

BUCHAREST: INTELLIGENCE COLLEGE IN EUROPE (ICE) – ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

On May 4, 2023, the first academic conference of the European Intelligence College (ICE), the only platform for academic cooperation between intelligence communities at the European level, was held in the premises of the Romanian National Intelligence Academy “Mihai Viteazul”.¹ Initially conceived as a two-day format event, the conference was later updated to a one-day program. The conference was dedicated to the academic representatives of the ICE partners, specifically their interactions and discussions in a stimulating environment. The development of a common European strategic intelligence culture represents the guiding idea of the work of the entire network since its inception, so, in accordance with the above, the goal of this conference was to connect the partner universities of the network more closely so that, based on discussion and cooperation, they could successfully contribute to the planning of the development of education and intelligence-related research on European level. Given that the emphasis in intelligence studies, but no less in intelligence practice itself, has for a long time been placed on interdisciplinarity in combination with technological progress and all kinds of innovation in action as far as hybrid type threats are concerned, the conference wanted to equally emphasize the importance of joint efforts in designing specific research projects as well as intelligence studies programs at different educational levels. The conference was attended by representatives of eight ICE member states.

The opening of the conference began with

a welcome speech by the head of the network, François Fischer. In his speech, the network was presented as the result of cooperation between practitioners and the academic community, and in its work, the roles and visions of a common European strategic culture in the intelligence field were highlighted. Reviewing what has been done up to that point, this conference was given the anticipatory task of innovating through stronger forms of cooperation, such as thematic seminars and mixed research-practitioner network clusters focused on certain topics (anti-terrorism, cyber security and others). However, with a further critically intoned review of the network’s work so far, he pointed out that it is still about separate actors gathered in the network, and not togetherness with a synergistic effect, despite the fact that 2023 can finally be spoken of as the first year with a full program of activities since its foundation. As possible and desirable directions of the network’s future activity, he espoused: the project orientation of the network, especially in the sense of designing pilot projects based on which the network can be involved in the search for financial sources for the research of relevant actors; academic programs of mutual education and skills acquisition through the formation of educational clusters whose activity is focused on new ideas; emphasizing unexplored topics; detecting legal restrictions on proposed network activities; paying attention to “educating the educators” through comparison with existing good practices; dissemination of the results of the activities, especially by targeting undergraduate and graduate students of various sciences and highlighting ICE as a

¹ See in more detail at: <https://www.intelligence-college-europe.org/>.

brand. At the end of the speech, the Rector of the Romanian National Intelligence Academy "Mihai Viteazul" Adrian Ivan also greeted the audience with a short address, while mentioning the fundamental determinants of the Romanian chairmanship of the network ("Building clusters of expertise and hubs of innovation" – 2023) which followed the Croatian ("Setting up and strengthening the College's governance" – 2020), UK ("Fusing intelligence and policy to build resilience in the 21st century" – 2021) and Italian ("Focus on outreach: cooperation beyond practitioners" – 2022). He mentioned hybrid threats, radicalization and cyber security as some of the fundamental preoccupations of the Romanian presidency and connected the thirtieth anniversary of the host academy with the European wishes materialized in this network. Overall, during the Romanian presidency, efforts were made to: facilitate the engagement of all members of the network, map common needs, create the right framework for joint co-production programs, and encourage joint dialogue and collective outreach of the network's activities. After this address, and with the guidance of Cristina Ivan from the Romanian National Intelligence Academy "Mihai Viteazul", all present stakeholders introduced themselves, highlighting their interests and affinities in the network.

The first session, with the moderator role of Cristina Ivan, was firstly dedicated to the presentation of research results on existing educational programs and practices in the field of intelligence activities in network members with an emphasis on consideration of complementarity and assessed needs. Then all present representatives of the network partners briefly presented what is being done in their countries regarding the education of intelligence community employees in terms of differences, similarities, problems, development trajectories, networking opportu-

nities, public perception and other points of interest. This kind of direct overview revealed the significant diversity of the European intelligence landscape. Despite this, common problems of all partners were identified regarding the cooperation of practitioners and the academic community and their link with decision-makers in the field of security: bureaucratization, funding sources, secrecy, inaccessibility to younger generations, and poor public perception. Within this session, the potential of joint initiatives was also discussed, in which each representative was given the opportunity to present their institutional profile and topics of academic interest with the aim of encouraging collaborative activities in research and education. The Croatian representative at the conference, also the author of these lines, presented during the session the basic dimensions of the topic of intelligence culture as a research interest of domestic and international importance in a comparative sense.

The second session, more precisely the first academic panel, was dedicated to the future of intelligence education and research in the broadest possible parameters. With subsequent moderation of the discussion by Antonio Diaz Fernandez from the University of Cádiz (Spain), presentations based on previously published scientific articles were held by Cristina Ivan ("Perspective of critical intelligence studies on intelligence education and research"), Iztok Prezelj from the University of Ljubljana ("Intelligence scandals: a comparative analytical model and lessons learned from the test case of North Macedonia") and Valentin Stoian from the Romanian National Intelligence Academy "Mihai Viteazul" ("The best of both worlds? A hybrid approach to research and intelligence").²

² See more in: H. Bean, P. de Werd, C. Ivan (2021) Critical intelligence studies: introduction to the special issue, *Intelligence and National Security* 36(4): 467–475, doi:

The third session on outreach was based on three discussion blocks: establishment of working groups (proposals for joint research on selected topics); targeting of the student population regarding network activities (undergraduate and graduate level of educational programs); reach at the level of the European Union (a step towards the education of employees and educators themselves and potentially political decision-makers). As part of this session, the Croatian representative presented *Polemos*, the Croatian scientific journal for interdisciplinary research on war and peace, as a suitable platform for disseminating the

network's activities, publishing scientific and professional contributions from other network partners, and involving students in the work of the network through the publication of advanced academic contributions.

In the fourth, and also the final hybrid type session, academic members of the network who were not physically present were informed about the conclusions of the work done via a teleconference link. At the same time, further engagements of the network were also proposed, especially in relation to the future Spanish chairmanship of the network in 2024.

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10.1080/02684527.2021.1893068; I. Prezelj, T. T. Ristevska (2023) Intelligence scandals: a comparative analytical model and lessons learned from the test case of North Macedonia, *Intelligence and National Security* 38(3): 143–170, doi: 10.1080/02684527.2022.2065616; V. Stoian (2022) The best of both worlds? a hybrid approach to intelligence and research, *Intelligence and National Security*, doi: 10.1080/02684527.2022.2137152.