



Evening conference, 16 June 2022 17:00 – 18:30

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** organised on **Thursday 16 June 2022** by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the Royal Higher Institute for Defence.

As relations between Mali and France, and the European Union by extension, continue to degrade – culminating on 2 May 2022 with the Malian junta's revocation of the defence agreements that authorised the presence of French and European troops in the country –, Niger appears from now on to be Europe's new key strategic partner in the region. Indeed, Niger's Parliament has recently approved to host more European troops following the suspension of French-led operations Barkhane and Takuba in neighbouring Mali. Yet, strategic interest in Niger is actually far from new; this country has not only been home to the first European Union Common Security and Defence Policy mission in the Sahel region (EUCAP Sahel Niger) since 2012, but has also been at the centre of the United States' security approach in the region for many years.

While cooperation with Niger in the field of security gained in importance in the past few years – and particularly the last few months –, European and international development efforts – including of Belgium – have been ongoing for decades. What are the priority actions of the European Union in Niger? How has the reconfiguration of political and security dynamics in the region impacted local politics in Niger? What are the main challenges encountered in the implementation of the EU's policy priorities? How does the EU advance the nexus between security, development and governance in the region?

In order to answer these questions, we will have the pleasure of welcoming Ambassador Denisa-Elena Ionete, EU Ambassador to the Republic of Niger since 2018 and former EU Ambassador to Chad.

This conference will take place on **Thursday 16 June 2022 at 17.00 hours in the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**). A simultaneous interpretation into English, Dutch and French will be provided in the conference room. We thank you in advance for registering via the following link: www.defence-institute.be. **Registration is compulsory and must be received by Monday 13 June 2022 at the latest.**

(Signed)

Filip BORREMANS, MSc Eng
Air Force Colonel GS
Director-General
Royal Higher Institute for Defence

16:30: Welcome
17:00: Conference and Q&A
18:30 – 19.30: Reception