

STRAX

Final Conference
The New Generation in Strategic Culture Research
10–12 June 2026



Concept

The study of strategic cultures has gained renewed importance in recent years, particularly in the context of global upheaval. *STRAX - Transforming strategic cultures in contemporary Europe* is a research project funded by the Research Council of Finland, bringing together researchers from Tampere University, the Finnish National Defence University, and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Launched in early 2023, the project has focused on key contemporary issues in the academic and policy debates surrounding strategic culture in Europe, including interaction, change, and agency in strategic culture.

STRAX final conference - **The New Generation in Strategic Culture Research** on 10-12 June 2026 at Botta events in Helsinki, Finland marks the culmination of the STRAX project. It will celebrate and further the project's work with a theme of "the new generation and the future of strategic culture studies". With a focus on European perspectives, the conference provides a platform for exploring the state-of-the-art in strategic culture studies. By providing insights into how deep-rooted beliefs, norms, and patterns of behaviour shape political actor's approaches to security and defence, strategic culture studies contribute to our understanding of war and peace in ways that may elude other theoretical frameworks.

The return of war at the heart of global power politics, the vast technological shifts shaping security and defence, and the increasing importance of non-state and transnational actors in war and peace both highlight the relevance of understanding strategic culture and challenge some of the field's underlining assumptions and boundaries. In the STRAX project, the goal has been to orient the research agenda towards interactive and co-operative elements of European strategic cultures, such as overlap, convergence, and the different strategic practices of the keepers of strategic culture. We have approached strategic cultural change as not strictly structural or agent-driven but as something that occurs via the interplay of agents and structures at different venues where dynamic interaction takes place. Strategic culture is not only a product of historical experience but also of present-day co-operation – often under conditions of crisis and uncertainty. The conference offers an opportunity to present research on, debate, and further these and other themes and approaches relevant to the study of strategic culture.

The conference brings together key scholars and the new generation of strategic culture researchers. Providing opportunities for dialogue between different generations of scholars and different approaches to the study of strategic culture, the conference opens doors for new ideas and new networks. For early career scholars, the conference is a chance to gain feedback on their research, advance their skills, and form networks. It creates space for future collaborations and envisages what the future of this multidisciplinary field could look like.

The conference begins with an opening reception that provides an informal setting to network but also to explore and discuss developments in Finnish strategic culture in recent years. The academic programme includes plenary sessions as well as several parallel thematic sessions with paper presentations as well as a brainstorming workshop focused on the future of the interdisciplinary field. Moreover, there will be a public seminar “Strategic thinking under stress: devising strategy in the evolving security landscape” that tackles the implications of the shifting international order and increased volatility for strategic thinking and strategy making in Europe. Key speakers include **Nathalie Tocci**, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali and Professor of the Practice at SAIS Europe, and **Sven Biscop**, Acting Director-General of Egmont, Royal Institute of International Relations and Professor at Ghent University.

Preliminary Schedule

Venue: Botta, Helsinki, Finland

Wednesday 10 June

17:00-19:00

The New Generation in Strategic Culture research meets Finnish strategic culture

Wine reception

Thursday 11 June

08:30-17:00

Plenary Session: What is the role of strategic culture research in a world of uncertainty and upheaval?

Multiple parallel sessions

Closing Session: What lies ahead for strategic culture studies?

Conference dinner

Friday 12 June

09:00-14:00

Public seminar: Strategic thinking under stress: devising strategy in the evolving security landscape

Presentation of the STRAX manual on strategic culture

Brainstorming workshops: The Future of Strategic Culture Studies

Lunch