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WORKING PAPER

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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	Belgian delegation
To:	Delegations
Subject:	European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres: the case for Belgium

Delegations will find attached a paper from Belgium to host the above-mentioned Centre in Belgium.

European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres: the case for Belgium

Our increased dependency on technology and digital infrastructure goes hand in hand with an expanding risk and vulnerability, as well as important strategic opportunities for the European Union to develop its own cybersecurity competences and products.

The recent COVID-19 crisis has stressed even more the increasing role and impact of an ever more digitalized society and economy as well as the need to guarantee its resilience and safety in line with our core European values and principles.

The importance of the creation and development of a European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres should therefore stand beyond any doubt. Moreover, in order for this Centre and the Network to achieve its maximal potential, it would be advisable to locate the Centre in Belgium. There are 4 principal reasons supporting this argument:

- **The proximity to European decision making**: The European Union's need for strategic autonomy is stressed systematically by European leaders and cybersecurity will be an important vector in this regard. Answering to the real and important needs requires knowledge-based decision-making. In order to make the best informed decisions with limited public resources it will be crucial to be able to effectively inform European decision-makers on a constant basis. Moreover, as other relevant Joint Undertakings are mainly located in Brussels, the synergies between these different technological fields should be nurtured and seized as much as possible.

- **An effective synergy with NATO and other international organisations**: The cooperation and exchange with NATO is an important cornerstone of the European cybersecurity framework. NATO has located his most important cyber infrastructure in Belgium (NATO Cyber Security Centre - NCSC) and NIAS, the largest NATO cybersecurity conference, takes place on a yearly basis in Belgium. The central position of Brussels in the international diplomatic and policy ecosystem

will certainly strengthen the leverage and impact of the European cybersecurity efforts. The recognition by the European Space Security and Education Centre in Redu as a centre of excellence for space cybersecurity services for ESA is also exemplary for what Belgium has to offer.

- **A strong and vibrant Belgian ecosystem**: The leading position of Belgian research and academia is well-known. Belgium ranks in the top 5 of European countries regarding patents and publications on cybersecurity. KU Leuven is considered to be a world leader regarding cryptography. And not to be underestimated: European analysis shows that Belgian research is more internationally focused than anywhere else in Europe, fully in line with the objective of transborder cooperation set out by the proposal. The Belgian government is also committed to this ecosystem: The 14 mio EUR support for ESEC is a clear token of our support to the industry. Belgium is committed to join the Quantum Communication Initiative Belgium considers the close cooperation between government, industry and academia on a national and international level a key vector of effective cybersecurity. Our national Centre for Cybersecurity has established for example the Cyber Security Coalition, creating a platform for close cooperation and information exchange between the government and other relevant actors.

- **A clear Belgian commitment:** Belgium stands ready to offer quality infrastructure for the centre close to the European institutions in order to favour exchanges between researchers and decision makers.