

EU CYBER DIRECT RESEARCH SEMINAR

EU DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY: FROM NARRATIVE TO POLICY?

Friday 18 March 2022, 13:00-17:45 CET

Online

Leiden University

The EU Cyber Direct Research Seminars

As part of the European Cyber Diplomacy Initiative, the EU Cyber Direct project (jointly implemented by the EU Institute for Security Studies, Carnegie Europe and Leiden University's Institute for Security and Global Affairs), is organizing a series of research seminars: **the EU Cyber Direct Research Seminars**.

The objective of the EU Cyber Direct Research Seminars is to gather a small group of scholars and experts on a specific topic (10-15 people). Each seminar is comprised of two sessions with the objective to have interactive discussions with the participants. For this reason three participants per session will be asked to provide short input comments to start the discussion while most of the time of each session is dedicated to an in-depth, interactive discussion with all the participants.

The introductions for each session will be based on draft input papers (1.000-1.500 words) prepared by the speakers and to be circulated among participants a week before the event. After the event, the speakers will have about a month to send a final version of their input papers, which will then be collected and published in an edited publication.

Research Seminar on Digital Sovereignty: from Narrative to policy?

The second EU Cyber Direct Research Seminar will be dedicated to **Digital Sovereignty: from Narrative to policy?** It will take place on **18 March 2022**, in the afternoon. Due to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been decided to hold this event **online**. This EU Cyber Direct Research Seminar is co-organised by The Hague Program on International Cyber Security.

This seminar takes the recent discussions and narratives about EU digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy as a point of departure and asks the question what this means for the array of individual (EU) policies that will have to support a new strategically autonomous/geopolitical positioning of the union. EC president Von der Leyen presented her team unapologetically as the 'geopolitical commission' that Europe now needs, but that does beg the question whether the EU has the instruments, policies, institutions and political will to implement and substantiate its geopolitical ambitions.

The EU's narrative of digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy is, or may be, reflected in three 'strands' of EU policies and implementation. These are, firstly, the instrumental use of 'classic' internal market policies, such as trade and competition policy, to exert geopolitical influence. Secondly, policies that aim to impose foreign policy 'requirements' and restrictions on national markets, such as the 5G toolbox. And thirdly, a new generation of hybrid digital policies in which internal market concerns, fundamental rights and geopolitical concerns are all present, such as the AI-Act and the DSA/DMA. Given the Commission's strong competence in the internal market and the relatively limited competence in common foreign and security policy, the EU is likely to have more geo-economic and geopolitical clout in internal market and hybrid policies. Furthermore, a more geopolitical stance of the EU will interact with the EU's (self-image of) as a regulatory and normative power.

Core questions

For this seminar we will convene academic experts on a number of different subfields of EU policy making around a common set of questions:

- Has this policy field been instrumentalised for geopolitical reasons before, and what does that look like?
- What are the possibilities and the constraints for this policy to be used in a geopolitical fashion?
- What is lost and what is gained by taking a more geopolitical stance in this policy field?
- How does the ambition of more strategic autonomy relate to the role of the EU as a regulative and normative power in this field?

Set up

The seminar is comprised of two sessions in the afternoon of 1,5 hour each. The first session will focus on the more established (internal) market policies, like competition law and GDPR, and the newer, 'hybrid' policies such as DSA/DMA and the AI act. The second session will focus on policies that are formulated from an EU foreign policy perspectives and require member states to align (national) security decisions with EU interests (5G toolbox, Chips Act and FDI), and on the investment agenda that is needed to build EU capacity in light of sovereignty and strategic autonomy.

Agenda

- 13:00-13:20 Introductory Remarks
- **Dennis BROEDERS** (Leiden University)
- 13:20-15:05 Session 1: Market policies and hybrid policies
- **Kristina IRION** (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
– Input on GDPR and Privacy
 - **Giorgio MONTI** (Tilburg University, the Netherlands).
– Input on competition law and policy
 - **Simona SOARE** (International Institute for Strategic Studies, The UK) – Input on DSA/DMA and the AI Act
- 15:05-15:30 Health Break
- 15:30-17:15 Session 2: Foreign policy restrictions on national markets/policy and the investment agenda
- Raluca **CSERNATONI** (Carnegie Europe, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium) – Input on FDI screening and the Chips Act
 - Paul **TIMMERS** (Oxford University, The UK) – Input on the investment agenda
 - Margarita **ROBLES CARRILLO** (University of Granada, Spain) – Input on 5G toolbox and policy
- 17:15-17:45 Conclusions and Closing Remarks