

AGENDA
11-13 November 2026
Central Military Club | Sofia

Day 1, November 11

PLENARY HALL

09:00

Opening

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

Keith Peter Kiely, Senior Researcher, 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

Prof. Dimitar Vatsov, President, HSS Foundation – Sofia

Keynote

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

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10:00 **Information, Technology and the Character of War** (title TBC)

Democratic Warfare: The Proliferation of Strategic Technology in Asymmetric Phases of Conflict
Asher Derry, Privacy Engineer and Communications Consultant

Communications as Defence: Engineering Legitimacy in Ukraine's War
Dmytro Raiskyi, Director Strategic Communications and Government Affairs, PR Army

Moderator: Ruslan Trad, Research Fellow, Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab)

11:00 **Coffee break**

11:30 **From FIMI Detection to Disruption: Pathways Towards Electoral Integrity**

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

Moderator: Rositsa Dzhekova, Director, Democracy Shield Task Force, Center for the Study of Democracy

12:30 **Lunch**

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

11:30 **Using LLMs to Detect Harmful Narratives**

MAP-Desinfo: Using Large Language Models to Detect Harmful Narratives in Bulgaria's Regional Media
Nikola Tulechki, Founder, Data for Good
Georgi Penchev, Data for Good

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

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Antoinette Nikolova, Director and Board Member, BFMI
Representative, Sensika Technologies
Oliver Money-Kyrle, Senior Advisor, EU Policy & Advocacy, BFMI

Moderator: **Representative**, Sensika Technologies

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

SECOND HALL

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

Nevena Grigorova, Researcher, GATE Institute
Dobromir Tsolyov, Researcher, GATE Institute
Keith Peter Kiely, Senior Researcher, GATE Institute

Moderator: **Keith Peter Kiely**, Senior Researcher, GATE
Institute

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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

Maria Mateva, Co-Founder, Kronkite

Garvan Walshe, Co-Founder, Kronkite

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

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

Yana Naydenova, Junior Researcher, GATE Institute

Ruslan Trad, Research Fellow, Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab)

16:00 Information and Knowledge Asymmetries

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

From Exposure to Disruption: Imposing Costs on Hostile State Information Operations

Sopo Gelava, Associate Director for Research, DFRLab, Atlantic Council

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

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Moderator: Keith Kiely, Senior Researcher, GATE Institute

18:00 Closing

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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

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

10:30 Environmental and Climate Information Integrity

Paul Grignon, ECOLAB, French Ministry of Ecological Transition, PhD candidate

Katharina Zuegel, Forum on Information & Democracy

Moderator: Iglia Ivanova, GATE Institute

10:30 China's 'Soft Power'? Producing Narratives, Winning Minds, Influencing Publics

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

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Moderator: **Vladimir Shopov**, Visiting Fellow, Asia Programme, European Council on Foreign Relations

11:30 Coffee break

12:00 *AI and Cognitive Security in the Decade of Information Warfare*

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)

Moderator: **Gloria Trifonova**, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

12:00 *Project CoDE Session: Building a Collaborative Model for Information Integrity in the Digital Age in Bulgaria*

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

Moderator: **Dr. Ralitsa Stoycheva**, Research Associate of the KAS Media Programme

13:00 Lunch

14:00 *Overview and Safeguarding Strategy for Information Integrity on Wikipedia*

Nathan Forrester, Senior Trust & Safety Specialist, Knowledge Integrity | Wikimedia Foundation

Building and safeguarding knowledge integrity during elections and crisis (both titles TBC)

Moderator: **Iglika Ivanova**, GATE Institute

14:00 *AI and Cognitive Security in the Decade of Information Warfare (Protocol Lab) Part 1*

Co-creation workshop

Moderator: **Gloria Trifonova**, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

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15:00 ***Propaganda Images of Europe in Bulgarian Media***

Europe in the looking glass of anti-democratic propaganda
Maya Dimitrova, Journalist, Bulgarian National Television

Propaganda Imagery and Its Networks of Dissemination
Lyubomir Donchev, Researcher, HSS Foundation – Sofia
Suicidal Tendencies: Narratives on the Decline of Europe
Valentin Valkanov, Assistant Professor, New Bulgarian University

Moderator: Veronika Dimitrova, HSS Foundation – Sofia

16:00 **Coffee break**

16:30 ***DisInfoHack and Student Research on countering disinformation - Session 2***

Patriotism Through Division: „Us vs. Them“ narrative in Bulgarian Political Discourse
Gabriela Radkova, Anastasiia Peicheva, Masters in E-Europe and DisInfoHack 2026 Second Place Finalists

Mourning or Triumph? The Far Right Through the Image of the Lukov March Over the Years
Karina Zhecheva, Gergana Dimitrova, 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

SECOND HALL

15:00 ***AI and Cognitive Security in the Decade of Information Warfare (Protocol Lab) Part 2***

Co-creation workshop

Moderator: Gloria Trifonova, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy

16:30 ***Beyond the Feed: Youth, Culture and Democratic Resilience***

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

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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)

Two Polish documentary filmmakers investigate Russian covert operations and networks of influence across Central and Eastern Europe.

Director: **Konrad Szolajski**

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

Presented at SIIF 2026 through the British Council's partnership with Sofia DocuMental / Balkan Documentary Center, whose support makes the screening possible. The film featured in Sofia DocuMental's 2024 programme, with screenings organised in partnership with the Polish Institute in Sofia and discussions with the director.

19:00 Closing

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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

Moderator: Devora Kotseva, Information Integrity Specialist, Identrics

10:30 ***From Detection to Response: Building Europe's Next Layer of Cognitive Resilience***

Dirk Kunze, Media Director, Logiq Media
Adrien Duguet, Vice-President and previous President of ACTE, Co-Founder of Citipo (TBC)
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

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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

Reflections and Takeaways SIIF 2026

14:00 **Closing**