

Slándáil 2020: Ireland's National Security Summit

The National Security Summit Ireland launched on the 25th September 2019 in the Westbury Hotel with a series of interesting and provocative presentations and a panel discussion on 'Protecting Democracy in the age of disinformation'. By Slándáil Director, Dr Gerry Waldron.

The speakers at the launch included The Hon. Mr Justice John L. Murray former Chief Justice of Ireland, Deputy Eamon Ryan Leader of the Green Party, member of the Oireachtas Communications Committee and International Grand Committee on Disinformation, Mr Ben Nimmo Head of Investigations at Graphika and senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Disinformation Research Laboratory, Ms Liz Carolan Executive Director of Digital Action Ireland and Dr Jane Suiter Head of the DCU Institute for Future Media and Journalism. The panel examined the prevalence of disinformation and fake news and the readiness and ability of government and state agencies to respond to that threat.

The event was a prelude to 'Slándáil 2020' Ireland's inaugural national security summit which will take place on the 25th and 26th February 2020. The summit will connect government, industry, academia and civil society in a constructive manner to encourage discussion and debate of our national security needs and requirements. Slándáil is the Irish language term for security and its broader meaning encompasses concepts of safety, protection and future stability. We believe that this name reflects the importance of the issues that will be discussed and debated at our event. In the age of climate change, emerging disruptive technologies, and greater connectivity in cyber space, Ireland's geographical position no longer offers the security, protection and stability we have become accustomed to. The time to discuss and debate our future security needs is now and members of the Defence community need to be part of that conversation.

The National Security Summit comprises 5 events across 2 days and will take place in the iconic Helix venue on DCU campus. These events are;

1. A 'Global Security Forum' which will cater for high profile debate of the world's most pressing security challenges and critically analyse their relevance to Ireland as a small, open, global economy and a state committed to the international rules based order.
2. A 'Defence, Intelligence & Security Conference' for military, police, government officials and academics. This conference aims to highlight current Irish capabilities and ask provocative questions about the future direction and needs of all security services.
3. An 'Emergency Preparedness, Response & Resilience Conference' for the state's principal response agencies, related departmental officials, and members of industry and academia. Guided by the National Risk Assessment Process, the Strategic Emergency Planning Framework and regional major emergency plans, the EPRR Conference aims to increase our capability to respond to and recover from civil emergencies, with a particular focus on informing the development of enhanced national and community resilience.
4. A 'Strategic Cyber Security Conference' to discuss Irish, European & global policy initiatives for a public and private sector audience with a particular focus on how our national cyber strategy fits into our wider security architecture and our ambitions to be a global cyber security hub.
5. An 'Industry, Innovation and Research Symposium' to highlight, important post graduate research, innovative Irish companies, and the opportunities for Irish industry in relation to EU funding and global markets in the security, defence and civil protection fields. This event will provide a platform for knowledge exchange between government, industry and academia through presentations, seminars and focused workshops. Pioneering Irish security research will be acknowledged and rewarded, Irish industry successes will be showcased and discussed and innovative solutions to current and future security challenges will be proposed and investigated.

Our aim for the summit is create a large, diverse and active national security community and increase engagement with wider society on security issues. We believe that the current



The launch of the security summit in Dublin's Westbury hotel.



crisis in defence is a symptom of a wider political and public apathy towards defence and security issues and hope over the longer term alongside a number of other initiatives to begin to address this. This event is a unique opportunity for leaders in the Defence Forces to engage directly with their peers in other services, friends and valued colleagues in academia and industry, and the wider public and I would encourage all readers to take an active interest in our agenda and proceedings. We are currently recruiting speakers, sponsors and exhibitors and welcome any assistance no matter how small from serving and former members of the Defence Forces.

The summit is organised by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis. Tickets are free for members of all uniformed and emergency services in Ireland but registration is required. For more information check out our website on www.nssi.ie, the Slándáil LinkedIn page or @slandail_nssi on twitter.



Dr Gerry Waldron



The conference will be a unique 5-seminar event to discuss Ireland's place in European and global security architecture.