

CSS Strategic Trends 2026

Press Club Europe, 95 Rue Froissart, Brussels
(15:30 - 17:30) 23 APRIL 2026



BRUSSELS SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE
CENTRE FOR SECURITY,
DIPLOMACY AND STRATEGY



ETH Zürich

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in v o o p

CONCEPT

How is intensifying geopolitical rivalry reconfiguring regional orders and global domains? Distinctions between regional orders, technological spheres and security domains are becoming increasingly blurred. From the evolving trajectory of Europe-China relations to the growing strategic salience of domains such as outer space and emerging technologies, contemporary international security is shaped by intersecting and mutually reinforcing contests over influence, access and control. These dynamics point to a more fragmented and contested international landscape, raising fundamental questions about the exercise of power, the negotiation of order and the interplay between regional and global logics.

Europe faces a series of interrelated challenges: how to position itself amid competing regional orders, how to respond to the technological transformation of warfare and how to navigate the expanding range of strategic domains. What role can Europe play in shaping these evolving dynamics? How can it balance security, economic and technological priorities in a context of intensifying competition? And to what extent can European actors influence, rather than merely react to, the reconfiguration of global order? This discussion aims to unpack these questions and reflect on Europe's strategic posture in a rapidly changing environment.

This event is jointly organised by the Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy (CSDS) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zürich. It marks the launch of *Strategic Trends 2026*, CSS' flagship annual report, which provides in-depth analysis of key developments in international security. The discussion will draw on the report's insights while offering forward-looking perspectives on the implications of these trends for European and global security.

PROGRAMME

Public event

15:30 – 15:35 **Welcome remarks**

Luis Simón

Director, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy – VUB

15:35 – 15:45 **Report Overview**

Daniel Möckli

Director of Think Tank, Center for Security Studies - ETH Zürich

Gorana Grgić

Head of Global Security, Center for Security Studies - ETH Zürich

15:45 – 16:45 **Panel I – Contesting Regions, Contesting Domains**

Moderator

Giulia Tercovich

Deputy Director, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy – VUB

Speakers

Luis Simón

Director, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy – VUB

Gesine Weber

Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies - ETH Zürich

Ivan Zaccagnini

Researcher, Center for Security Studies - ETH Zürich

16:45 – 17:30 **Reception and Networking**

17:30 **End**