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# PORTALS OF SELECTED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY – THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Donat Jerzy Mierzejewski\*

## ABSTRACT

The article presents a new form of communication and transmission of information related to international security through global network – the Internet. First of all, attention is paid to developed web portals which deal with issues of international security – in particular, portals of selected international organizations. The study indicates in terms of content and method of presentation the essence of web portals describing, investigating, commenting, and reporting events related to issues of international security. This article presents a critical analysis of selected websites in terms of authenticity and credibility. It indicates the strengths and weaknesses of particular portals. What is more, it compares them in terms of graphic design and transparency of the information contained therein.

**Keywords:** international security, web portals, communication, Internet, global network, interactive education, research institutes, transfer of information.

## Introduction

During the last twenty years in the era of accelerating processes of globalization we can watch growing popularity of a new medium – the Internet (Sujkowska, Życki, 2010, pp. 179-181). With such fast developments and growing social access to Internet there is no wonder that international organizations, research and scientific institutes and government offices dealing with security subject are willing to reach the society though the Internet, offering expanded Internet portals.

The big advantage of the Internet portals is that they give possibility to store and access huge amount of information and data in digital form. They could be film, sound, and all kind of pictures, photos and electronic documents of written form. What makes information presentation with help of the Internet different

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from other media as press, radio or television is its full interactivity. A well and thoroughly run Internet portal is able to fulfil functions of these three media, i.e. press, radio and television, as well as the previously mentioned new function of interactivity (Sujkowska, 2012, pp. 764-765). A person gathering information from the Internet has possibility to express his/her opinion, leaving a comment on particular subject or even take part in direct discussion in form of a chat, or video conference dealing with given subject.

The creators of the Internet portal should first of all pay attention to its clarity. The page should be aesthetic, functional and essential. This lets search particular information of interest easier and faster. An interesting and very helpful solution is usage of references in form of links and hyperlinks to other internet sites. This breaks a linear way of information presenting where movement was possible only forwards or backwards. Hyperlinks allow the user enter into the depth of presented information and create impression of three dimensional text. This opens possibility for wider deepening of particular topic and gives feeling of interactivity while increasing the level and attractiveness of the material presented (Aronson, Pratkanis, 2005 p. 77, Juszczyk, 2000, p.34, Lewicka-Grisalde, Mclaughlin 2002, p.37, Mierzejewski, Ochodek (ed.) 2005, Reeves, Nass 2005, p.46.)

In this article portals of the following international organizations will be presented: Western European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, United Nations and scientific and research institutes: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, European Union Institute for Security Studies and International Institute for Strategic Studies. This work has a referential character and was based in main part on analysis of contents and structures of selected portals.

## **Portals of international organizations**

### **Western European Union**

The portal of the Western European Union (WEU. Home) consists of two parts. On the left-hand side there is a menu divided into main sections and these are divided into subsections. The right-hand side after reading by an Internet browser presents the home page of the Western European Union. It serves also as a part where we have possibility to enter to the following section chosen from the menu. The site has also '.int' domain designed first of all for

international organizations. This type of domain is recognized as the high level domain.

The main page of the portal (WEU. home) contains brief information in English and French explaining the necessity for the Western European Union structures, resulting from obligations written in the modified Treaty of Brussels. At the end there is also a link to a text of the Treaty of Brussels. From the level of the home page there is also a possibility to change the portal language. It can be done by clicking the particular flag positioned above the text. The authors of the portal give us possibility to browse the site only in English and French. The official portal of the Western European Union is fully served with these two languages, which means that changing language from English to French results in change of the whole page with PDF documents and files in sections.

The first section in the portal menu presents the members and organization. There are links to a simplified list of 28 country delegations. You can learn also which country has had or will get presidency of WEU or EU. The last hyperlink to the first part of the menu is the general secretariat of the WEU. The authors in interesting and clear way showed all units of the general secretariat. There are also contact data to particular units such as phone and fax numbers and e-mail.

The second section of the menu is about treaties and key texts. The modified text of the Brussels Treaty is to be found here, as well as other documents referring to the WEU, under the 'Other Documents' hyperlink section. The 'Key Texts' have been ordered according to dates from 1984 to 2000. There are 49 documents in PDF file format which can be opened by clicking an icon on the right side.

In the third section called 'WEU History' the whole history of the WEU is described.

