

The Impact of the War in Ukraine on the Scientific and Research Community, an interview with Polina Sinovets



Polina Sinovets (PhD) is the Head of the Odessa Center for Nonproliferation (OdCNP) and an associate Professor at the Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University. Author of more than 70 research publications in scientific journals in Ukraine, the US and Russia, her scientific interests include: the nuclear policies of state actors, the non-proliferation regime and nuclear deterrence theory. She is a member of the editorial staff of the international scientific journals: "ONU Herald" and "Political Life".

Russia's war of aggression is having a devastating humanitarian impact on Ukraine. No aspect of the country's social and economic life has been spared, including scientific and research activities. How has the Ukrainian scientific community reacted to this awful situation?

Honestly, there is no unanimity in the research community's reaction to the war. Some of us remain in Ukraine, observing and commenting on the situation, some have left the country and are seeking to develop their activities abroad. Our Odessa Center for Nonproliferation found its temporary home in Malta University, but we keep working on nuclear issues, stimulated by the war against Ukraine.

To what extent have Ukrainian scientists and researchers received help and assistance from partner countries and international research networks? What type of support do they expect? What are the main priorities in this regard?

The biggest help and support has come from the EUNPD Consortium and its separate members, in particular when it comes to increasing cooperation in the research and teaching dimensions. The EU Consortium asked OdCNP members to perform some paid analytical work. Moreover, SIPRI involved us in organising a Stockholm Summer School on Armament and Disarmament which is a great pleasure for us as we have long experience in organising the same events back home in Odessa for 15 years already. Along with that, we work in cooperation with VCDNP where I have a research fellowship within the project on new arms control initiatives.

Our main priorities are to keep working on our activities even though we are not currently in Ukraine, which became possible due to the huge support and cooperation with Consortium members and great individuals such as Sibylle Bauer, Benjamin Hautecouverture and Elena Sokova.

The EUNPDC has been in constant contact with your centre since the outbreak of the war. How can the Consortium contribute concretely, in your view, to the efforts aimed at ensuring that the Ukrainian scientific community remains an active part of the international research community?

The Consortium is currently performing this work with us by putting us in front of their initiatives on non-proliferation research and training. This is something we used to do in Ukraine, but currently due to the Consortium support we are enjoying much wider outreach for our work and activities.

The EUNPDC will soon start a new cycle of activities, in light of the current situation in Ukraine. What issues do you think the Consortium will need to address in the coming months?

I believe the EUNPD should give more visibility to Ukraine (which is currently being done, but it is important to keep the level of involvement) to give Ukrainian members more possibilities to attract attention to Russia's war against Ukraine and its influence over the world nuclear order, in particular, arms control and the non-proliferation system.

First Lessons from the Ukraine War

On 16-17 May, the Foundation for Strategic Research, organised an ad hoc seminar in Brussels on the impact of the war in Ukraine on non-proliferation, disarmament, arms and export controls with the participation of over 130 experts, including representatives of almost all EU countries.

The seminar, organised on behalf of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium, brought together leading European experts as well as EU officials and representatives of EU member states to provide a first assessment of the lessons learned from the conduct of military operations, including, in particular, the use of various types of missiles and new technologies. Other central themes were the emergence of non-conventional threats related to nuclear weapons, civilian nuclear facilities as well as chemical and biological issues. The EU's response, in particular the sanctions and export control measures adopted against Russia, were also analysed in detail. Finally, the impact of the war on the European security architecture and wider global order were debated.

The following summarises a number of elements that emerged from the discussion:

The Ukraine war witnessed the first large-scale use by Russia of long-range precision-guided conventional – both ballistic and cruise – missiles. Such capability turned out to be significantly bigger than many had anticipated. This has provided analysts with fresh evidence about the efficacy and availability (or lack thereof) of some of these designs in Russia's arsenal as well as of Russia's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) targeting capabilities.

The ongoing war will also impact plans to enhance and modernise EU export controls and its cooperation with partners – e.g., in the context of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council. Against this backdrop, the seminar addressed the new risks associated with trade in emerging technologies.

