



CENTREPEACE

# Central and Eastern European Security Cooperation Cluster

Horizon Europe – Twinning

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Funded by  
the European Union

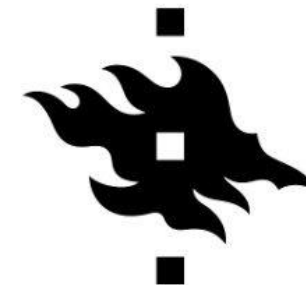
# CENTREPEACE

- Duration: 3 years
- Start date: 1 June 2024
- Budget: € 1 498 629,25
- Coordinator: International Institute of Political Science, MUNI



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# What is the CENTREPEACE about?



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI  
ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE

MUNI



CENTREPEACE

# What is the CENTREPEACE about?

- Russia's invasion of Ukraine elevated CEE to critical strategic importance
- Yet CEE security research voice remains underrepresented in European debates
- Excellence exists in the region—but lacks international integration
- Mission: Integrate CEE perspectives into European security research mainstream

## Three Pillars:

- **Strategic Networking** - Build international research collaborations through focus groups
- **Culture of Excellence** - Transform institutional research practices and management capacity
- **Pathways to Impact** - Translate research into actionable knowledge for practitioners.



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# PILLAR I: STRATEGIC NETWORKING

## Quantified Achievements:

- 18 researchers across 3 institutions engaged in focus groups
- 15.6 weeks of international mobility completed
- 8 external partners identified and engaged through matchmaking
- 3 research articles submitted to leading journals
- 1 special issue commissioned
- 2 policy memos published in PONARS Eurasia and PRIO Policy Brief



# What Do We Do?

- Knowledge exchange workshops
- Lectures
- RMA Breakfasts
- Mobilities
- Summer school
- Conferences
- Matchmaking



# PILLAR TWO - CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

## Challenges addressed:

- Strong regional reputation but not yet competing internationally
- Limited exposure to international best practices
- Restricted networks for collaborative grant development
- Insufficient mentoring structures for junior researcher advancement

## I. Response strategy:

### *Building Culture of Excellence - Research Track*

#### **1. Research Pilots (WP3)**

- Applying for joint projects through focus groups, generating publications and proof-of-concept for larger initiatives, strategic investment in high-impact research

#### **2. Intensive Training**

- Specialized lectures (159 participants), 9 RMA breakfasts (144 participants), world-leading scholars directly engaging faculty, building "institutional common sense" around international competitiveness

#### **3. PhD development**

- 3 PhD students in international co-supervision
- Topics: China's AI strategy, OSINT/AI in defense, Russia's „escalatory cycle“ in the EaP.
- Reshaping what it means to be a security researcher at MUNI.



# PILLAR TWO - CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

## II Advancing Women in Academic Leadership

- Current situation at MUNI:
- Women hold only 17% of leading positions in IR and Political Science departments
- Senior staff: 7 professors (1 female); 10 associate professors (10 male, 2 female)

## CENTREPEACE Response:

- March 2025: gender equality workshop with PRIO specialist advisor
- 4 female researchers identified and placed in mentoring relationships
- Career development coaching focused on progression to leadership
- Contributing to MUNI Gender Equality Plan 2022-2024 implementation



# PILLAR TWO - CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

## III New institutional mechanisms

- RMA Breakfasts: regular gatherings of research support infrastructure with researchers
- Lecturer series: regular intellectual exchange
- PhD co-supervision model: mutual mentoring across institutional boundaries
- Funding observatory: working group identifying and tracking funding opportunities



# PILLAR THREE - PATHWAYS TO IMPACT

## Academic Impact:

- Summer School on Energy Security (July 2026) - 30 scholars
- Aleksanteri Conference (October 2026) - 200+ participants
- Co-organized by CENTREPEACE partnership

## Policy Impact:

- 4 workshops with CEE security stakeholders
- Brussels-based engagement events for EU-level decision-makers
- Ensuring CEE perspectives reach policy audiences

## Sustainability:

- Follow-up project concepts being developed
- IIPS positioned as coordinator
- Moving from dependency to independent collaboration



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# VISION FOR IMPACT

## Beyond the Funding Period: Institutional Transformation

- A pipeline of internationally competitive security researchers from Central and Eastern Europe
- Permanent institutional infrastructure for international research collaboration
- A model that demonstrates how widening countries can compete at the research frontier

## Outcomes We Expect:

- Sustained, independent research collaboration beyond CENTREPEACE
- Multiple follow-up projects funded through Horizon Europe and other sources
- Increased representation of CEE voices in European security policy debates
- New generation of researchers understanding international competitiveness as normal

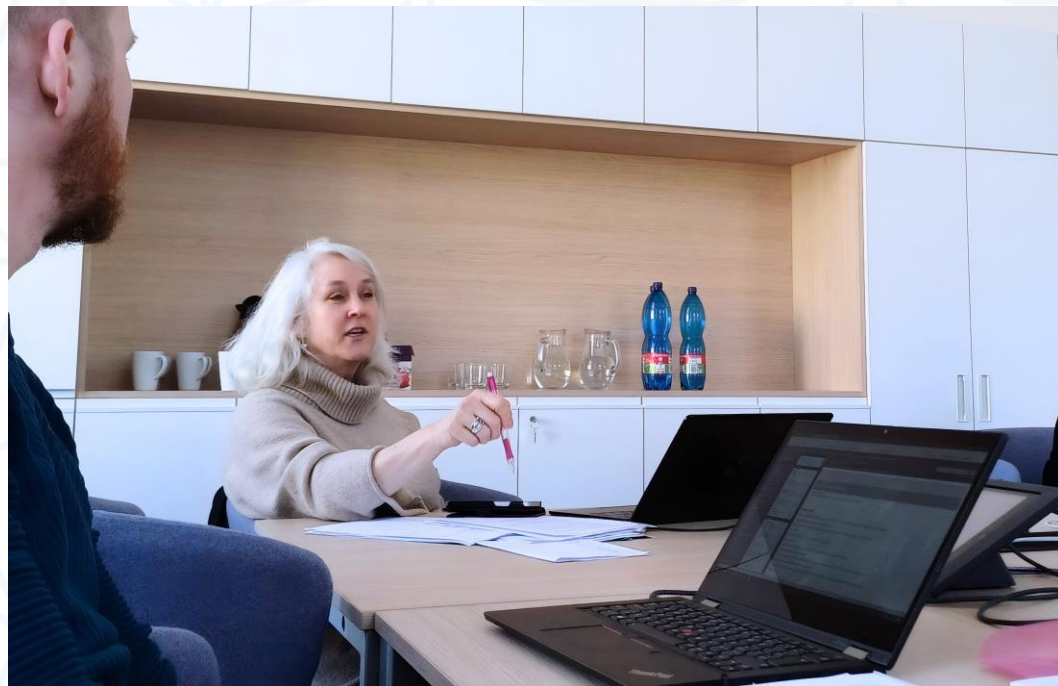


# RMA Breakfasts



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# Writing detox



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# Mobilities



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# Questions?

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