

## Proliferation Risks in Space: Interview Jana Robinson



Dr. Jana Robinson is currently Space Security Programme Director at the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI). She previously served as a Space Policy Officer at the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, as well as a Space Security Advisor to the Foreign Ministry of the Czech Republic. From 2009 to 2013, Robinson worked as Resident Fellow at the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI), seconded from the European Space Agency (ESA), leading the Institute's Space Security Research Programme.

The mission of the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI) includes the objective of advancing the space security agenda, an increasingly critical element of foreign and security policy. What are, in your view, the key proliferation risks and threats related to space?

As we know, the space environment is fragile. Existing mechanisms have proven inadequate to halt the growth of space debris. New technologies are rapidly evolving and the number of states and commercial actors in space is steadily rising. In addition, more countries are using space to advance their strategic and national security interests, including through counter-space operations. This creates greater potential for a damaging incident, or even conflict, involving space. I believe that there is a spectrum of "grey zone" threats, associated with deliberate actions aimed at probing gaps in our security, preparedness and readiness to protect space infrastructure, that are particularly troubling. Of these hybrid threats, I believe that cyber and economic and financial (E&F) operations are the most worrisome.

You have conducted several studies on space hybrid operations. What are their main findings?

Although hybrid operations are not a new phenomenon, there are no accepted deterrence regimes currently in place to address such activities in the space domain. Our latest research has targeted the issue of economic and financial (E&F) space hybrid operations. The mission was to understand the situation in the global space sector and probe the competition for space partnerships. We focused on China and Russia as countries with global E&F space

footprints. We observed that some deals concluded by these non-democratic states potentially expose recipient countries to the vulnerability of unsustainable space partnerships through a phenomenon we term "space sector capture". This has implications not only for allied militaries, but the overall European space industry and our ability to establish global space norms based on transparency, good governance and the rule of law.

What effective response tools can be created to avert these threats?

We, of course, need to continue to work on building resiliency for our space systems. The policy challenge here is, like in cyberspace, that effective deterrence has been elusive. We have not been able to dissuade our competitors from engaging in provocative counter-space operations and training or hold them accountable for hybrid disruptions/attacks. We should rely on cross-domain response options to avoid endangering the delicate space environment. Specifically, using economic and financial policy tools, including sanctions in egregious cases, have promising potential. This means penalizing companies that undertake malevolent activities on behalf of the governments through naming and shaming and other means that impact their global market acceptance, corporate reputation and share value.

How do you assess the way Europe is addressing the rising space security challenges?

Europe is increasingly alert to these unconventional challenges, but has not yet internalised the economic and financial dimensions of the global competition for space partnerships and the shaping of norms of acceptable behaviour.

## The NPT 2020 Review Conference: What To Expect?

The most recent preparatory meeting for next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference ended last May in New York. Participants reached procedural understandings, including the nomination of Ambassador Rafael Grossi from Argentina as Chairman of the Review Conference. However, the main problem the NPT will face is not procedural but of substance: the growing division between nuclear (NWS) and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS).

The five NWS share common strategic interests. These include: preserving their privileged nuclear status, preventing others from gaining such status and paying the minimal price in terms of their obligation to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Post-Cold War nuclear reductions, although significant, did little to reduce the risks of a nuclear conflict. More recently, instead of progressing towards nuclear disarmament, NWS have been making steps backwards.

Due to growing frustration, many NNWS supported a 2017 "shortcut" to total disarmament by negotiating a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This treaty, has become an additional source of friction among NPT signatory states. Nuclear weapon states not only refused to subscribe to the TPMW (which falls within their rights), but did not even participate in the negotiations (which was an obligation).

As per European countries, their posture on nuclear issues reflects the diversities and contradictions existing within the NPT community. Furthermore, EU countries have been humiliated by the unilateral US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the secondary sanctions imposed by Washington on its allies for abiding by the deal's provisions and the UN Security Council resolution which enshrines them. The subsequent US withdrawals from the INF Treaty and the Arms Trade Treaty constituted an additional shock. Despite the outgoing EU High Representative Federica Mogherini's strenuous engagement in preserving those commitments and seeking common positions, these divergences might re-emerge at the NPT Review Conference next year.

For the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium and its Network of independent Think Tanks, the main challenge in the coming months will be to raise awareness within the new European Commission and Parliament on the necessity of an enhanced European cohesion on nuclear disarmament and cooperation.

