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National security research programmes that complement and support efforts at EU level

BRUSSELS – One of the key objectives to the EU's Security Research (SR) programme is to support European policies, promote technological innovation and its use in the marketplace by end-users. A few member states are pursuing at national level via their own security research programme, complementary research in support of national policies.

A typical example is Austria, where several of its nationally funded projects have been commercialised. Vienna in fact was the first capital in the EU to create a national security research programme. Inspired in part by PASR – the Commission's 2003-2006 Preparatory Action Security Research pilot projects, which laid the basis for the EU's current EUR 1.4 billion SR budget – Austria's "KIRAS" programme was created in 2005.

A number of KIRAS projects have been approved for use in actual security settings or have been commercialised. These range from improved airport security methods to faster command-and-control (C2) systems for emergency response to new ways to process and use open-source intelligence data.

Like other national security research programmes, Austria's projects tend to complement the wider efforts at EU level in many areas. The EU's SR programme has financed dozens of cross-border projects to improve the interoperability of C2 systems to help restore security and safety after a crisis, for example. It also supports a number of research projects focused on exploiting open-source intelligence.

And similar to FP7's support for the societal side to security, KIRAS mandates a broad approach to the subject by taking into account socio-political, economic and cultural aspects at national and European levels. Indeed KIRAS requires that security end-users must be included in each of the projects it funds, while promoting the integration of humanities, social sciences and cultural studies into security research as well.

"Societal issues such as the acceptability of newly developed security solutions are taken into consideration during the whole project lifecycle and thus represent an integral part of the research work we fund," says Michael Brugger at Austria's Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology, which manages the programme. "Societal aspects are deeply embedded in these projects."

In broad terms, KIRAS funds projects that:

• generate knowledge needed for national security policy

• improve the subjective perception and objective quality of security of Austria's citizens

• promote security-related technology "leaps"

• boost the growth of Austria's security industry

• integrate relevant societal questions in the project's work

For further information:

FP7's Security Research programme

Austria's national security research programme (KIRAS)

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