

**Opening remarks of Mr. Timo Soini, Minister for
Foreign Affairs, Timo Soini
HELSINKI CYBER SPIRIT 2017
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It is my pleasure to open the Helsinki Cyber Spirit 2017. I am especially happy to welcome our very prominent guest speakers and panelists.

This conference is first of its kind to take place in Helsinki. It is also very timely. A widespread cyberattack affected a large number of countries around the world only some weeks ago. It was a serious wake up call. We need to be more alert. We need to do our homework properly in order to increase our resilience. We need to be ready.

Cyber threats do not stop at our borders. We need to realize that not a single nation can cope alone with the cyberspace related issues. We need to work together. Cooperation is needed to counter cyber threats and also to fully exploit the potential of cyber in developing our modern societies. Cyber and digitalisation can bring us security and also economic and social welfare.

I would like to underline the importance of the strategic perspective of cyber threats. Cyber is not just a technical issue of malware. Public debate tends to forget this from time to time. Our societies and economies are depending on digitalization and the free use of internet. Our schools, hospitals, businesses,

critical infrastructures - such as energy delivery - rely on digital systems. Our defence and security structures are vulnerable to attacks. Potential adversaries have invested massively in cyber in order to take use of the existing vulnerabilities in our societies. We need to have comprehensive strategies to counter state and non-state actors. We need to strengthen deterrence and capabilities and ensure that our societies are resilient to attacks that cannot be prevented.

Cyber issues have rightly gained more importance on the international foreign and security policy agenda. They have become a prominent part of the Finnish foreign, security and defense policies. According to our cybersecurity strategy Finland wants to be a forerunner in threat preparedness and in managing the disturbances caused by these threats. This requires consistent domestic efforts. But as I mentioned, nobody can do this alone. Finland wants to act both regionally and bilaterally. Hence Finland wants to be actively engaged in international cooperation; for example in EU, NATO, UN, OSCE, OECD and the Council of Europe.

We need to develop international policies and rules and exchange best practices. The agenda is wide: It includes: international law and norms, cyber security in a wider sense, human rights and privacy questions, cybercrime, cyber defence, internet governance and capacity building of developing countries.

We need to develop trust by working together. Governments, private sector, researchers and civil society need to work together both nationally and internationally.

I would like to underline the importance of private sector in cyber field. Considering that the private sector provides more than 80 % of our critical infrastructure this relation should be more than just a partnership. It needs to be an active, two way cooperation and teamwork. Dialogue between governments, academia and private sector is needed if we want to be up to date of the rapid development of technologies.

We have witnessed a dramatic change in our security environment. Hybrid threats are part of this change – and issues related to cyberspace are of course part of this broader concept.

Hybrid threats and hybrid tactics have become one of the most prominent security challenges. Hybrid activities have become a permanent part of the European security environment. Hybrid means have been used as a tool both in power politics and in military conflict in Europe. Coercive and subversive activity to confuse, complicate and hinder decision-making processes has increased.

The use of hybrid strategies will put the resilience of our societies to the test. Hybrid attacks seek to exploit internal weaknesses and to turn the openness of our societies against us.

To tackle hybrid threats, we need societal resilience.

As is the case with cyber – we need international cooperation. Finland is happy to host the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, which will commence its work this summer and which is open to EU Members States and NATO Allies. It will support us to develop preparedness and civil-military capabilities to counter hybrid threats. The Centre will engage in strategic-level analysis, consulting, exercises and training. We hope that this Centre will closely cooperate with other Centres of Excellence relevant to countering hybrid threats, such as NATO Centre of Excellence in Tallinn dealing with cyber defense.

For Finland, enhancing cooperation on hybrid threats within the EU and between the EU and NATO is a key priority. It is also important to see how we can enhance the EU-NATO cooperation in cyberspace related issues.

You will have a full day in tackling all these issues and to exchange best practices, set goals and consider possible solutions together. In the cyber field our main aim is to preserve the universal, free and secure internet with full respect of human rights.

With these words I wish you fruitful discussions on these important issues.