



Co-funded by
the European Union



Nordic Council of Ministers'
Office in Estonia

Information Package

30. November 2025

Contents

- 1. Introduction and objectives of the Conference**
- 2. Programme format and main themes**
- 3. Practical Information**
- 4. Conference agenda and experts:**
 - **Thursday, 4th December 2025** Arrivals and sightseeing in Tallinn
 - **Friday, 5th December 2025. CONFERENCE DAY ONE**, Toila Spa Hotell
 - **Saturday, 6th December 2025. CONFERENCE DAY TWO**
 - **Sunday, 7th of December 2025. DAY THREE. and Conclusions**
- 5. Conference venue**
- 6. Contacts**

1. Introduction and Objectives of the Conference

The geopolitical shock and the consequences following from the Russian invasion in Ukraine are also influencing security and democracy development in three key regions: Charting Ukraine's and Moldovan's Future in European Union, conscious Nordic-Baltic security policies to becoming NATO members and global & regional influence on Mediterranean security environment. We will discuss the role of CSOs and different stakeholders in achieving peace and the importance of intercultural dialogue in healing divides and reconciling societies. Key foreign and security policy issues plus development aid questions will be discussed mostly from the perspective of the African, Euro-Mediterranean region, Northern and Eastern parts of Europe.



Main Goal: Explore the impact of development aid on European security and discuss scenarios for achieving peace and security in regional conflicts through international cooperation. The conference focuses on translating political promises into action, sharing lessons learned, and highlighting best practices for local and international participants.

The conference is an opportunity to reaffirm the significance of the work of the European Union development aid, NATO, OSCE and its member states for promoting peace on the continent and achieving a safer, greener, socially sustainable and digitally integrated community.

This important three-day event will gather development aid organisations, regional networks of practitioners, distinguished policymakers, civil society organisations, youth, analysts, politicians, experts, development cooperation actors, researchers, governmental institutions and community leaders from Europe, Middle East/ North Africa / Central and West Africa and beyond to discuss critical issues surrounding development cooperation, humanitarian aid, existing crises and community resilience.

At this conference, the DAD (**Development Aid Declaration**) will be finalised and approved, together with networking plans, which will be submitted to the European Commission, International Institutions, international and governmental organizations, media and various of thematic networks who is working on achievement of peace, security, democracy, rule of law and support of CSOs in Build Resilient Societies.

The conference, organized by Sillam'e Society for Child Welfare (Estonia), Peace Child Estonia, Green Habito (Finland), and EuroMeduc (Greece) networks, aims to bring development cooperation experts, civil society organisations, international donors, governmental bodies, youth networks, and security experts to engage in high-level dialogue on “*The impact and effectiveness of development cooperation on European & Global security in times of turbulence.*”

Security and Civil Society Conference:

- **As a place of networking**, the conference offers rich opportunities to meet peers from across Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond — to exchange ideas, forge partnerships and build lasting cooperation networks.

- **As a platform for cooperation**, it emphasises cross-sectoral collaboration — between governments, NGOs, donors, academia and the private sector — in order to co-create action plans and the “Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Aid Declaration”.
- **As a forum for debate**, the conference tackles urgent questions: how can development cooperation strengthen European and Global security in times of turbulence? How can civil society and local communities respond to hybrid threats, aid challenges and democratic shocks? Through interactive sessions and world-café style working groups, participants will deliberate strategies, share best practices, and propose concrete next steps.

[Join us to connect, cooperate and contribute to shaping resilient societies and responsive development agendas for the future.](#)

[More about the conference: <https://conference.sscw.ee/conference/>](https://conference.sscw.ee/conference/)

The conference is co-financed by the **European Union Cohesion Policy Fund**, Estonian National Foundation of Civil Society, British Council, Nordic Council of Ministers office in Estonia, Green Habito and EuroMeduc Networks.



2. Programme format and main themes

The conference will feature key note speeches, high-level panel discussions, practical skills workshops, study visits, a round table, and World Café working groups, culminating in the development of the “Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Aid Declaration.” This declaration will outline how societies can adapt to emerging global challenges while advancing effective development cooperation, humanitarian response, and community resilience.

Participants are expected to share experiences, highlight perspectives on the “art of the possible,” and deliver targets and action ideas for implementation at local, national, and international levels.

Conference main themes:

- Global challenges and their implications for Estonia, Europe, and the international community.
- Development policy and humanitarian assistance: needs, challenges and expectations.
- The future of international cooperation in turbulent times: possible scenarios
- The role of local governments and civil society organizations in building resilient communities.

