

AGENDA

11-13 November 2026
Central Military Club | Sofia

Day 1, November 11

PLENARY HALL

SECOND HALL

09:00

Opening

Prof. Dimitar Vatsov, President, HSS Foundation – Sofia

Prof. Sylvia Ilieva, Director, GATE Institute

Rositsa Dzhhekova, Director, Democracy Shield Task Force, Center for the Study of Democracy

Nesin Veli, CEO, Identrics

Representative, Sensika Technologies (TBC)

Dr. Mariya Yurukova, European Studies Department, Sofia University

Christoph Plate, Director Media Programme South East Europe, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Keynote

Sophia Eriksson-Waterschoot, Deputy Director-General for Communication, European Commission

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10:00	<i>Information Wars in the Middle East</i> Alessandro Accorsi, Senior Analyst, Technology and Conflict, Crisis Group <i>Democratic Warfare: The Proliferation of Strategic Technology in Asymmetric Phases of Conflict</i> Asher Derry, Founder, Dowser Labs <i>Moderator: Ruslan Trad</i>, Research Fellow, Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab)		
11:00	Coffee break		
11:30	<i>From FIMI Detection to Disruption: Pathways Towards Electoral Integrity</i> Andrei Rusu, Media Monitoring Expert, Watchdog.md Liubomir Borissov, Senior Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy Calin Georgia, Researcher, Funky Citizens Romania Małgorzata Szumna, Head of Narrative Trend Analysis and Fact-Checking Team, NASK Poland Szymon Grabowski, Senior Analyst, NASK Poland <i>Moderator: Rositsa Dzhekova</i>, Director, Democracy Shield Task Force, Center for the Study of Democracy	11:30	<i>Using LLMs to Detect Harmful Narratives</i> <i>MAP-Desinfo: Using Large Language Models to Detect Harmful Narratives in Bulgaria's Regional Media</i> Nikola Tulechki, Founder, Data for Good Georgi Penchev, Data for Good
12:30	Lunch		

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13:30 *TikTokcracy Unmasked: When Platforms Decide Elections*

Antoinette Nikolova, Director and Board Member, BFMI
Representative, Sensika Technologies (TBC)
Oliver Money-Kyrle, Senior Advisor, EU Policy & Advocacy, BFMI
Representative, European Commission / European Parliament (TBC)

Moderator: **Representative**, Sensika Technologies / BFMI (TBC)

14:30 *Multi-Domain Hybrid Threats: Cross-Regional Parallels in the Eastern Flank of NATO*

Ruslan Trad, Co-Founder, De Re Militari
Tsveti Monova-Borisova, PhD Researcher, De Re Militari
Natali Nacheva, Cybersecurity Researcher, De Re Militari

Moderator: **Ventsislav Bozhev**, Managing Director, De Re Militari

13:30 *DisInfoHack and Student Research on countering disinformation - Session 1*

AI Warfare Disinformation: A Content Analysis of Bulgarian Fact-Checking Platforms

Georgi Stoyanov, Petya Vretenova, Nevin Boshnakova, DisInfoHack 2026 Finalists

Disinformation as a Tool of Hybrid Warfare: Rethinking Offense, Defense, and Collective Security in the Digital Age

Anastasiia Peicheva, Master in E-Europe and DisInfoHack 2026 Second Place Finalist

The Impact Of Influence Operations: Development Of The Methodology For Io Impact Measurement In Real-Time

Alexandra Gouleva, Master in International and Security Politics, DisInfoHack 2025 Finalist

Moderator: **Dr. Mariya Yurukova**, Head of MA “E-Europe” and DisInfoHack, Sofia University

14:30 *Building Human-Centred LLM/NLP Tools for Information Integrity*

From Signals to Social Meaning: Building Human-Centred LLM/NLP Tools for Information Integrity

Representative, Commetric (TBC)
Nevena Grigorova, Researcher, GATE Institute (TBC)
Dobromir Tsolov, Researcher, GATE Institute (TBC)

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15:30 Coffee break

16:00 The Algorithmic Influence Machine: AI, Politics & Media

Chat, tell me who to vote for: How LLMs responded to voter questions about the Bulgarian elections

Devora Kotseva, Information Integrity Specialist, Identrics

Todor Kiriakov, Information Integrity Specialist, Identrics

Monetized Slopaganda: How Facebook is funding AI political clickbait against its own policies

Aleksandra Atanasova, OSINT investigator

Recommender systems for intelligent media

Garvan Walshe, Founder, Article 7-Intelligence for Democrats

Moderator: Representative, Identrics (TBC)

17:00 Resilience Under Fire: Communication and Legitimacy in Wartime

When Preparedness Becomes Reality: Crisis Communication and Societal Resilience in Israel

