



Evening conference

30 September 2026

16:30 - 18:00

Defence Ministry Forum

The Political and Military Significance of NATO's Summit in Ankara

Dr Gerlinde NIEHUS

(independent NATO and international security expert)

Lieutenant-General aviator Geert DE DECKER

(Belgian Military Representative to NATO's Military Committee)



Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** hosted by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence** on **Wednesday 30 September 2026** from **16:30 until 18:00**.

The return of great power competition, persistent instability on NATO's borders and the rapid evolution of military technologies have reinforced the importance of transatlantic unity and collective defence. At a time when the Euro-Atlantic security environment faces its most significant challenges in decades, the decisions taken at NATO summits have become increasingly consequential for the security of Allied nations, including Belgium.

The NATO Summit in Ankara came at a pivotal moment. From strengthening deterrence and defence to sustaining support for Ukraine, addressing hybrid threats and adapting the Alliance to emerging security challenges, Allied leaders were called upon to define NATO's priorities for the years ahead. The choices made in Ankara will have far-reaching implications for European security, burden-sharing within the Alliance and the future of transatlantic cooperation.

During this evening conference, we will examine the key outcomes and strategic significance of the NATO Summit in Ankara. What are the main decisions taken by Allied leaders and what do they mean for Belgium and its armed forces? How can Belgium contribute to NATO's evolving strategic objectives while safeguarding its national security interests and strengthening its role within the Alliance?

To tackle this complex subject matter, we are honoured to welcome Dr Gerlinde Niehus, an independent NATO and international security expert and one of NATO's former Deputy Directors for Defence and Security Cooperation with NATO partner countries, as well as Lieutenant-General aviator Geert De Decker, the Belgian Military Representative to NATO's Military Committee.

This conference will be held **in English at the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**) on **Wednesday 30 September 2026 at 16:30**. Simultaneous interpretation in Dutch and French will depend on the progress of the renovation work in the Frank De Winne conference room and cannot be guaranteed at this time. Please note that online participation will not be possible.

Kindly register in advance at www.defence-institute.be. **Registration is required by Thursday 24 September 2026 at the latest.**

(Signed)

Baudouin COPPIETERS DE GIBSON, MSc Eng

Rear Admiral

Aide-de-Camp to the King

Director-general

Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16:00: Welcome
16:30: Conference and Q&A
18:00 – 19:00: Reception