



European
Commission

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Security Research Event 2018



SRE 2018: a success in Brussels

Co-organised by the European Commission and the Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology, the Security Research Event (SRE 2018) on 5 – 6 December 2018 in Brussels gathered around 1000 participants (industry, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, end-users) from across Europe and beyond, in discussions in two high-level panels and eight thematic panels. The focus of the SRE 2018 was on demonstrating the impact of security research with special attention given to project communication and dissemination. Attendance and interest have gone beyond any expectation with some of the single thematic panels being attended by over 400 people.

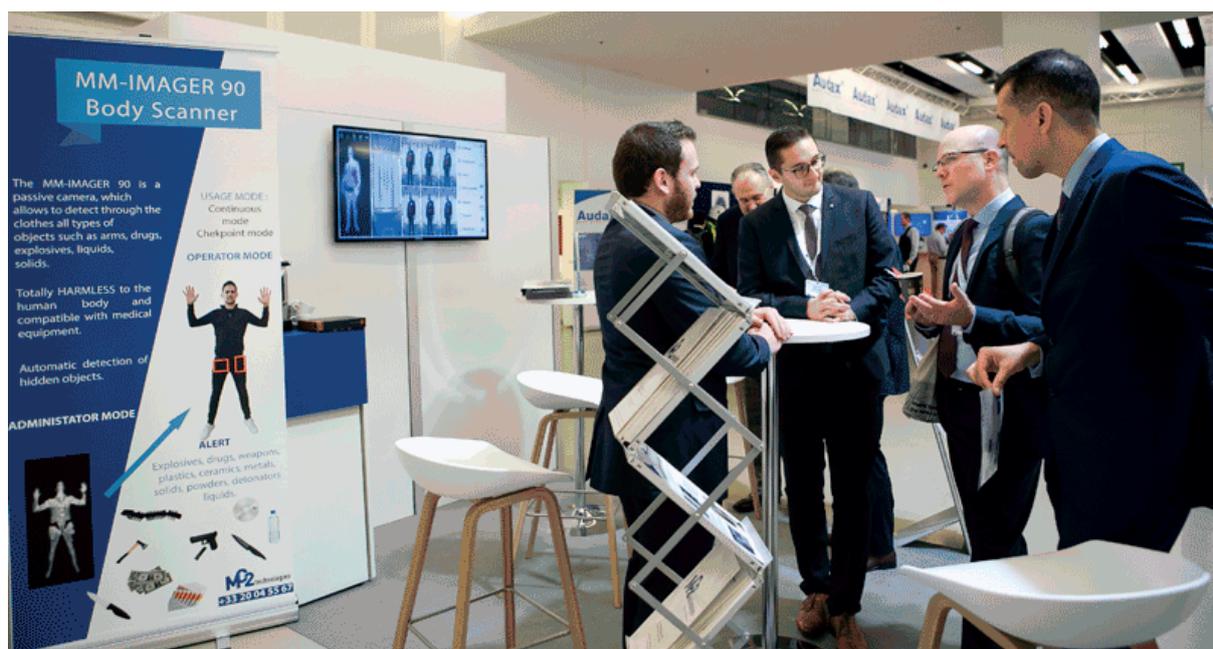


SRE Exhibition 2018ls

53 innovative projects financed through the security part of the EU Framework Programme (Horizon 2020 and FP7), the SME Instrument, the Austrian Security Research programme (KIRAS) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) were exhibited in a dedicated area of the Event. Projects had therefore the opportunity to showcase their activities and outputs, highlighting their relevance for security practitioners in a number of different areas, ranging from border control to maritime security, fighting crime and terrorism and responding to natural or man-made disasters. The exhibition area allowed exchanging views with the project exhibitors and testing with hand the products and services stemming from the different research initiatives. The full list of participating projects is available at this link: <https://www.sre2018.eu/exhibition>

The exhibition also helped boost cooperation, create synergies and enlarge networks on security research between different stakeholders such as public authorities, industry, academia and practitioners.

Success stories summarising the activities and achievements of the different exhibited projects can be accessed and downloaded on using the link: http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/theme_en.cfm?item=Security



Journalists also had the opportunity to engage in a discussion with the Commissioner for Security Union, Julian King, and the Austrian Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology, Mr. Norbert Hofer during the SRE 2018 press conference. Commissioner King stated in particular that “We are now better than we used to be in turning ideas into solutions. This is the result of a deeper involvement of practitioners in research and thus we need to keep this approach. There are good projects delivering results in countering criminal activity or next-generation border surveillance systems, yet, there is still a challenge in turning research outcomes into assets deployed in real operations”.