Ludmila Hamplova, Strategic and Crisis Communication Consultant, Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic (TBC)

Moderator: Keith Peter Kiely, Senior Researcher, GATE Institute

16:00 Who Knew? On European East-West Knowledge Hierarchies and their Remedying

Dr. Tereza Hendl, Post-doc Institute of Ethics, History and Theory of Medicine Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

Moderator: Prof. Dimitar Vatsov, President, HSS Foundation – Sofia

17:00 On the Front Line of Cognitive Warfare: Disinformation Attacks on Key Industries and Critical Infrastructure in Southeast Europe and the Black Sea Region

Uwe Wolff, Founder and Managing Director, NAİMA Strategic Legal Services GmbH, Berlin (TBC)

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Beyond Military Force: Information Warfare and the Struggle for Legitimacy in the 2023 Gaza War

Yana Naydenova, Junior Researcher, GATE Institute

Moderator: Ruslana Margova, Researcher, GATE Institute

SECOND HALL

18:00 **Closing**

Day 2, November 12

PLENARY HALL

09:30

Keynote

Bolt's Paradigm of Strategic Communications: A Critical Exchange

Dr. Neville Bolt, Founder & Director, Sympodium Institute for Strategic Communications (TBC)

Prof. Dimitar Vatsov, President, HSS Foundation – Sofia

Moderator: Milena Iakimova, Associate Professor at Sociology department, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

SECOND HALL

09:30

Narratives, Beliefs and Vulnerabilities: Propaganda Risks in Europe

Unique EU Accession Case of Ukraine: Propaganda Risks

Krassen Stanchev, Dr. Habil, Sofia University and the Institute for Market Economics (TBC)

Aistė Sabaliauskaitė-Tsachev, Chief Strategy Officer, Repsense.io (TBC)

Conspiracy Regimes: A Comparative Study of the Correlates of Conspiracy Beliefs Across Europe

Marta Antonova, PhD Candidate, University of Berne, Switzerland (TBC)

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10:30	<i>Environmental and Climate Information Integrity</i> Paul Grignon, ECOLAB, French Ministry of Ecological Transition, PhD candidate Katharina Zuegel, Forum on Information & Democracy <i>Moderator: Iglia Ivanova</i>, GATE Institute	10:30	<i>China's 'Soft Power'? Producing Narratives, Winning Minds, Influencing Publics</i> Prof. Chloe Froissart, Professor in Political Science, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris Filip Sebok, Head of Prague Office, Central European Institute of Asian Studies <i>Moderator: Vladimir Shopov</i>, Visiting Fellow, Asia Programme, European Council on Foreign Relations
11:30	Coffee break		
12:00	<i>AI and Cognitive Security in the Decade of Information Warfare</i> Tomáš Kriššák, Senior Strategic Communications Consultant, Gerulata Technologies Jeremy Fannin, Assistant Professor, EDHEC Business School Peter Benzoni, Senior Research Manager, Institute for Strategic Dialogue Katy Ling, Open-source intelligence (OSINT) specialist, digital risk consultant, and investigative producer (former BBC) <i>Moderator: Gloria Trifonova</i>, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy	12:00	<i>Project CoDE Session: Building a Collaborative Model for Information Integrity in the Digital Age in Bulgaria</i> Todor Tagarev, Former Minister of Defence, Bulgaria and George Sharkov, CEO, European Software Institute (ESI) Velizar Shalamanov, Associated Professor, Institute of ICT, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Yordan Terziev, PhD candidate, Institute of ICT, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Aleksey Potebnya, Assist. Prof. PhD, Department of Business Administration, Sofia University Dr. Mariya Yurukova, Assist. Prof. PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University <i>Moderator: Dr. Ralitsa Stoycheva</i>, Research Associate of the KAS Media Programme
13:00	Lunch		