Key topics include development cooperation policy implementation, effective and coordinated responses to security (Russian aggression), humanitarian and development challenges, Building Democratic and Community Resilience, Advancing the 2030 Agenda, Exploring new approaches to democratic governance, digital participation, and citizen security.

3. Practical Information and agenda

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The working language is English; Estonian/ French and Arabic translations will be provided according to the needs.

EVENT TYPE

This Conference is designed as a hybrid event with most participants attending in person but organisers will provide the possibility to join virtually for interested experts. Also we will encourage participation of CSO representatives from Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Africa, Euromed and Nordic-Baltic regions.

ACCOMMODATION

All the delegates are accommodated in [Toila Spa Hotel](#) and [Narva Hotel](#) . The conference fee consists of accommodation in shared rooms (twin and triple). Private rooms are available on request and additional fee.

FOOD

Throughout the conference agenda, participants will be provided with a selection of nutritious and buffet meal options to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience. The catering includes:

- Welcome coffee time with light snacks upon arrival
- Daily coffee break offers tea, coffee, water, some pastries, fruits, and small snacks.
- Hot lunch buffet featuring a variety of meat and/or fish, and vegetarian dishes, salads, and soups.
- Conference dinner with a balanced menu highlighting local flavours (vegetarian and dietary options available upon request)

All meals are designed to accommodate a range of dietary needs. Participants with specific dietary restrictions are kindly asked to inform the organisers in advance so that suitable arrangements can be made. Fresh drinking water will be available throughout the day in all conference areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Please arrive in Tallinn on 4 December 2025, no later than 17:00. We will meet in front of Hestia Hotel Europe. If you have chosen to participate in the afternoon programme, please contact us in the WhatsApp group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/HYU3yOzAA7L1SKjDec0NXW>

Transportation to the hotels and venue will be organised following way:

Security and Civil Society Conference 2025

- 4.12 at 18.00 pm from Tallinn, in front of Hestia Hotel Europe (Paadi 5) to the hotels (Toila Spa Hotell and Narva Hotell) estimated arrival time approx 21.30
- 5.12 at 8.20 am from Narva Hotel to Toila Spa Hotel Conference Venue and back at 21.00 pm to Narva Hotel.
- 6.12 at 8.20 am from Narva Hotel to Toila Spa Hotel Conference Venue .
- 7.12 at 8.30 am from Narva Hotel and at 10.00 am from Toila Spa Hotel to the Tallinn airport and ferry D Terminal.

NB!!! Detailed information on the arrival and departure buses from Tallinn to the hotel and back can be found here: [bus schedule and list]

(https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gzRcD-tblew9uCtmvPSVFjxLYI5cLyWxslb_kwJEJE/edit?usp=sharing)

FREE TIME and LEASURE

Participants will have the opportunity to explore Tallinn's Old Town on the arrival day. On Saturday, they may visit museums and meet with local organisations and community groups.

In addition, delegates staying in the hotels can enjoy spa facilities after the official conference programme each day.

Start planning your holidays in Estonia by visiting webpage: <https://visitestonia.com/en>



Visit Tallinn's official tourism portal and Step inside a Christmas fairytale :
<https://www.visitallinn.ee/eng/visitor/christmas>

Visit also North East Estonia event entertainment and tourism platform:
<https://idaviru.ee/en/>

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

You are warmly invited to join us for the Security & Civil Society Conference 2025, held virtually via Zoom.

ZOOM CONFERENCE LINK

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85491680358?pwd=r6asaJGs0dhxJaaesEl7sBsh6c0xKf.1>

Meeting ID: 854 9168 0358

Passcode: 543942

COMMUNICATION AND EVENT TYPE

1. Please use the conference hashtag #SECCON2025 and our social network addresses when sharing information about the event.
2. We encourage you to use the official conference hashtag and our social media channels to promote the event.

Conference official facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/687812727360511>

1. Please use the conference hashtag - and our social network addresses <https://www.facebook.com/SSCW.ESTONIA/> when sharing information about the event.

2. We encourage you to use the official conference hashtag and our social media channels to promote the event: #SECCIV2025 #SECCON_EE2025 #SSCWESTONIA #HUMANEE2025

AGENDA

Thursday, 4th December 2025 - Arrivals and sightseeing in Tallinn.

NB! The meeting and gathering point for participants and organisers in Tallinn is the Hestia Hotel Europe ([Paadi str 5](#)).

