A three-day workshop under the EU's TAIEX instrument entitled "*The role of the EU's Cyber Ecosystem in the global cyber security stability*" finished today in Thessaloniki, Greece.

This was a unique common initiative between the European Commission, the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Greek Ministry for Digital Governance and the Western Balkan authorities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo[1]*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

It brought together around 36 decision makers from the areas of Cyber Diplomacy, Cyber Crime, Cyber Defence, Digital Transformation and National CERTs (Cyber Emergency Response Teams) from the six Western Balkan partners, providing a common platform to exchange experiences and best practice from the field with over 20 EU and EU Member State experts.

The first day of the conference, June 20, the EU institutions with cyber related tasks presented the EU's Cybersecurity Ecosystem. On the second day, National Authorities took the floor to outline their experiences, lessons learnt, best practice and the specific challenges they currently face in the area of Cyber Diplomacy, Cyber Crime, Cyber Defence and Digital Transformation. The third day was dedicated to a cyber incident simulation organised by ENISA. It was based on a close-to-life scenario to test national cybersecurity structures and promote cooperation in cyber among Western Balkan partners and the EU member states.

Francisco López-Menchero, Acting Head of Unit for the TAIEX instrument at the European Commission, stressed the importance of cooperating with the region on cybersecurity matters: "*Increasing the cyber resilience and capacities in the Western Balkans is closely in line with the key policy frameworks of the European Union and indeed an integral part of our Enlargement policy*".

At the workshop, the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs noted that "*Greece understands that cyber security is a global challenge. We therefore contribute to the fullest extent possible to the EU's efforts to boost the cyber capacity building of our Western Balkan partners. It is in the collective interest of all to promote due diligence, share best practices, and build cyber capacities.*"

ENISA's Head of Capacity Building Unit **Demosthenes Ikonomou** stressed: "*Practice makes perfect - this is true both for cybersecurity resilience and cooperation structures within the EU, as well as for those in the EU's partners in the Western Balkans. That's why testing and walking through these cyber exercises together is so important.*"

The type of programme is intended to familiarize the administrations with the main pillars of the EU cyber ecosystem and how they can reinforce the global security stability by strengthening their cyber resilience, build trust and upscale the cooperation among the global actors. It especially allows mid and senior-ranking officials to exchange views and share best practice on cyber-related topics.

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[1] *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

The **European Security and Defence College (ESDC)** is an EU body embedded in the External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Union (EU) that provides training and education at EU level in the field of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission. TAIEX supports public administrations with regard to the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as facilitating the sharing of EU best practice.

The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) is the Union's agency dedicated to achieving a high common level of cybersecurity across Europe. ENISA contributes to EU cyber policy, enhances the trustworthiness of ICT products, services and processes with cybersecurity certification schemes, cooperates with Member States and EU bodies, and helps Europe prepare for the cyber challenges of tomorrow.