

The War in Ukraine and its Effects on the Global Nuclear Order, an interview with Névine Schepers



Névine Schepers is Co-Team Head (ad interim) and Senior Researcher in the Swiss and Euro-Atlantic Security Team at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich. She is also co-editor of the monthly policy brief series CSS Analyses in Security Policy.

What is the current research agenda of the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zürich in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament? How are you currently approaching these topics? What is the main research agenda you are pursuing?

Researchers at the CSS work on topics related to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in the nuclear, chemical and biological weapons fields as well as emerging technologies and export controls. Ongoing projects explore issues such as the future of nuclear arms control, technology governance and verification through publications, seminars and workshops. Researchers contribute to teaching university courses on security, technology and dual-use research of concern. The CSS also collaborates closely with the Swiss national Spiez Laboratory in the context the biennial Spiez Convergence Conference that reviews the latest advances in science and technology and how they may affect the regimes governing the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons.

In what ways will you and your Centre contribute to the Consortium activities and objectives?

As one of the latest institutes to join the EUNPDC network of think tanks, we are delighted to contribute to dialogues as well as the mentorship programme where we can support the emergence of a new generation of experts. Moreover, the CSS' unique position as a centre of expertise on Swiss security policy within a science and technology-focused university has provided us with experience in building bridges between technical, academic and policy communities. Given the increasing challenge of bringing together a variety of stakeholders to develop governance frameworks that address today's threat landscape, we hope to share our experience with the rest of the Consortium and learn from others who have worked on cross-stakeholder and holistic approaches to arms control.

What do you consider should be the main focus of European non-proliferation policy in the coming years?

The EU and Switzerland have much in common when it comes to focusing on effective

multilateralism in the field of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. The coming years will be particularly challenging in most multilateral settings given the long-term impacts of Russia's war in Ukraine and exacerbating proliferation crises. However, there is impetus to use working groups to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Process and the Biological Weapons Convention for instance. In addition, European states can also focus on making progress on nuclear risk reduction goals and reinforcing export controls. Finally, as the war has highlighted security risks to civil nuclear infrastructure, work on strengthening nuclear security norms is also high on the agenda.

We note that you have recently published a [paper on the war in Ukraine and its effects on the global nuclear order](#). Given the development of the conflict, what is your vision for the future of nuclear arms control in global terms?

Russian aggression has dampened most prospects for a legally binding follow-on treaty to New START, whose full implementation is also currently in limbo, while Chinese remains hostile to treaty-based arms control. Future prospects for arms control are limited but there are still opportunities in pursuing risk reduction measures. In this regard, US initiatives such as declaring a moratorium on direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing or its commitment to ensure that a human will remain "in the loop" for decisions related to nuclear use are encouraging. China's dislike of inflammatory nuclear rhetoric may also provide openings for discussions on new cooperation initiatives such as the creation of nuclear crisis communication tools between the United States and China similar to those that exist with Russia. As the United States, NATO allies and US allies in the Indo-Pacific respond to a worsening security environment by focusing on strengthening deterrence, both conventional and nuclear, maintaining windows of opportunity for genuine dialogue with adversaries may become more difficult but will remain necessary.

The EU and the nuclear weapons regime complex

Unlike other fields of arms control, the EU is not seen as a unitary actor in the nuclear weapons regime complex. Coordination among EU member states on nuclear weapons questions in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) framework has traditionally proved challenging due to multiple divides: some members are NATO allies and thus accept nuclear deterrence as part of its defence posture – four of them also host US nuclear weapons on their territories – while those outside the organisation are not bound by it. Some member states oppose nuclear energy for civilian purposes. The EU includes one nuclear-armed country, France, while Austria, Ireland and Malta are ardent advocates of nuclear disarmament. Moreover, in the past decade, two pro-disarmament initiatives have been source of major divisions within the EU: the Humanitarian Initiative (HI), which explored the impact of nuclear detonations, and the ensuing Treaty on the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), a multilateral treaty concluded at the United Nations (UN) that entered into force in 2021.

