



## EVENING CONFERENCE

Dear Madam, Sir,

We have the pleasure to inform you that the Royal Higher Institute for Defence is organising an evening conference on **Tuesday 11 December 2018**.

### ***Recent Developments in Turkish Foreign Policy***

**Prof. Dr Dries LESAGE**  
**Ghent University**

In May 2013 the Royal Higher Institute for Defence organised a colloquium on Turkey. For Europe, the most important issue at that time concerning this country was the legitimacy of its accession to the EU.

It happened that, at the end of that very month, the first major domestic demonstrations broke out against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's policy. Since then, Turkey has experienced dramatic reforms under his drive. The secular state has largely eroded away to the advantage of a policy of Islamisation, and nowadays no other country in the world holds so many journalists behind bars because of their profession than precisely Turkey.

Europe's perception of the policy carried out in this country has since then deeply changed, and the question of the appropriateness of Turkey's accession to the EU has been pushed into the background.

In 2015 the EU concluded a contested agreement with Turkey on the refugees' issue. In 2016 a coup d'état and several terrible terrorist attacks took place in this country, causing some far-reaching reactions on political level. With the modification of the Turkish Constitution in 2017, a presidential regime giving much more power to the head of state was installed, to the detriment of the Turkish armed forces. In the geopolitical field, this country pursues a state-centric policy, resulting in changing alliances and a general downturn in its relations with the EU and its member states. Of course, Turkey still is a NATO ally.

What are the causes of the present-day Turkish policy and security situation? What is the role of the Turkish armed forces and which influence does Turkey have on the present conflicts roaring in the Middle East? What are its interactions with its European and non-European partners in that context? In order to analyse this issue, we have invited Prof. Dr Dries Lesage from Ghent University as guest speaker.

This conference will take place on **Tuesday 11 December 2018 at 17:00 hours** in the conference centre of the Campus Renaissance (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8, 1000 Brussels**). The lecture will be given in **Dutch**, with **simultaneous translation** into **French** and **English**. Parking is available on the Cinquantenaire esplanade in front of the Royal Museum of Armed Forces and Military History. We are looking forward to welcoming you and kindly ask you to confirm your participation by registering online on the RHID website: [www.rhid.be](http://www.rhid.be).

**Pre-registration is mandatory to access the premises and must reach us not later than Friday 7 December 2018.**

#### **Programme:**

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

(Signed)  
Tim VAN LANGENHOVE, MSc Eng  
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