institutions in the Face of Transformations in Public Spaces), a large-scale research project aimed at rethinking the foundations of democracy in an era of political, social, and informational crises, and brings together more than 330 researchers from 51 research units in France. This workshop received government funding administered by the French National Research Agency (ANR) under the France 2030 program, grant number "ANR-24-RSHS-0001".

8h30: Welcome coffee

9h – 9h15: Welcome speech - Delphine Deschaux-Dutard & Fabien Terpan (CESICE)

9h15 – 10h45: Session 1 : EU–NATO Cooperation and Cyber Defence in a Hybrid Threat Environment

Chair : Renaud Bellais, CESICE

Cécile PELAUDEIX (Université Grenoble Alpes) & Iulian ROMANYSHYN (University of Bonn) - EU-NATO Cooperation on Hybrid Threats: Balancing Alignment and Hedging in Times of the Transatlantic Rift

Delphine DESCHAUX-DUTARD (Université Grenoble Alpes - CESICE) - EU–NATO Cyber Defence Governance in a Hybrid Threat Environment: A Discursive-Institutionalist Perspective on Strategic Autonomy in Cyberspace

Theodoros KARATHANASIS (Université Grenoble Alpes) - The fragmentation of transatlantic security: "Strategic localism" as an instrumentally rational response to hybrid threats

Ben FARRAND (Newcastle University) - Defence industrial policy and cybersecurity: European AI strategic autonomy independent of NATO?'

10h45-11h15: Coffee break

11h15-12h45 Session 2: Doctrines, Disinformation, and the EU's Conceptualization of Hybrid Threats

Chair: Delphine Deschaux-Dutard, CESICE

Sabine SAURUGGER (Sciences Po) & Fabien TERPAN (Sciences Po Grenoble-UGA - CESICE) - Crisis-Induced definitions: The Evolution of the EU's understanding of Digital Hybrid Threats

Johanna MÖHRING (ENS Paris - Université Grenoble Alpes) - Transnational epistemic strategic communities and the development of hybrid threat doctrines: Integrating hybrid threats in the warfighting spectrum to ensure deterrence

Evangelia PSYCHOGIOPOULOU (University of the Peloponnese) - The EU's fight against disinformation: Values, regulatory models and governance structures

Patryk PAWLAK (European Union Institute) – Strengthening accountability for hybrid operations in the EU

12h45-14h: Lunch break

14h - 15h30: Session 3: Sectoral and Regional Responses to Hybrid Threats: Migration, Maritime Security, and EU External Action

Chair: Fabien Terpan, CESICE

Juan SANTOS VARA (University of Salamanca) - The instrumentalization of migration by neighbouring countries

Nikolaos KARMIS (Université Grenoble Alpes) - Charting in a World of Hybrid Maritime Threats: Navigating Between the Law of the Sea and the Law of Naval Warfare in EU Maritime Strategy

Andriy TYUSHKA (College of Europe, Natolin) - From Coping Alone to Countering Hybrid Threats Together: The (In)Advertent Rise of the EU's New CSDP Missions in Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus

Evgeny ROMANOVSKIY (Charles University) - Beyond Formal Policy: Informal EU Influence as a Counter-Hybrid Strategy in Russia's North Caucasus

15h30-15h45: Conclusive remarks: Delphine Deschaux-Dutard & Fabien Terpan (CESICE)