

THE 2ND RTO INNOVATION SUMMIT

Industrial technologies for the future

Cybersecurity in the Digital Age

Session Summary

18 November 2020

The digitalisation of almost every area of our society has changed the rules of the economy and many mechanisms of our society at an impressive pace. We live in a networked world in which everything is interlinked: public institutions, businesses, private households, and particularly our critical infrastructures that we all rely on in our modern world. This is especially the case for our communication and data exchange infrastructures, but also for healthcare, and the finance, transport and energy sectors.

The downside of global networking and permanent availability is that we simultaneously become more vulnerable. Any breakdowns or damages to our infrastructures have a direct impact on our economy, on our society and our lives, both globally and at a regional level. The threats to our digital systems have radically changed and intensified. The current COVID-19 crisis has been accompanied by new cybercrime patterns, mostly due to more intense teleworking and e-commerce. This illustrates how strongly the functioning of our economy and society depends on cybersecurity.

Ensuring a high degree of cybersecurity therefore is a top priority in making Europe fit for the Digital Age. Numerous initiatives have already been launched across Europe and supported by the European Commission. The European Framework Programme H2020 has stimulated significant R&D efforts in the area of cybersecurity and it is important that HORIZON EUROPE will continue in this direction.

However, all speakers and also the audience of the session agreed that there is no single measure which would guarantee cybersecurity; rather we need a comprehensive approach covering a wide range of technologies, but also awareness and capacity building as well as standards and regulation.

Moreover, European-wide cooperation, across organisations and national borders is essential. RTOs play a key role here as they have a wealth of experience and track record in initiating and leading joint research projects that bring together relevant players from academia and industry along with public stakeholders and target end users. In this context, the four recently established pilot networks of cybersecurity competence centres¹ are particularly noteworthy initiatives: They will not only serve to pool the existing expertise, but also help to align R&D roadmaps, to build a common agenda for investments into cybersecurity, and to set priorities for research, development and roll-out of cybersecurity solutions.

Cybersecurity is a prerequisite for exploiting the huge potential which digitalisation opens for new applications, businesses and value streams. There is an evolving market for cybersecurity products and services, and Europe has a golden opportunity to position itself as a global leader in cybersecurity, and RTOs have an important role to play.

For further reading: [Cybersecurity in the Digital Age](#)

¹ Cf. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/four-eu-pilot-projects-prepare-european-cybersecurity-competence-network-infographic>