The EU has for the first time activated the recently established European Peace Facility aimed at facilitating the provision of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine. Weapon deliveries entail, however, risks of diversion and misuse, widely discussed at the seminar.

Russia has conducted a vast disinformation campaign about the alleged development of biological weapon capabilities in Ukraine without providing any documented evidence. Its allegations about violations by Ukraine of the Chemical Weapons Convention have been even more vague. This campaign has raised fears that Russia could use chemical or biological weapons in Ukraine, openly or in the context of false flag operations.

Benjamin Hautecouverture
Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS)



Funded by
the European Union

*E-newsletter of the European Network of Independent Non-Proliferation
and Disarmament Think Tanks*

Latest Publications

'Navigating Chinese–Russian nuclear and space convergence and divergence', Lora Saalman, EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Papers, no. 78, 04/2022

Balancing the three pillars of the NPT: How can promoting peaceful uses help. Ingrid Kirsten and Mara Zarka, EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Papers, no. 79, 05/2022

Hypersonic missile proliferation: An emerging European problem? Timothy Wright, EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Papers, no. 80, 05/2022

Survey of the Status of Small and Very Small Missiles, Preventive Arms Control for Small and Very Small Armed Aircraft and Missiles, Jürgen Altmann and Dieter Suter- Report No. 2, Chair Experimental Physics 3, TU Dortmund University. 2022

Network Calls

Cluster Leader, Arms Control and Disarmament – Research and Policy Advice Department

The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) seeks to hire an experienced cluster leader for the Arms Control and Disarmament Cluster. The position will consist on analysing arms-related developments, create related knowledge and insights, deduce the policy implications, develop policy recommendations, offer general and specific policy advice, and organise related events. Closing date: **15th June 2022**. More information: [here](#)

Research Associate for Defense Economics and Military Analysis

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) seeks a Research Associate for Defense Economics to join the Defense and Military Analysis Program (DMAP). The proposed position involves a full-time, permanent contract. Closing date: **30th June 2022**. More information: [here](#)

EU NEWS

Declaration by the EU High Representative On Russian Cyber Operations in Ukraine

On 10 May, Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, [outlined](#) the European Union's condemnation of cyber-attacks undertaken by Russia against Ukraine.

The denunciation refers to the Kremlin's actions against the Ukrainian satellite network KA-SAT, operated by Viasat, which occurred minutes before the start of the invasion on 24 February 2022. The satellite attack was aimed at facilitating Russian entry into the foreign state territory, causing communication disruptions and damages to public authorities, businesses and private users, going so far as to interfere with the operations of some EU member states.

Reiterating the European intention to support Ukraine following the unprovoked and unjustified invasion perpetrated by Russia, Borrell then reported how further deterrence and prevention measures are being considered to manage the possibility of similar events in the future.

The extent of damage reported by Ukraine has not been made public, but it is known that both Ukrainian police and military forces had contracts with KA-SAT. The United States, Canada, Estonia and the United Kingdom have joined in support of the accusations made by the European Union, confirming how the damage from Russia's malicious action irreparably affected devices connected to the Internet even beyond the Kremlin's primary target.

NETWORK NEWS

Young Women in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Mentorship Programme - 2nd Edition

The Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) and the International Affairs Institute (IAI) invite female undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students as well as recent graduates to apply to a Young Women in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Mentorship Programme. The mentorship programme, seeks to engage young women in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament and will pair successful applicants with well-known experts to establish a mentoring relationship. Additionally, networking and career and skills development opportunities will be offered through seminars, workshops, and other activities.

The deadline for applications is **8 July 2022**.

More information [here](#)

RUSI Land Warfare Conference 2022

The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) Land Warfare Conference is the UK's pre-eminent gathering of the international land forces community, hosted annually on behalf of the UK's Chief of the General Staff. Discussing the war in Ukraine, the renewed role of military ground forces and the integration for complex environments, the conference will bring together allies and partners to debate how armies are ensuring mission readiness while pursuing technological transformation. The event will be held **from 28 June to 29 June 2022**, at Church House, Westminster.

More information: [here](#).

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the EU NPD Network and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union