Closing Remarks

Ambassador a.h. Michel SPINELLIS

Director General of the General Directorate of National Defence Policy

and International Relations

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

As we come to the conclusion of this constructive conference, allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the insights and depth of the discussions that have taken place over the last two days.

The topics addressed — from the geopolitical implications of AI to operational and ethical considerations — reflect not only the complexity but also the urgency of shaping a responsible path forward for Artificial Intelligence in the domains of security and defence.

It is now beyond doubt that the integration of AI has fundamentally transformed the means and methods of conducting military operations. The rapid adoption of AI across allied forces is already reinforcing deterrence and defence postures.

We have seen how AI applications provide significant operational advantages and augment human capabilities in complex and high-risk operational environments.

AI also offers us tools to enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict. Improved targeting accuracy, real-time risk assessments, and the more precise delivery of humanitarian assistance — provided that these technologies are used in full compliance with International Humanitarian Law and ethical norms.

In the same vein, AI-enabled decision support systems offer both risks and benefits. They can provide predictive analysis and assist operators and commanders in the planning and execution of multi-domain operations. Yet, we must be mindful that the speed and autonomy these systems bring could also reduce human oversight, potentially lowering the threshold for the use of lethal force and increasing the risk of unintended escalation.

We have also heard valuable insights into the potential role of AI in crisis management, incident response, and recovery. From early warning systems that facilitate prevention to tools that can enable faster and more coordinated responses, the potential is considerable. However, the key challenge remains: how do we achieve the necessary balance between autonomy and human judgment — between speed and prudence — in today's dynamic security landscape?

A recurring theme in our deliberations has been the moral and legal responsibilities arising from the use of AI-enabled military systems. The ability of AI to detect, select, and engage targets raises profound questions about proportionality, distinction, and accountability. Algorithms cannot — and should not — replace human conscience and judgment. The development and deployment of these systems must, therefore, fully comply with International Humanitarian Law and should remain under a human chain of command and control, particularly in the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).

The ongoing discussions within the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS remind us of the vital importance of setting clear boundaries — not only technological and operational, but also normative. Despite states 'differing approaches, we must work to bridge these perspectives. Regulation must be proactive, inclusive, and adaptive, reflecting both state responsibilities and individual accountability in the use of force.

Another important point raised during the conference is the dual-use nature of AI. The same tools that can support defensive missions can also be misused for disinformation, cyberattacks, or psychological operations. The malicious use of AI to manipulate public opinion, spread deepfakes, or target peacekeeping operations with propaganda poses a direct threat to democratic institutions and trust in international mechanisms.

We have also discussed the critical role of defence industries in this challenging transformation. The private sector plays an increasingly central role in driving innovation. That is why frameworks for ethical standards, transparency, and public-private partnerships are essential to ensure alignment with democratic values and strategic priorities.

Dear Participants,

AI is a game-changing technology. But how we choose to integrate, regulate, and govern it will determine whether it becomes a tool for peace or a catalyst for instability. As several sessions have reminded us, we are walking a thin line between innovation and militarization, between empowerment and overreach.

This is not just a technological debate — it is fundamentally a political, ethical, and human one. And it demands nothing less than our collective wisdom and unwavering commitment to upholding the principles that bind us: responsibility, transparency, accountability, and respect for human dignity.