**Amb. Carlo Trezza**

Scientific Advisor to the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)/  
EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium



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## Latest Network Publications

*Guide to Conducting a National  
Proliferation Financing Risk Assessment*,  
Anagha Joshi, Emil Dall and Darya  
Dolzikova, The Royal United Services  
Institute (RUSI), 2019

*Will Outer Space Be Weaponized?*,  
Miroslav Tůma, Center of International  
Law, Institute of International Relations  
Prague (IIR), 2019

*Artificial intelligence, strategic stability  
and nuclear risk: Euro-Atlantic  
perspectives*, Vincent Boulanin, Stockholm  
International Peace Research Institute  
(SIPRI), 2019

*CTBT: Possible Measures to Bring the  
Provisions of the Treaty Into Force &  
Strengthen the Norm Against Nuclear  
Testing*, John Carlson, the Vienna Center  
for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation  
(VCDNP), 2019

## Network Calls

### UK PONI CONFERENCE

On 13 June the UK Project on Nuclear  
Issues (UK PONI) will host its Annual  
Conference. By bringing together  
emerging and established experts from  
across the nuclear field, the UK PONI  
conference promotes an informed and  
diverse dialogue on the most pertinent  
nuclear issues.

This year's conference will feature panel  
discussions on nuclear economies and  
geographies, emerging issues in  
deterrence and arms control, risks and  
trends in South Asia and UK nuclear  
policy and practice.

A pre-conference event will also be  
organised on the 12 June in collaboration  
with the Project on Nuclear Gaming  
(PoNG) led by the University of  
California-Berkeley (UCB) and experts  
from Sandia National Laboratories  
(SNL) and the Lawrence Livermore  
National Laboratory (LLNL).

More information and the registration  
form to attend the Conference: [here](#)

## EU INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

### The EU continues its support to OPCW to make the world safe from chemical weapons

On 1 April 2019, the EU formally renewed its support to the activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with a funding contribution of €11.6 million. The [Decision](#), which the Council adopted in the framework of the implementation of the [EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction](#), reinforced the Union's commitment to work towards the complete elimination of chemical weapons (CW) and the full enforcement of the [Chemical Weapons Convention \(CWC\)](#).

The OPCW, the implementing body of the CWC, has presided over the destruction of almost 97% of all the declared chemical weapons stockpiles worldwide since the entry into force of the CWC in 1997. In 2013 the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

“The European Union stands against the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances”. The EU's financial support to the OPCW – amounting to a total of approximately €47 million since 2004 – has contributed, amongst other things, to the destruction of CWs and the creation of an OPCW Fact Finding Mission in Syria, as well as to the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism, a partnership aimed at identifying perpetrators of chemical attacks. The new financial support will contribute to the OPCW's core goals, such as verification, national implementation, and universalisation. It will also be used to help OPCW identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons, transform the OPCW laboratory into a Centre for Chemistry and Technology and support the Organisation's Africa Programme.

For more information:

[EU continues its support to OPCW to make the world safe from chemical weapons](#)

## NETWORK NEWS

### CALL FOR PARTICIPATION:

#### The NEXT GENERATION WORKSHOP

The Istituto Affari Internazionali, on behalf of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium, is organizing a “*Next Generation Workshop*” open to **12 young researchers and professionals** working in the Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament field.

The workshop will be held in Brussels on *12 December 2019*, back-to-back with the 2019 EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (EUNPD) Conference to be held on *13-14 December 2019*. The selected candidates will be given the opportunity to also participate in the EUNPD Conference.

The Next Generation workshop will comprise four sessions on the following areas/topics:

- Non-Proliferation and Arms Control in the Middle East
- Non-Proliferation and Arms Control in Asia
- Illicit Trade of Conventional Arms, including SALW
- Emerging Technologies, including cyber security

Selected participants will deliver a presentation offering their views on the topics under discussion, which will be followed by comments from other participants, including EU officials. Members of the Consortium will chair the sessions.

The call is directed at junior diplomats, M.A. students, PhD students, post-docs, and young professionals working in research centres and think tanks with proven experience in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Candidates can be from both the EU or non-EU countries. Age limit: 36 years old by the end of 2019. Costs related to participation (flights and accommodation) will be covered by the organisers.

#### Application material:

- ✓ Résumé or CV
- ✓ Cover letter detailing the applicant's motivations for taking part in the exercise and specifying the chosen topic from the list above
- ✓ 300/350 word abstract of presentation
- ✓ Letter of Reference

#### Application process:

Applicants must submit their candidacy by **July 10th, 2019** to [eunpd@iai.it](mailto:eunpd@iai.it)

Selected candidates will be contacted by **July 31st, 2019**

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