



**INFORMAL COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP ON THE COMMUNITY FOR EUROPEAN
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR SECURITY (CERIS) REGEXP E03834**

MINUTES

1st meeting of the CERIS expert group

Brussels, 14 October 2022

1. Approval of the agenda

The Chair - DG HOME - welcomed the experts to the 1st meeting of this Group. They explained that the **purpose of this meeting** was to

- 1) Familiarise the experts with CERIS and with EU security research in general;
- 2) Explain the *Terms of Reference* of the Group and agree on the *Rules of Procedure* (all documents are published on the Commission's Register of Expert Groups);
- 3) Discuss the mandate of the Group and the relation with other relevant actors.

Prior to the meeting, members had been asked to submit a declaration of interest. During the meeting, members were reminded that in case of a new potential **conflict of interest** they are obliged to inform DG HOME and submit a new declaration of interest.

2. Nature of the meeting

At this first inaugural meeting of the CERIS Expert Group, DG HOME representatives explained the policy context and the objectives of the Expert Group. The Group took note of the *Terms of Reference*, agreed on the *Rules of Procedure*, and discussed its mandate. This was a non-public physical meeting.

3. List of points discussed: Part I: CERIS – the ‘bigger picture’

DG HOME (Group secretary) presented the policy context relevant for the group.

EUR 1.6 bn have been reserved for 2021-2027 under Cluster 3 of Pillar II of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework R&I programme. CERIS largely follows the structure of Cluster 3 by covering¹:

- 1) Fighting crime and terrorism, incl. ensuring resilient infrastructure (FCT/INFRA);
- 2) Disaster resilient societies (DRS);
- 3) Border management (BM);
- 4) Strengthening Security Research and Innovation (SRRI).

¹ Cybersecurity is also covered by Cluster 3, but outside the scope of CERIS.

The CERIS Expert Group brings together the knowledge and expertise of practitioners, researchers, academia, industry and civil society, covering the four thematic areas mentioned above. The Group will support DG HOME in gathering expert knowledge regarding security research matters, in organising dedicated workshops, as well as in preparing a CERIS Annual Report starting in 2023.

As outlined in the *Commission Staff Working Document 'Enhancing security through research and innovation'* (SWD (2021) 422 final of 15.12.2021), EU security research plays an essential role when pursuing a forward-looking approach in capability development for European civil security, which can be supported by the Group.

DG HOME then presented the four different areas covered by the CERIS subgroups and the related EU security policies:

- 1) The thematic area of **Fighting Crime and Terrorism (FCT)**: is regularly on top of the EU agenda, with the EU Security Union Strategy, the Counter-terrorism agenda for the EU, the EU strategy to tackle organised crime (2021-2025) and other EU policy documents recognising security research as a strategic enabler for the EU to keep up with evolving technological developments. Research in this area covers a wide range of topics, such as police cooperation, forensics, fighting organised crime, combating terrorism and cybercrime, but also societal issues, e.g. the prevention of radicalisation and of domestic violence. DG HOME underlined the importance of the various networks of practitioners as well as of the EU agencies and the *EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security*, in which EU JHA agencies like Europol, Frontex and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency jointly work on research and innovation. This thematic area also includes **resilient infrastructure (INFRA)** for energy, health, information and communication technology, supply chains and urban environments, notably smart cities, with various networks also connected to it, being also on top of the EU agenda, in particular with the Commission proposal for a Critical Entities' Resilience Directive.
- 2) With people in the EU becoming increasingly exposed to extreme weather events, such as flash floods, droughts, wildfires and heatwaves, as well as other natural hazards (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis) and accidental threats (incl. CBRN), the thematic area of **disaster resilient societies (DRS)** is also gaining importance. It covers our enhanced capacity to manage risks related to natural, accidental and (intentional) human-induced disasters (by looking at tools, technologies, methods for a better prevention, preparedness and response to disasters). Linked to this overall disaster risk management area, research projects carried out in this thematic area also provided Member States with a number of tools helping to better manage the COVID-19 pandemic. The cooperation in this area is governed by EU legislation (in particular the Union Civil Protection Mechanism) and networking initiatives like the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network (UCPKN) and the Europe Scientific and Technological Advisory Group (E-STAG) at UN level.
- 3) The **effective management of EU external borders (BM)** is also regularly on the EU agenda. EU R&I in this aspect aim at understanding and developing future capabilities to facilitate travels across borders; ensure strong European land, air and sea external borders; promote fundamental rights, including privacy, while managing borders; combating identity and document frauds; improve the security of maritime borders, critical infrastructures, activities and transport, including search-and-rescue; and improving detection of dangerous and illicit goods as well as trade crimes while protecting trade flows and supply chains. EU security research already provided

innovative solutions for facilitating travel at border crossing points for land and maritime border surveillance, or on detection of threats in containers or cargo. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA), and EU Customs play important roles in this area. In particular, long-term components of the upcoming Capability Roadmap for the European Integrated Border Management; of the EU Maritime Security Strategy; and of the EU Customs Union Action Plan are particularly relevant for informing future EU R&I in this area.

