



## EVENING CONFERENCE – INVITATION

Madam, Sir,

We have the pleasure to invite you to the evening conference organised on 6 November 2014 by the Royal Higher Institute for Defence.

### Blowback Revisiting the threat from foreign fighters to Europe

*Dr Thomas HEGGHAMMER  
Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment*

*Mrs Francisca BOSTYN  
Advisor to the European Union Counter-Terrorism Coordinator*

The attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels and more recently the engagement of a coalition of the willing to combat the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Syria and Iraq have stirred up the debate in Europe on how to dissuade people from travelling to these two countries in order to join the fight and on how to deal with returning foreign fighters once more. Even though the phenomenon of Europeans travelling abroad to join parties in conflict is hardly new, the scale on which it happens with respect to Syria and Iraq is unprecedented. We are confronted almost daily with different estimates on the number of European nationals who have travelled to, or still are in, this conflict zone. However, is showing figures alone sufficient for a sound threat assessment? In order to look at the threat beyond only figures and revisit the blowback, i.e. the threat from foreign fighters to Europe, we have the pleasure to host two distinguished authorities in this field.

Dr Thomas Hegghammer is an academic specialist on violent Islamism. He is currently the director of terrorism research at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (Forsvarets forskningsinstitutt – FFI) in Oslo. He is the author and co-author of several books and has published widely in academic journals.

Mrs Francisca Bostyn is advisor to the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator. She joined the office of Mr de Kerchove in 2011 after having served as security advisor to two Belgian Prime Ministers and as President of the national Board for Intelligence and Security.

The conference will take place on **Thursday 6 November at 17:00 hours** in the conference centre of the Campus Renaissance (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8, 1000 Brussels**). The lecture will be given in English with simultaneous translation into Dutch and French. Parking is available. We hope to welcome you all and kindly ask you to confirm your participation by registering online on the RHID's website: [www.rhid.be](http://www.rhid.be).

**Pre-registration is mandatory to access the premises and must reach us not later than Monday 3 November.**

**Programme:**

16:30 : Welcome  
17:00 : Conference and Q & A  
18:30-19:30 : Reception

(Signed)  
Guido MAENE, Ir  
Colonel General Staff  
Director-general  
Royal Higher Institute for Defence