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14:00	<i>Overview and Safeguarding Strategy for Information Integrity on Wikipedia</i> Nathan Forrester, Senior Trust & Safety Specialist, Knowledge Integrity Wikimedia Foundation <i>Building and safeguarding knowledge integrity during elections and crisis</i> (both titles TBC) <i>Moderator: Iglika Ivanova</i>, GATE Institute	14:00	<i>AI and Cognitive Security in the Decade of Information Warfare (Protocol Lab) Part 1</i> <i>Co-creation workshop</i> <i>Moderator: Gloria Trifonova</i>, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy
15:00	<i>Propaganda Images of Europe in Bulgarian Media</i> Maya Dimitrova, Journalist, Bulgarian National Television Lyubomir Donchev, Researcher, HSS Foundation – Sofia Valentin Valkanov, Assistant Professor, New Bulgarian University <i>Moderator: Veronika Dimitrova</i>, HSS Foundation – Sofia	15:00	<i>AI and Cognitive Security in the Decade of Information Warfare (Protocol Lab) Part 2</i> <i>Co-creation workshop</i> <i>Moderator: Gloria Trifonova</i>, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy
16:00	Coffee break		
16:30	<i>DisInfoHack and Student Research on countering disinformation - Session 2</i> <i>Patriotism Through Division: „Us vs. Them“ narrative in Bulgarian Political Discourse</i> Gabriela Radkova, Anastasiia Peicheva, Masters in E-Europe and DisInfoHack 2026 Second Place Finalists <i>Mourning or Triumph? The Far Right Through the Image of the Lukov March Over the Years</i>	16:30	<i>Beyond the Feed: Youth, Culture and Democratic Resilience</i> Ernesta Rousseva, Chief Expert, Secretariat of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Council of Ministers, Bulgaria Vasilena Dimitrova, Co-Executive Director, Single Step Foundation Viktoria Mileva, Youth Worker and Volunteer, Open Space Foundation

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PLENARY HALL

Karina Zhecheva, Viktoria Mirinska, DisInfoHack 2025 Finalists

Beyond Horoscopes: Astrology, Political Narratives and Disinformation about the EU on Bulgarian YouTube

Elena Rodimova, Master in E-Europe and DisInfoHack 2025 Third Place Finalist

Moderator: Dr. Mariya Yurukova, Head of MA “E-Europe” and DisInfoHack, Sofia University

17:30 **Screening of “Putin’s Playground” (Sofia DocuMental / Balkan Documentary Center) (TBC)**

Two Polish documentary filmmakers investigate Russian covert operations and networks of influence across Central and Eastern Europe. Following evidence of sabotage, poisonings and political manipulation, the film explores the threats these activities pose to European societies and democratic security.

Director: Konrad Szolajski

2024 | 91 minutes | Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Norway, Latvia and Germany

SECOND HALL

Céline Branchi, Attachée de coopération institutionnelle, Embassy of France / French Institute in Bulgaria

Malgorzata Hejduk-Gromek, Director, Polish Institute in Sofia; Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of Poland in Bulgaria
Representative, Sofia DocuMental

Moderator: Dobryana Petkova, Cross-sectoral Programme Manager, British Council

19:00 **Closing**

Day 3, November 13

PLENARY HALL

SECOND HALL

- 09:30** ***A Look into the Future of Media Literacy: The Evolution of Media Literacy and Two Hypotheses for the Future***
- Andy Stoycheff**, Founder, Director & Researcher, NTCenter
Vladimir Pachemanov, PhD, Senior Researcher, NTCenter
Raya Rankova, Researcher, NTCenter
- Moderator: TBC*
- 10:30** ***From Detection to Response: Building Europe's Next Layer of Cognitive Resilience***
- Dirk Kunze**, Media Director, Logiq Media
Yoana Barakova, Project Coordinator, Center for the Study of Democracy
Jakub Weiner, Associate Fellow, Center for the Study of Democracy
- Moderator: Rositsa Dzhekova*, Director, Democracy Shield Task Force, Center for the Study of Democracy.
- 11:30** **Coffee break**
- 12:00** ***Follow the Networks: Hands-On OSINT from Putin's Digital Gulag to Bulgaria***
- Andrey Zakharov**, Independent investigative journalist
Georgi Angelov, Senior Analyst, Sensika Technologies
- Moderator: TBC*

- 09:30** ***Recognise, Resist, Respond: Youth-centric techniques to countering disinformation (Youth workshop - Part 1)***
- Lecture: recognising disinformation and digital citizenship*
- Moderator: Svetoslav Malinov*, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy
- 10:30** ***Recognise, Resist, Respond: Youth-centric techniques to countering disinformation (Youth workshop - Part 2)***
- Interactive presentation of the adapted counter narrative toolkit*
- Multi-stakeholder simulation*
- Moderator: Svetoslav Malinov*, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy
- 12:00** ***Recognise, Resist, Respond: Youth-centric techniques to countering disinformation (Youth workshop - Part 3)***
- Campaign presentation and discussion*
- Closing and validation*
- Moderator: Svetoslav Malinov*, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

Day 3, November 13

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13:00 Closing session

Information resilience mechanism for MoFA and the Government in EU framework

Velizar Shalamanov, Associated Professor, Institute of ICT, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Maria Spassova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe (CoE)

Reflections and Takeaways SIIF 2026

14:00 Closing

Organizers:

CSD | CENTER FOR
THE STUDY OF
DEMOCRACY

HSSF
Sofia

identrics

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big data for smart society

SENSIKA

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