- 4) **Strengthening security research & innovation (SSRI)** provides support on horizontal issues to the other areas and proposes measures to strengthen security research and innovation. It focuses in particular on promoting the uptake of innovation for security (e.g. analysis, synergies, testing and validation, standardisation, industrial policies, innovation procurement, dissemination and communication). DG HOME presented its recently completed EU security market study. DG HOME is currently working to identify possible EU dependencies on critical technologies. The discussion with the experts was focused on proposals to foster innovation uptake of security research, to find synergies with other areas such as defence and space, the EU Open Strategic Autonomy and proposals to foster a forward looking approach and capability driven approach.

In the **discussion**, it was suggested to also discuss cross-cutting topics touching upon different areas. Several members of the Expert Group supported the idea for dedicated CERIS workshops in 2023 on security innovation that promotes protection of fundamental rights as well as on fostering the capability-driven approach in the civil security domain. In its concluding remarks to this session, the Chair underlined that the group will also serve also an amplifier for EU security research.

Part II: CERIS expert group – procedural issues

DG HOME (group secretary) explained what a Commission expert group is and the rules applicable to Commission expert groups.

It was reminded that the group members were selected via a public call for applications, and that each applicant was checked against potential conflict of interest. The names of the experts are published in the Commission Register of Expert Groups. A general description of the Group members was then provided by DG HOME (gender balance, geographical balance, professional background).

The members of the group took note of the **Terms of Reference**, which stipulate i.a.:

- The 65 members of the CERIS expert group are appointed in a personal capacity - they are acting independently and in the public interest;
- They are appointed for 3 years, renewable for another 3 years;
- From a reserve list of 44 candidates, already one member has been selected.
- Minutes and an attendance list will be prepared by the secretariat (DG HOME) for each group/subgroup meeting.

It was agreed that concerned EU agencies may be invited as observers.

The expert group adopted the proposal of DG HOME for the **Rules of Procedures**. In the **discussion**, it was clarified that while the group members must comply with the Commission decisions (EU) 2015/443 and 2015/444 on the protection of EU classified information, DG HOME does not intend to handle classified information in the group.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions: Part III: Discussion on objectives and priorities for the CERIS expert group

DG HOME presented how CERIS, the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and EU-funded security research projects, but also the Member States (through the Programme Committee and through in particular their innovation labs and their national communities of users), different networks and EU agencies work together in an ecosystem for EU civil security research. DG HOME then presented in detail the group's tasks, as defined in point 3 of the Terms of Reference, namely to assist DG HOME, with regard to the four above mentioned thematic areas, in:

- a. determining capability gaps and research needs;
- b. supporting synergies and the exchange of knowledge among security research projects and other relevant activities;
- c. promoting the testing and validation of research projects and of their results in an operational environment and the dissemination of test results among end-users;
- d. promoting the uptake of innovative technologies;
- e. analysing the impact of innovations developed by the research projects on society, practitioners and the market.

In the **discussion**, the Chair stressed, in view of the wide mandate of the Expert Group, the need to prioritise the work for the first year. It was reminded that the expert group itself has no competence to determine any capability gaps and research needs, but only to assist DG HOME in identifying them by giving its advice. It was moreover explained that a clear distinction has to be made between the mandates of CERIS, of the Programme Committee for EU civil security research (Cluster 3) and the EU Research Executive Agency (REA). In particular it was clarified that the expert group has neither a role in selecting or supporting any EU security research projects nor in giving advice how to implement them. Several experts underlined that the work of the group should not only focus on modern technology, but also on knowledge and innovation as such.

5. Next steps

DG HOME presented its preliminary ideas for a 2023 **CERIS report**, which would make the progress achieved more visible, strengthen the link between research and the relevant security policies and provide a strategic outlook on new trends. On the basis of the exchange, it was agreed that more detailed information on the Group working methods will be circulated in the coming weeks. In the concluding remarks, DG HOME invited the different subgroups to closely work together, and welcomed the clear interest shown by all members to actively participate in the work of this Commission expert group.

6. Next meeting

DG HOME foresees the next meeting in the third quarter of 2023.

7. List of participants

Sean Gaines

Anneli Ehlerding
Babak Akhgar
Luísa Proença
Bart Nys
Konstantinos Demestichas
Patrick Padding
Sofia Tsekeridou
Letizia Paoli
Daniela PISOIU
Rita Ugarelli
Caroline Davey
Isabel Praça
Beatriz Anton Lazaro
Petr Motlicek
Malte von Ramin
Daniel Camara
Zvonimir Ivanovic
Atanas Rusev
Andreas Kriechbaum-Zabini
Juha Hintsa
James Ferryman
Elisabete Pires
Christoph Busch
Paolo Salieri
Michael Doherty
Marcin Kowalski
Annalisa Meloni

Isto Mattila
Pantelis Michalis
Axel Kerep
Emilio Mordini
Laura Salmela
Jennifer Woodard
Magda Stepanyan
Samuel Rufat
Michel Zayet
Daniel Sempere
Christian Illing
Xavier Romao
Olga Vybornova
Denis Josse
Samantha Lim
Luigi De Dominicis
Patricia Compard
Katharina Ross
Tiina Ristmäe
Lukasz Szklarski
Anastasios Dimou
Xenia Schneider
Sandra Mezzadri
Stephan Corvers
Hans-Martin Pastuszka
Isabelle Linde-Frech
Yannick De Smet
Antonio Marques

Alessia Melasecche

Stefanos Vrochidis

Eric Moore

Jozef Kubinec

Marcel Van Berlo

The Chair of the CERIS expert group

DG HOME