

Press Release

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#IDSF25: AIT STRENGTHENS STRATEGIC COOPERATION FOR CYBER SECURITY AND SECURE DIGITALIZATION IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

International cooperation with the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) and the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) strengthens digital resilience and makes an important contribution to digital humanism on a global level

Vienna (June 5, 2025) - As part of the second conference day of the International Digital Security Forum (IDSF) in Vienna's MuseumsQuartier, a significant step was taken today towards further strengthening international cooperation in the field of digital security: The AIT Austrian Institute of Technology signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) each with the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) and with the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS).

Both agreements aim to meet the challenges of an increasingly digitized and security-critical world through increased international cooperation - with a particular focus on education, capacity building and technological development in the areas of cyber security, artificial intelligence (AI), countering disinformation and the responsible use of new digital technologies in the security-relevant environment.

AIT and WINS: Focus on cyber security for critical infrastructure operators

The memorandum with WINS forms the basis for closer cooperation to strengthen digital resilience for both energy production and energy distribution grid infrastructures. The focus is on the joint development of practice-oriented training and awareness programs that provide operators of critical infrastructures with specific skills in dealing with current and future cyber threats. Targeted training formats and the use of modern technologies - particularly in the field of artificial intelligence - are intended to identify risks at an early stage and strengthen cross-sector security standards in the long term.

"WINS values its partnership with AIT, which has been only growing stronger since its start in 2018, and our shared objective to support WINS' global community of practitioners to mitigate the increasing risks from cyber threats. We look forward to our enhanced cooperation in this important field so that the response to the cyberthreats is effective and sustained," said **Lars van Dassen**, Executive Director of WINS.

AIT and VCDNP: Digital technologies for disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear security

The partnership with VCDNP aims to strengthen joint initiatives that deal with security and geopolitically relevant issues relating to the use of modern digital technologies and strategic stability in the digital age in the context of highly critical infrastructures. The focus here remains on the security policy implications of quantum technologies, artificial intelligence and technologies to combat disinformation. Joint studies, training formats and high-profile measures are planned in order to raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities of digital technologies in security-relevant contexts at both institutional and societal level.

"It is of the utmost importance to forge strong links between technical experts and policy experts when it comes to emerging digital technologies. We are excited for the opportunities that our partnership with AIT will offer to combine our policy expertise and their technical knowledge with the aim of building capacity internationally and advancing understanding of the impacts of digital technologies on nuclear security, non-proliferation and disarmament," says VCDNP Executive Director **Elena Sokova**.

IDSF programme stage as a dialogue platform for international players

To coincide with the signing of the two agreements, Elena K. Sokova (Executive Director, VCDNP) opened the topic area this afternoon with a keynote speech on the role of new technologies in nuclear safety. Afterwards, high-ranking representatives of both organizations - Elena K. Sokova and Lars van Dassen (Executive Director, WINS) - discussed the social, regulatory and technical challenges in the area of tension between innovation and nuclear security in the IDSF session "Digital Transformation and the Security Impact on Nuclear Ecosystems and Non-Proliferation" moderated by Donald Dudenhoeffer (Cyber Security Expert, AIT) together with Paul Smith (Professor at the School of Computing and Communications, Lancaster University, UK), Ulrik Ahnfeldt-Mollerup (Head of Section at the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, UNOCT) and Rodney Busquim (Head of the Information Management Section, Division of Nuclear Security, Department of Nuclear, Safety and Security, International Atomic Energy Agency – IAEA)

In addition, the VCDNP organized a special workshop on "Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security of High-Risk Critical Infrastructure", which was moderated by Sarah Case Lackner (Senior Fellow, VCDNP) and discussed with experts from business, international organizations and authorities - including Szilvia Tóth (Cyber Security Officer, OSCE Secretariat, Transnational Threats Department, Austria), Daniele Sangion (CSO UniCredit Bank Austria) and Stefan Brandl (Director of Information Security at the Austrian State Printing House) - both the risks and opportunities of AI in dealing with critical infrastructure.

With the signing of the two agreements, AIT underlines its special expertise in the responsible development of digital technologies made in Austria and once again its role as an international hub for research and cooperation in the field of digital security - and as a bridge builder between technology, security policy and global cooperation.

Helmut Leopold, Head of Center for Digital Safety & Security, AIT: "A sustainable design of technology can only be achieved through an intensive dialogue between technology developers, policymakers, authorities and technology users in a global context, as part of an ongoing 'technology shaping process'. Technology must serve people, ensuring that we do not become

victims of poorly designed technology. Newly established global collaborations are an important contribution to the positive digital transformation of our society."

Andreas Kugi, Scientific Director of the AIT: "Digital security is central to the sustainable success of digitalization. Through the strategic collaborations now concluded with WINS and VCDNP, we are not only strengthening Austria's role as an international hub for cybersecurity research, but are also making a significant contribution to the further development of global standards and awareness for the secure and responsible use of digital technologies. At AIT, we combine cutting-edge technical research with strategic networking and thus provide impetus for a globally responsible digital transformation."

About AIT

Today, the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology is regarded as a European specialist for advanced cyber security solutions. Based on its many years of research expertise, which includes a broad know-how and technology portfolio in the field of cyber security, the AIT has developed a modern simulation and training environment - the AIT Cyber Range - as the basis for the implementation of innovative training and exercise concepts for operators of critical infrastructures and authorities, as well as companies from business and industry. Since 2022, the AIT has been globally active as the world's first IAEA Collaborating Centre in the field of cyber security for the development of capabilities to increase nuclear safety in the IAEA member states. Further information:

<https://cyberrange.at/>

About VCDNP

The Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) promotes international peace and security by conducting research, facilitating dialogue, and building capacity on nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and nuclear security. Our research and analysis provide actionable policy recommendations for decision-makers. We host public events and facilitate constructive, results-oriented dialogue among national governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society. The VCDNP is an international non-governmental organisation established on the initiative of the Austrian government and a member of the [EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium](#), which coordinates a Europe-wide network of think tanks and research institutes, supported by the European Union.

About WINS

WINS is an international non-governmental organisation committed to building a global community of nuclear security professionals who are willing to work together to strengthen the security of nuclear and other radioactive materials. It was established in September 2008 during the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and has grown to include more than 9,000 members in 166 countries. WINS' primary purpose is to improve the professionalism and competence of all those involved in nuclear security so nuclear and other radioactive materials are not used for terrorist or other criminal purposes by any actor, whether State or non-State. It promotes knowledge sharing and best practices through workshops and webinars, dozens of guidance documents, 10 certified training programmes in four languages, and benchmarking and evaluation services.

About #IDSF25

The digital transformation presents states and organizations with the challenge of preserving their sovereignty while promoting global solidarity in the fight against cyber threats. Digital sovereignty emphasizes control over national data and infrastructure, while digital solidarity builds on international cooperation to develop common security standards and share knowledge. From June 4-6, 2025, the 4th International Digital Security Forum (IDSF) at MuseumsQuartier Vienna focuses on discussing this crucial balance from different technological and thematic perspectives. Topics include cybersecurity in a globalized world, AI-driven critical infrastructure security, PeaceTech initiatives and the role of technology diplomacy in the age of artificial intelligence. Further information: www.idsf.io

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