



KEY RESULTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

“NAVIGATING DUAL-USE: BALANCING FREEDOM AND SECURITY”

Panellists: Alice Aiken (Dalhousie University, CA), Alex van Someren (Government Office for Science, GB), Carsten Breuer (Bundeswehr, DE), Ursula Staudinger (Technical University of Dresden, DE), Georg Schütte (Moderation) (Volkswagen Foundation, DE)

Europe’s science and defence sectors must adapt to address evolving security threats, from conventional military challenges to cybersecurity and hybrid warfare. While Europe has historically hesitated to integrate military research into universities, current global tensions highlight the need for collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches that include government, industry, and academia. Germany and other European nations need stable, long-term funding to support defence-related research and innovation, drawing on examples like the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in the US but ultimately developing their own models. There is also a growing emphasis on building trust and sharing knowledge between sectors and across borders, while recognising geopolitical sensitivities in international partnerships. Universities have a social responsibility to contribute to security solutions, balancing the need for openness with ethical considerations about dual-use research.

THE EXPERT PANEL ARTICULATES THE FOLLOWING CALLS TO ACTION:

Increase interdisciplinary collaboration.

- 1 — Support partnerships among government, universities, and private sectors to address security challenges, bridging traditional boundaries in Europe between science and defence.

Develop a European model for defence innovation.

- 2 — Create a uniquely European approach to defence research that leverages local expertise and adapts successful models, such as DARPA, to Europe’s context and needs.

Promote awareness of dual-use applications in research.

- 3 — Educate researchers on dual-use implications of their work and ensure ethical oversight for technologies with both civilian and military applications.

Strengthen trust-building for data sharing.

- 4 — Build trust and transparency around data-sharing practices to ensure that data can be responsibly leveraged for defence and the public good.

This expert panel is supported by Hertie Foundation and assembled in the framework of the Falling Walls Science Summit 2024 in Berlin. The Falling Walls Science Summit is a leading international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral forum for scientific breakthroughs. It commemorates the fall of the Berlin Wall and aims to promote dialogue between science and society.

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