To assess the impact of these initiatives on EU stance on nuclear weapons matters, in a recent [article](#) we examine intra-EU alignment from 2000 to 2020 in two key fora: the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conferences (RevCon). More specifically, we measure yearly voting on nuclear weapons-related resolutions at UNGA and illustrate patterns of joint submissions by EU members at the RevCons.

This analysis shows that the division within the EU between pro-disarmament members and NATO allies became more pronounced in the aforementioned period. While the HI and the TPNW allowed the pre-existing nuclear cleavage to resurface, CFSP coordination did not collapse. Instead, two fairly cohesive subgroups crystallised: a large group supportive of gradualism, and a small abolitionist minority. This approximates a scenario of "differentiated co-operation". Divisions nevertheless failed to disrupt CFSP co-operation habits and practices: common positions were still adopted at international fora, and in their submissions to NPT RevCons, EU member states co-operated with each other more closely than with non-EU NATO allies.

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Latest Publications

[The Elusive European Nuclear Deterrence](#). Driss Larafi, The Defence Horizon Journal

[Remote Monitoring: Verifying geographical arms limits](#). Moritz Kütt, Ulrich Kühn, Dmitry Stefanovich, Bulletin of Atomic Scientists

[Expanding Access to Peaceful Uses Of Nuclear Power](#). Anthony K. Stoot and Ingrid Kirsten. Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP),

[Nuclear Arms Control Need a Fresh Start](#). Jan Ludvik. Peace Research Center Prague

EU NEWS

Cuba and the European Union held the third session of the political dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation

Discussions included exchanges of views on recent developments in the area of nuclear, biological and chemical non-proliferation, United Nations General Assembly works on non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Both parties agreed on the importance of stepping up international cooperation in these areas, and exchanged views on assistance provided to third countries for the purpose of arms export control and non-proliferation, and agreed to continue exchanging information and to consider further cooperation in these areas.

The Dialogue on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons, and on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction were held under the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA), which was signed in December 2016 and entered into provisional application on 1 November 2017.

More info: [here](#)

Network Calls

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) seeks to appoint a Research Assistant and Programme Administrator who will be based in the London office. This position will assist the Defence and Military Analysis Programme in the implementation of the Missile Dialogue Initiative, a multi-year Track 1.5 project that seeks to strengthen international discussion and to promote a high-level exchange of views on missile technologies and related international security dynamics.

Deadline of the Application: 31st January 2023

More info: [here](#)

Chatham House, is seeking a Research Fellow in the Russian military-security field. This position will assist in the design and delivery of research projects on the war in Ukraine and Russian foreign and security policy; Enhance centre, programme and institute networks for research and influence; Deliver ongoing research by producing high quality policy-relevant research outputs for publication by the institute; Identify and pursue opportunities for appropriate communication and dissemination of project findings; Develop new funding leads, prepare applications, and secure project funding; and strengthen relationships with existing donors

Deadline of the Application: 31st January 2023

More info: [here](#)

NETWORK NEWS

The *Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales y Política Exterior* (INCIPE) has been nominated to the Spanish National Security Culture Forum.

INCIPE will act as the representative and leader of the group of institutes and centres for strategic analysis on national and international security, including non-proliferation and arms control. It will carry out the mandated studies and may make proposals to the Standing Committee in collaboration with other think tanks.

More info: [here](#)

New IAI course on Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

This course organised by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) provides a political, legal and historical perspective on the regulatory framework, strategies and techniques for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation; it also offers the opportunity to hone skills of analysis, presentation, and argumentation in negotiation and debate contexts on international security issues. international security issues. To this end, the course includes a simulation exercise related to international negotiations, such as those that take place at international treaty review conferences or to address nuclear proliferation risks.

More info: [here](#)

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