ESSENTIAL Winter School on Trust and Resilience - Group Assignment

Student Handbook

Motto:

"Never be too sure about security"

Situation:

25th November 2019

Romania holds the Presidency of the European Council.

"During the Romanian Presidency, we are delighted to host, on the 4-5-6th of December the future of European regional security conference and kindly welcome all the EU officials, heads of states and experts to Bucharest. Regional security, in this time of uncertainty and crisis is a key element for European society. The essential task is to find balance between security requirements and human rights" said Minister for Foreign Affairs Teodor Melescanu.

The high level conference "European Regional Security – What Next?" is hosting 400 participants and over 30 speakers. The conference will be opened by President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis and the Head of the External Action Service, Federica Mogherini. Confirmed speakers include representatives from the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD), NATO and heads and states and ministers from across Europe.

1st December 2019

Street protests are snowballing in Romania against a Canadian-led gold mining project in the Rosia Montana area in the Apuseni Mountains. More than 20,000 people joined a protest march in Bucharest on Sunday, and thousands in other Romanian cities took to the streets.

The Sunday marches represent the third major countrywide weekend mobilisation to oppose the project since Sep. 1. They drew the biggest numbers of participants so far. Smaller numbers of people have been protesting daily in Bucharest, in the western city of Cluj, and in others cities.

The protests erupted after the Romanian government proposed a draft law Aug. 27 that gives extraordinary powers to the project promoter, Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (in which Canadian group Gabriel Resources is the majority stakeholder).

According to the text, the company can relocate people whose homes are on the perimeter of the mine. Additionally, the law asks state authorities to grant the company all necessary permits within set deadlines regardless of national legislation, court rulings or public participation requirements.

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Gold Corporation plans to build Europe's largest gold mine at Rosia Montana to extract 300 tonnes of gold and 1,600 tonnes of silver over 17 years. The operation would involve the destruction of three villages and four mountains.

An even larger protest is planned for Wednesday 4th December in Bucharest, when a high-level meeting of European officials is due to take place in the context of the Romanian Presidency of the European Council.

16th December 2019 – 09h00 a.m.

BREAKING NEWS

"Information leaked that Secret Intelligence Agency of Romania has been spying on environmentalists, marching against the Rosia Montana gold exploitation!"

Casa Jurnalistului (in English – House of the Journalist), a Romanian investigative journalism website reported that the Romanian Secret Intelligence Agency was collecting the telephone records of dozens

of Romanians, involved in the Rosia Montana protesters. The paper published secret intelligence report showing that the Agency had directed the telecommunications company Green to hand over all its phone data to the SIA on an "ongoing daily basis".

That report was followed by revelations by other two Romanian news agencies, Mediafax and PressOne that SIA had tapped directly into the servers of 3 national Internet firms to monitor email exchanges between protesters against the Rosia Montana.

Shortly afterwards, Casa Jurnalistului revealed that the individual responsible for the revelations about the SIA surveillance programme is Alex Ionescu, a 33 year old Cherry Blossom employee.

Cherry Blossom is an Estonian-based company, which has developed the ALYSEUM intelligence analysis platform, widely used by intelligence agencies, law enforcement, financial intelligence units and security think-thanks across Europe.

After having leaked the information to the media, Alex Ionescu seems to have sought refuge inside the Jordanian embassy in Bucharest, who so far has refused to hand him over to Romanian authorities. Allegedly, the information seems to have been acquired through a back-door embedded in ALYSEUM, which enables some high ranking Cherry Blossom employees to have access to the ALYSEUM users' databases.

It seems that Mr. Ionescu, who was one of the software engineers responsible for the design of the ALYSEUM platform had used a back-door into the programme to download sensitive national security information, which he believed proved beyond doubt that SIA's actions are abusive and go against European human rights laws.

In a note accompanying the first set of documents he provided, he wrote: "I understand that I will be made to suffer for my actions," but "I will be satisfied if the federation of secret law, unequal pardon and irresistible executive powers that rule the world that I love are revealed even for an instant."

16th December 2019 – 11h00 a.m.

The Director of the Secret Intelligence Agency, Mr. Andrei Andreescu organizes a press conference to refute allegations made by ex-Cherry Blossom employee, Mr. Alex Ionescu, stating that all actions carried out by SIA were in compliance with Romanian law. He also expressed his deep concern that the revelations are endangering the work and identity of dozens of SIA agents working undercover to preserve the country's national security.

Mr. Andreescu has also called for the start of an immediate investigation into how such a security breach was possible inside Cherry Blosson and whether ALYSEUM does indeed possess a back-door that can be exploited by company employees to retrieve data from the clients' databases.

16th December 2019 – 13h00

Cherry Blossom owner, Ms. Marit Pihor, rejected all claims that ALYSEUM had a back-door and has expressed her willingness to assist Romanian authorities with their investigation, on what is now being called the "Ionescu Disclosure".

