Reflecting on the EU's approach to cybersecurity capacity building abroad

Towards operational guidelines

8 December 2017, Thon Hotel EU, Meeting room Germany
Rue de la Loi 75, 1040 Bruxelles

Concept note

The expanding use of Information and Communications Technology over the past 20 years and its contribution to the evolution – or even complete revolution – of various policy areas has resulted in the emergence of a broad policy community relying on these technologies. However, the efforts at improving access to ICT and growing levels of internet penetration have so far underestimated the risks and challenges associated with this process. Consequently, capacity building has become a key approach which endeavours to ensure a minimum level of cybersecurity across the globe.

In broad terms, capacity building in the cyber domain is aimed at building functioning and accountable institutions in order to respond effectively to cybercrime and to enhance the countries' cyber resilience. This is an integral component of international cooperation and as such can foster international solidarity with a common vision and purpose: to secure a free, open, secure, interoperable cyberspace for everyone while ensuring compliance with human rights and the rule of law. The question about how to structure the capacity building efforts, what methods to use and how to measure their efficiency is a central one in this process.

Since the adoption of its 2013 Cybersecurity Strategy, the EU has been leading on international cyber capacity building and systematically linking these efforts with its development cooperation funds. Such actions are based on promoting a rights-based and whole-of-government approach that integrates lessons learnt from EU's internal experience, as well as from the development effectiveness agenda. Moreover, in 2017 there has been a clear recognition at EU level that cybersecurity should be considered as a transversal issue in development cooperation that can contribute to the progressive realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as stipulated in the EU's Digital4Development policy framework.

In light of this, a concerted effort is deemed necessary to consolidate the lessons learnt from the EU's experience to date – particularly in bridging the development and technical communities – as well as to translate the several dimensions of cyber policy into a systematic methodology that will serve as operational guidance when designing/implementing EU's external cyber capacity building actions. Due to the highly sensitive aspects of cybersecurity and potential flow-on risks running contrary to key EU values and policies (e.g. a rights-based approach, freedom of expression online/offline, multi-stakeholder internet model, the applicability of international law in cyberspace), vigilance is necessary to ensure coherence between EU policy and programmes.

This workshop is intended to bring together a mix of policy actors that have been working in the fields of cyber policy and cyber diplomacy, together with practitioners involved in the definition and implementation of cyber capacity building actions, as well as experts in evaluating capacity development results. Based on the initial work conducted by the EU Institute for Security Studies on the 'operational guidelines' for cybersecurity capacity building, the meeting will serve as a platform to brainstorm on defining the key pillars and layers of the EU's external cyber capacity building model as well as reflect on how to systematise existing EU values, principles, and interests as a guiding blueprint for the EU's capacity building engagements abroad.

Agenda

09:00-09:30

Registration and welcome coffee

09:30-09:45

Welcome remarks

Nayia BARMPALIOU

Policy Coordinator / Programme Manager for Organised Crime and Cyber, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission

09:45-11:00

Session I: Defining the pillars and layers of cybersecurity capacity building

Moderator

Alejandro PINTO

Director of Digital Transformation Programmes, Ministry of Interior, Madrid; Member of the EUISS Cyber Task Force

Presenter

Patryk PAWLAK

Brussels Executive Officer, EU Institute for Security Studies

Comments

11:00-11:15

Coffee break

11:15-12.30

Session II: Systematising values, interests and principles for cybersecurity capacity building

Moderator

Thorsten WETZLING

Project Director, Stiftung Neue Verantwortung, Berlin; Member of the EUISS Cyber Task Force

Presenter

Patryk PAWLAK

Brussels Executive Officer, EU Institute for Security Studies

Comments

12:30-12:45

Closing session

Heli TIIRMAA-KLAAR

Head of Cyber Policy Coordination, Security Policy Directorate, European External Action Service

12:45-14:00

Lunch