EU CYBER DIRECT

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
**Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation**

CLOSING THE GAP 2022

RESPONSIBILITY IN CYBERSPACE: NARRATIVES AND PRACTICE

8-9 June 2022
Egmont Palace, Brussels, Belgium
Conference organised in cooperation with the Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs of Belgium

CALL FOR PAPERS

Rationale

The European Union Cyber Diplomacy Initiative – EU Cyber Direct project – joins forces with the Belgian Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs and numerous research institutions and civil society organisations around the world to organize the second edition of the Closing the Gap Conference. This two-day conference aims to explore more rigorously one of the key concepts in the international debates about peaceful use of cyberspace: responsibility.

In the past decades, the discussions at the United Nations have led to the emergence of a framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Encompassing both obligations from international law, norms of responsible behaviour, confidence-building measures and capacity building, this framework marks certain behaviour in cyberspace as acceptable or unacceptable, either from a legal or political perspective. It serves as a point of reference for state behaviour in cyberspace. In parallel, an increasing number of actors, including states and nongovernmental organizations, are advocating for compliance with this framework and other normative endeavours and for strengthening accountability in cyberspace. By focusing on responsibility and accountability as such, we hope to bring to the fore the variety of views, ideas and mechanisms from different disciplines – law, international relations, political sciences, sociology, behavioural sciences – that influence practices of state and non-state actors in cyberspace.

Goals

The conference has three primary objectives:

1. Forging collaboration between scholars and practitioners to produce evidence-based policymaking and policy-relevant research;

2. Encouraging productive exchanges between different generations of scholars (emerging talents and established researchers), sectors (government, private sector, academia, NGOs) and regions (Global South-North);
3. Fostering interdisciplinary approaches and encourage discussions between disciplines (law, political science, international relations, economics, geopolitics, IT, media studies, etc.).

Process

The organizers invite interested authors to submit their paper proposals on topics linked to the main theme of the conference, including for instance:

- Different conceptualisations of *responsibility* in cyberspace;
- Exploration of narratives and practices regarding responsible behaviour in cyberspace;
- Mechanisms and tools for promoting responsibility in cyberspace, including rules and principles of international law applicable to cyber behaviour, norms of responsible behaviour in cyberspace;
- The role of non-state actors in shaping the framework(s) of responsible behaviour.

We are looking for contributions that are grounded on solid research on which the author would build on, but letting aside the so-called 'academic scaffolding, to focus on the policy implications and potential recommendations that may be inferred from their work. We are particularly interested in paper proposals which approach the field in 'out of the box' ways and which critically engage with existing policies and frameworks in a constructive, imaginative, and substantively well-informed manner.

How to submit your abstract

Those interested in participating in the Closing the Gap Conference are invited to send an abstract of no more than 500 words to closingthegap@fgga.leidenuniv.nl by Monday 14 March 2022. The outcome of the selection process will be communicated after 16 March 2022.

Output

The organizers will invite selected authors to contribute to an edited volume to be published in fall 2022. The edited volume will also have a policy-oriented focus. From that perspective, the published contributions will be relatively short (5.000 words) and should focus on the policy implications and potential recommendations of the research conducted by their authors.

Practical information

The organizers will cover full costs of participation for authors of the selected papers. Due to COVID-related restrictions currently in place, participants from outside of the EU may have to anticipate an earlier arrival to Belgium in order to conduct a PCR test and stay in isolation until the result is returned (up to 24 hours).

Tentative Timeline

February 2022:	Publication of the call for abstracts
28 February 2022:	Deadline for the submission of the abstracts (500 words)
14 March 2022	Extended deadline for submission of abstracts (500 words)
16 March 2022:	Information to selected authors
25 April 2022:	Publication of the program of the conference
1 June 2022:	Deadline for the submission of a draft version of the papers
8-9 June 2022:	Closing the Gap Conference
1 September 2022:	Deadline for the submission of the final version of the papers
Fall 2022:	Publication of the edited volume