16th December 2019 – 16h00

Representatives of several European companies who are using ALYSEUM for intelligence analysis purpose have expressed their deep concern regarding the possibility of ALYSEUM having a back-door and have asked Romanian authorities to start an immediate investigation into how it was possible for an employee of Cherry Blossom to gain access to confidential data processed through the help of the platform

16th December 2019 – 19h00

Large groups of people are starting to gather in Bucharest and other cities across Romania to protest against recent revelations that SIA has been intercepting the communications of environmentalists protesting against the Rosia Montana exploitations. Similar protests are scheduled to take place in the next days in front of Romanian embassies abroad.

17th December 2019 – 08h00

Romanian Prime Minister, Viorica Dancila is meeting this morning with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to discuss the revelations made by ex-Cherry Blossom employee, Alex Ionescu. Germany is just one of the countries mentioned in the revelations as having assisted SIA in gathering intelligence on the Rosia Montana protesters. Other countries mentioned in the report are the US, UK, Hungary and Bulgaria.

17th December 2019 – 12h00

A coalition of European digital rights and privacy NGOs led by famous Italian lawyer, Mr. Daniele Dante has published a media release asking for the Romanian authorities to take immediate action regarding the allegations of SIA surveillance. Mr. Dante has also expressed his willingness to provide free legal assistance to Mr. Ionescu who is in danger of facing multiple criminal charges from the Romanian authorities.

Team roles:

Team Member 1 - Cherry Blossom Representative

 Team Member 2 - Media (Casa Jurnalistului) Representative

Team Member 3 - Secret Intelligence Agency Representative

Team Member 4 - Representative of European digital rights and privacy NGOs

Task:

a. Carry out a PESTLE, also known as STEEPL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Ethical) analysis of the situation; from the perspective of the role, you have been assigned.
b. Visually depict the PESTLE (STEEPL) analysis on a flipchart page, using different colours for the different factors
c. Propose an initial set of measures to address the issues identified through the PESTL analysis
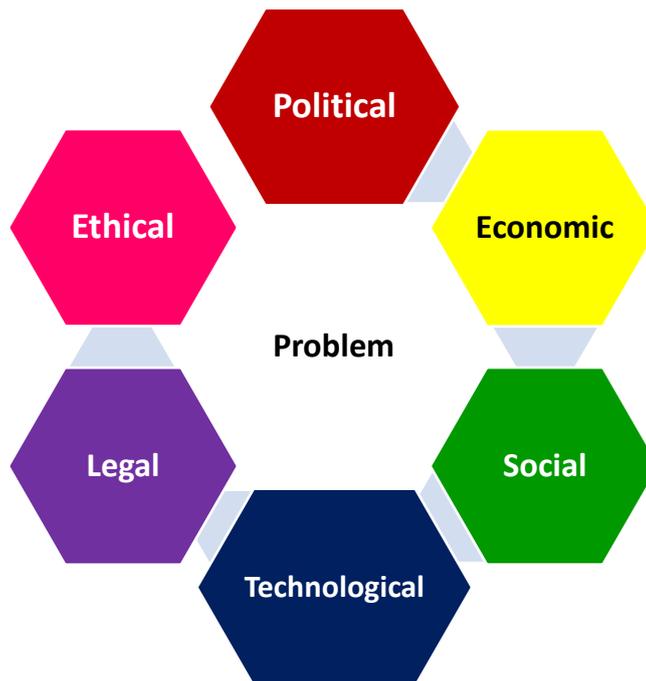d. Use same-coloured cards to group measures proposed next to the set of issues.

Figure 1 – PESTLE (STEEPL) Analysis

Support documents:

1. **THE LAW NO. 51/JULY 29, 1991 ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF ROMANIA**
(https://www.sri.ro/fisiere/legislation/Law_national-security.pdf)
2. **European Convention on Human Rights**
(https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)
3. **Backdoor definitions**
https://www.techopedia.com/definition/3743/backdoor
https://softwareengineering.stackexchange.com/questions/140373/how-is-a-software-backdoor-implemented
https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/03/thinking-about-term-backdoor
4. **PESTLE (STEEP) Methodology**
https://research-methodology.net/theory/strategy/7137-2/
https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/117422/SVENDSEN%20Adam_presentation_Advancing%20System%20of%20Systems%20Dynamics%20%28SoSD%29%20in%20the%20Cyber%20Intelligence%20%28CYBINT%29%20domain.pdf?sequence=3

Support structures:

Should you team encounter difficulties with solving the tasks (e.g. difficulties in identifying good sources of information/structuring the information/understanding different aspects of the situation) a number of experts will be available to provide assistance.

Technical advisor: Joe Cannataci
Legal advisor: Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici
Media advisor: Irena Chiru
Security advisor: Aitana Radu

To consult with the experts your team must first make an appointment from Wednesday 14th to Monday 19th in the following time intervals:
08h00 – 09h30 or 17h30 - 19h00