When you arrive, please use public transport (tram or bus) to reach the hotel.

The arrival and registration of the delegates will be done on the 4th and 5th December 2025.

13.00 – 16.00 Visiting NGOs: MONDO, Refugee Council and Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation.

13.00 – 14.00 Visit of government institutions (Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV), Estonian Parliament and Representation of the European Commission in Estonia) for registered participants only. Please bring your passport.” and Sightseeing tours in Tallinn

Departure at 18.00 pm to Toila Spa Hotel & other hotels (Accommodation and Venue place)

Arrival in Toila Spa Hotel at 20.00 pm and Dinner

20.00 – 22.00 Organising Committee meeting

Friday, 5th December 2025. CONFERENCE DAY ONE, Toila Spa Hotell

09.00 – 10.00 Registration and coffee

10.00 – 11.00 The Opening Ceremony and keynote speeches

Moderator of the Conference: Amb. Hatem Atallah

– Welcome speech by **Kairi Saar-Isop**, Director General, Department for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

– Welcome speech by **Maria Gratschew**, director of Nordic Council of Ministers’ Office in Estonia

– Welcome and keynote speech by **Elis Paemurd, Deputy Head of Representation of European Commission in Estonia, Head of Media and Communication**

– Keynote speech by **Rilli Lappalainen**, President of CONCORD Europe Network

11.00 – 12.30 I Panel discussion with experts, delegates and interested members of the public on “Development and aid policy in 2025: needs, challenges and expectations”

The European development policy fosters sustainable development and stability in developing countries, with the ultimate goal of eradicating extreme poverty. Development assistance is one of the pillars of the EU's external action, alongside foreign, security, and trade policies. In December 2021, the European Commission unveiled an ambitious Global Gateway investment programme for the period 2021-2027, through which the EU institutions, together with Member States, aim to develop digital technologies, green energy and clean transport networks, improve health and education systems, and promote research around the world, and in particular in developing countries. Along with the EU, there are many other governmental institutions like Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the United Nations programs and of course USA government who are providing the biggest development aid assistance in the world. The development aid policy in 2025 has been impacted from recent changes in the global geopolitics as the USA government has paused all US foreign assistance funded by or through the State Department and US Agency for International Development (USAID) and many rescue programs have been impacted. The Brutal Russian war in Ukraine has brought instability and chaos. Let's discuss the needs, challenges and future expectations of the stakeholders and actors from the global perspective.

Moderator: Ambassador Hatem Atallah, member of EMUNI's Management Board (Tunisia/Slovenia)

- Margus Gering, Head of Cooperation and Development for Ukraine, Estonian Centre for International Development
- Luc Meissner, Governance and Fragility Expert, Belgian agency for international cooperation (online)
- Eleanor Carey, Policy Analyst, Development Co-operation Research Unit, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (France, online)
- Rilli Lappalainen, President of CONCORD Network/ CEO Finnsus (Belgium/Finland)
- *Representative of EC Representation in Estonia (TBA)*

12.30 – 13.00 Working groups

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch (at the restaurant)

14.00 – 15.30 II Panel discussion with experts, delegates and interested members of public on

“Global challenges and its impact on Estonia and the World (climate change, education, social security, extremism, human rights, democracy, economic growth, humanitarian aid)

The global crisis changed the economic order, deepening the challenges developing countries will face in the decades ahead. Joblessness is making it harder for families to improve their living standards.

Growing energy needs are exacerbating the threat of climate change. Rapid population growth is overwhelming urban infrastructures. Water scarcity and inadequate food security are endangering the lives of millions. Humanitarian crises around the world leaving millions without access to food, water, shelter, and healthcare. These emergencies strain global aid systems and highlight deep inequalities in protection and support for vulnerable populations. Such strains also heighten the potential for conflict, as existing geopolitical tensions between global powers had a big impact on all aspects of our life.