The Conference



After a welcome address by Mrs. Paraskevi Michou, Director General of DG HOME, who highlighted the role of research for both policy development and for policy implementation and the challenge of bringing research results to real life use by security practitioners, three keynote speeches were delivered. The Austrian Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology, Mr Norbert Hofer, presented the Austrian programme for security research, KIRAS: “The KIRAS system is successfully in place for 12 years now. This early start allowed Austria to punch over its weight in shaping the security research programme of the European Union (...)”. He also highlighted the mandatory inclusion of end-users and societal dimension experts on the project level. After this national perspective, Mr Dan Nica, Member of the European Parliament, and rapporteur for the future Framework Research Programme – Horizon Europe – made the case for a self-standing security cluster and dedicated budget under Horizon Europe so to be able to address the challenges at stake. He concluded that: “Any event on security research is more than welcome by the European Parliament. There are concrete steps, policies which can protect critical infrastructure, housing and public spaces and the European Parliament is there to assist the European Commission so as to have prosperous results for everybody”. Immediately afterwards, the Deputy Director General of DG HOME, Mr Olivier Onidi, pointed out that “More work is needed to ensure, when so required, the strategic autonomy of the EU for technologies, services and systems that are critical to better protect EU citizens”.



The SRE 2018 continued with two High-level panels on “Demonstrating the impact of security research – challenges and barriers” and on “Projects after life” where lively discussions took place between panellists representing a broad variety of relevant stakeholders.



The discussions of the two days highlighted that there is a need to continue supporting a collaborative research effort where research and innovation can support security objectives and where practitioners should be the main drivers. Appropriate efforts are still required to better raise awareness on project outcomes so to enable appropriate exploitation of such results after the lifetime of a project.

Research output will have a positive impact on Europe's security when research results are ultimately used to develop a new tool/service/solution that is effectively used by security practitioners on the ground (research in support of policy implementation) or if those results are taken up in new policies (research supporting policy development).

The consolidation of a European market on security, with security research supporting the employment of 4.7 million people in the EU, would make it more attractive for industry to invest on security research output, thus avoiding research results ending in the so-called 'valley of death'.

As security research is about preparedness and anticipation of evolving threats, policy makers and practitioners should be able to anticipate needs, so that the needed capabilities can be timely developed in a co-creation process involving policy makers, researchers, end-users and industry. Given the specificities of the security research landscape in which, public authorities are the main buyers, research is effective only if acknowledged as one of the strategic enablers of a wider capability-driven process. Therefore, research should be undertaken in response to prioritised capability gaps.

EU security-related agencies, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency or Europol, can further strengthen the future uptake and impact of research activities. Information exchange and interoperability are also key to success although this is often not necessarily a technical issue. Moreover, citizens demand security as an elementary public good that institutions have to deliver as part of the social contract. Solutions must hence be designed to tackle challenges, while being socially acceptable by citizens.

In delivering the closing notes of the SRE 2018 Mr. Matthias Oel, Director for Migration, Mobility and Innovation of DG HOME, announced that the 2019 edition of the SRE will be taking place in Helsinki on 6-7 November. In concluding, he also highlighted "the need to overcome silos and build-up synergies among research, capacity building, market dimension and practitioners which should be a key component in increasing the impact of security research".



News from Austrian Presidency

With the handover of the sceptre between Austria and Romania closing in, the SRE 2018 has earned its place in history as a worthy showcase for the motto of the Austrian Presidency “A Europe that protects”. For security research this meant drawing the bow from the AEIOY-conference taking place in Vienna from 25- 27 June all up to the results that were discussed at the SRE in Brussels. These results are the distillate of a wide range of stakeholder debates on the future of civil security research having taken place between these two events. From our point of view, they can be put into the following nutshells:

1. Civil security research should stay a self-standing challenge in Horizon Europe. Horizon Europe should keep an exclusively civil focus to distinguish itself from the EDF.
2. Dual-use research should be performed where more budget is available.
3. Commission, Member and Associated States should assure that the future budget allocation for security research will surpass the amount reserved for “Secures Societies” in Horizon 2020.

A busy year is over and while the challenging task called the Presidency of the Council of the European Union has been mastered by Austria the quest to provide the best possible and most acceptable protection for our societies continues. From the security research perspective, the considerable successes achieved in 2018 are owed once again to the exemplary cooperation between the Commission, Member and Associated States. So this might well be cited as a best practice example how Europe may weather even a stormy sea as long as we on the helm decide to steer in the same direction. What is left to say, is a big thank you to all stakeholders for their contributions, all the best to the incoming Romanian presidency and a Happy New Year 2019!

If you would like to show your satisfaction for the SRE 2018, you can use the following link: <https://www.sre2018.eu/opinion>

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