Moderator: Triin Roos. Executive Director of Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (Estonia)

- Aysegul Bayar Hildgen, Civil Society Policy Analyst, Development Co-operation Research Unit, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (France)
- Michael G. Kavuklis, Political Scientist, Coordinator in Chief of the Europe, Entrepreneurship & Sustainable Development Forum of Rhodes (Greece)
- Madara Grinsteine, Marta Centre (Latvia)
- Mette Brogden, Professor at Arizona University (USA)
- Mahmoud Ezzat, Director of Center for Strategic Studies, Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt)
- Rashid Iddrisu, Director of WIACT (Spain/Ghana)

15.30 – 16.00 Working groups

16.00 – 16.15 Coffee break

16.15 – 17.30 III Panel discussion with experts, delegates and interested members of public on “The future of development cooperation in turbulent times: possible scenarios”

This panel discussion will provide participants and development actors a framework to understand, track and cope with the fast-changing and increasingly complex global context for development in terms of a multipolar divided world where global challenges are left unchecked. It looks back on the main drivers that have led us this far, and summarizes crucial challenges for actors in development. A world in which environmental challenges are addressed but at a large social cost. It looks back at what triggered the strong eco-oriented global development policy and summarizes what this has meant for the organisation of and challenges for development cooperation or a world in which a diversity of actors challenges the economic and political establishment and experiments with alternatives.

Moderator: Stefanos Vallianatos , Co-Founder of Fotoessa, Head of Greek Network of Anna Lindh Foundation (Greece)

- Janet Vähämäki, Senior Researcher, Stockholm Environment Institute and Swedish Defense Research Agency (online)

- Anita Käppeli Director of Policy Outreach, Center for Global Development Europe (Switzerland/UK)
- Dana Heiberga, Chief Officer for Development Cooperation, Head of Development Cooperation Department, Central Finance and Contracting Agency (Latvia)
- Kairi Saar-Isop, Director General, Department for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Tamta Mikeladze, Director of the Social Justice Center (Georgia)
- FCDO representative TBA, (United Kingdom)

17.30 – 17.50 Working groups

17.50 – 18.00 The concluding remarks of the Conference by Moderator: Amb. Hatem Attallah.

19.30 – 22.00 Official Reception and Estonian Culture programme

DAY TWO. Saturday, 6th December 2025

09.00 – 9.40 Elaborating Conference Declaration language on „Empowering Sustainable approach in development aid through success stories and necessary changes in the implementation policies“

09.40 – 10.00 Summary of the agreements. The conference Moderator & Working Group Rapporteurs

10.00 – 10.30 Keynote speakers on Conference Themes & Goals:

- **“What’s Next for the Global Development Agenda?”** by Rebecca Eriksson, Junior Research Fellow, Norderio (Sweden)
- **“Advocacy on Women, Peace and Security in example Eastern Neighborhood Programme of the International Development Aid Agency”** by the representative of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
- **“Sustainable Strategies for Development Cooperation to Reduce Dependency on Critical Raw Materials: The Roles of Governments, Businesses, and Civil Society”** - Associate Professor Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, Aalborg University (Denmark)

Two parallel public debates:

10.30 – 12.00 Panel discussion “Building Resilience in the face of cognitive warfare, cyber aggression and information operations”

This debate explores how societies can strengthen their resilience and security against cyber aggression (Russian) and cognitive & information warfare, focusing on the crucial role of civil society, sector stakeholder, independent media, and democratic institutions. As disinformation, propaganda, and fake news increasingly threaten public trust and social cohesion, effective fact-checking, media literacy, and community awareness have become essential defenses. The discussion will bring together experts, policymakers, civil society and private sector actors to examine strategies for

countering malign influence, safeguarding information integrity, cyber security and building collective resilience in the digital age.

Moderator: Maia Klaassen, Junior Research Fellow in Media Literacy, Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu, Coordinator of Baltic EDMO hub BECID

- Anneli Ahonen, research associate of Cardiff University, Strategic communication & influence campaigns analysis expert (UK/Sweden, online)
- Oliver Moody, Berlin Correspondent for The Times Author of Baltic: The Future of Europe (Germany, online)
- Julia Dobrowolska, Researcher, University of Warsaw (Poland)
- Gert Antsu, Diplomat, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ursula Roosmaa, Director of the British Council in Estonia

10.30 – 12.00 Community debates “The role of CSOs and Youth in fostering effective development co-operation and community change”

In times of growing political instability and global uncertainty, civil society and youth play a crucial role in strengthening the resilience of communities and driving positive social change. By promoting inclusive development cooperation, these actors contribute to enhancing democracy, social and political justice, and the protection of fundamental freedoms. Their engagement not only empowers local communities to respond effectively to crises but also ensures that development efforts remain people-centred, participatory, and sustainable.

Moderator: Anneli Ohvri, Green Tiger (Estonia)

- Zahid Mahmood, Director of British Council in Libya (UK/Libya)
- Mostafa Abbas, President of the Euro-Med Youth Federation e. V (Germany)
- Stelvy Emerson Banzouzi, Co-Founder of the Union for the New African and European Generation (France/DR Congo)
- Tetiana Revenko, Director of “Dwa Skrzydła UA” Foundation (Poland/Ukraine)
- Margit Sare, Head of Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (Estonia)
- PhD. Nikolai Tsvyatkov, Director of NGO Spero, Former Deputy chief at State Chancellery' Bureau for reintegration politics (Moldova)

12.00 – 13.00 Practical thematic session (Sharing best practices, experience and case studies)

Stakeholder in action: advancing development aid and security questions in examples of development aid and humanitarian crises in regions:

- Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia), hosted by Nikolai Tsvyatkov
- Africa region (Namibia, Ghana, DR Congo, Benin, Kenya and Tanzania), hosted by Rashid Idrissu

Security and Civil Society Conference 2025

- Mediterranean region (Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Libya), hosted by Amb. Hatem Atallah
- Other world (represented by invited experts and development agencies)

The session is organised by the invited experts and organisation representatives who are addressing development aid and humanitarian crises, community change in their work and willing to share own experience and best practices from the human rights and SDGs achievement perspective. The Session is run in the format of a world cafe where CSOs, governmental agencies and other stakeholders are sharing own practical experience.

12.00 – 13.00 Working group on official statement: Elaborating Conference Declaration language on “Towards 2030: Effective development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.00 Practical visits to Estonian CSOs and cooperation meetings (Participants will visit Estonian CSOs, discuss the role of civil society in development aid, and meet with Estonian and European officials and NGO leaders shaping development policy)

15.00 – 17.00 Estonian Culture Program: Visiting: Mining Museum in Kohtla Nõmme, Narva Museum and /or Vaivara Museum and Sillamäe City Museum (as alternative)

17.00 - 21.00 Free evening (Dinner is self-arranged)

DAY THREE. Sunday, 7th of December 2025 Conclusions

09.00– 09.30 Official Presentation and adoption of the Conference Declaration on “Towards 2030: Effective development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

09.30 – 10.00 Summary of the agreements – The conference Moderator & Working Group Rapporteurs

10.00 – 11.00 Conclusions and follow-up activities for 2026 and Official closing

11.00 – 13.00 Departure to Tallinn, Bus to the airport

CONFERENCE SPEAKER AND EXPERTS

Get to know more about the experts and their profiles on the webpage:

<https://conference.sscw.ee/experts/>

5. Conference venue

The main actions happening at [Toila Spa Hotell](#) Grand Hall, Mare Margarita and Conference centre.

NB! Please wear your conference name tag at all times while in the conference venue so that we can identify you.

THE VENUE

The venue of the conference is Toila Spa Hotel Conference Centre. Toila SPA Hotel is situated on a high seashore, overlooking the Gulf of Finland, nearby the famous Toila-Oru park and surrounded by pine forests – the air in Toila is particularly invigorating.



That's why the area has long been a favourite getaway among the creative set from Estonia and Russia. Scientists from the University of Tartu named Toila an 'air resort' as early as the late 1800s. Toila Spa nine-storey hotel accommodates up to 280 people.

To make Your vacation more enjoyable, there are many possibilities to spend Your free time: "[Toila Termid](#)" sauna complex – built in ancient Roman style, "[Orhidee](#)" sauna-paradise for adults, swimming pool, gym, aroma-relax room, clay studio, minigolf – and tennis courts, Toila skatepark, playworld for children.

Delicious food is served in a'la carte and buffet restaurants. Toila Spa have set a goal to approach each event individually, to make sure that all of the work-related meetings, conferences and product presentations are successful. We offer each client the best possible solutions for using the rooms, accommodation, catering, and free time. By considering your special requests, we create a new quality standard together. Toila SPA Hotel offers a conference hall, a banquet hall, a seminar room Star , and a meeting room Optimist.

6. Contacts

For additional information, please visit: <https://conference.sscw.ee/conference/>

- **KEY CONTACTS:**
 - In case of emergency and problems - Conference Head organiser: Mr. Vassili Golikov, tel: +372 55602993 Vassili Golikov
 - In case of conference practical, informational and registration questions: Mr. German Morris, tel. +372 55576329

"We look forward to your involvement in this significant initiative and hope to partner with you to advance discussions and solutions for addressing emerging global challenges through inclusive development and effective humanitarian cooperation. For further details or inquiries, feel free to contact us directly."