The fourth section called 'Reference Documents' presents in form of PDF files what is the WEU today and shows data about activity of organization contained in a brochure under hyperlink 'WEU today' and 'What is WEU today?'. These brochures were issued in 2000 and 2009, respectively.

There are also history and multimedia archives in the portal. The history archive is presented in form of PDF document to which a hyperlink titled 'Historical Archives' leads. The multimedia archive cannot be reached from the level of the web site. There is only information that the secretariat of the Western European Union possesses files of photos and other multimedia documents.

The portal of the Western European Union does not offer any audio-visual content. It is poorly developed in terms of multimedia. We will not find photos or audio and video clips. This site also does not have a news section. The graphics is limited to a menu on the left side and tables and graphs on the right one. The portal abounds with official documents associated with the Western European Union Portal; however, they are of highly formal character. In summary, the official portal of the Western European Union is poorly developed both in terms of content and type.

### **Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe**

The official portal of the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE. home) presents itself much more interesting than the portal of the Western European Union. The site is available in six languages: English, German, Spanish, French and Russian. The main page is rich with various photographs and hyperlinks to other sections. At the top there is information that OSCE is the biggest security organization in the world, gathering 56 countries geographically located from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The portal is divided into several functional parts, which makes it more user-friendly and easy to navigate during information search. At the beginning there is introduced information about OSCE (OSCE. About). It refers first of all to Secretary General, institutions, and basic range of organization and employment.

In order to learn more about the range of activity of the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe you need to enter 'Activities' hyperlink (OSCE. Activities). In this section there is a very detailed description of activities concerning counteracting the human trafficking, arms control, fighting terrorism, democratization, economic activity, education, elections, environment protection, gender equality, human rights, freedom of media, minority rights, tolerance and indiscrimination.

The third section is dedicated to regions. The user can find here detailed information concerning offices and mission undertaken by the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe in various regions of the world (OSCE. Regions).

The next important section is 'Resources' (OSCE. Resources). There are, among others: library documents, data bases, event calendar, multimedia, photo and publication archives. The library documents allow reading reports,

conferences, speeches and information materials contained in PDF files. They are ordered in two ways, chronologically and according to the list of the newest events (OSCE. Documents). The Internet data base shows hyperlinks to sites presenting law on-line, police information system about tolerance and discrimination (OSCE. Resources). We can find the newest initiatives, documents and publications. The event calendar (OSCE. Events) was divided into two parts. In the first one it presents actual and future events associated with OSCE while in the second one shows events which occurred lately. In multimedia there are video clips from OSCE conferences and meetings (OSCE. Multimedia). They are ordered from the newest to oldest. Under each clip there is its length and short description of the event it refers to. The photo archive (OSCE. Photos) was made in the same way as multimedia one with a difference that it contains the photo documentation and the last six presented photos are displayed as miniatures. Additionally, authors of the portal offer possibility to display or download to a computer high resolution photos. In publications (OSCE. Publications) there are introduced annual minutes and reports on activities of the OSCE. The user accesses them through a publication browser located on the right. Additionally, in this part of the portal there are direct hyperlinks to the five main OSCE publications and wider presented two most actual publications which have short descriptions. At each stage of searching the section of 'Resources' the user has opportunity to use a helpful browser built into pages. It fulfils navigational function making it even easier to find desired documents. It is achieved through a choice from the list, particular activities, years, months and document types.

The first part is 'Press centre' (OSCE. News Centre). Here press and media communications are to be found, listed from the newest to the oldest ones. We can find here also information about accreditation, hyperlinks to photo galleries and detailed contact information for people responsible for contact with press.

The last part of OSCE portal is 'contacts' (OSCE. Contacts). There is OSCE contact data here both main as well as for particular units. In this part we can find also a contact browser and hyperlink offering possibility to search contacts according to institutions and bodies, activity range, delegations and cooperation partners.

It is worth to pay attention that at each stage of viewing each page contains detailed information describing the particular issue. For instance, the page concerning human rights in 'Activities' section contains a detailed description and activities of OSCE intending to protect the human rights (OSCE. Activities.

Human Rights). Additionally, below the description there are placed hyperlinks to institutions active in human rights protection. On the right there is displayed a photo having a short caption. As a supplement we may find educational textbooks and documents in PDF format with hyperlinks referring to certain events associated with the discussed issue. Additionally in the 'Regions' section in sub-pages of particular missions, the portal authors developed a menu located on the left side. It gives possibility to get broader information. There is also a detailed event calendar to be found, together with press releases and first of all hyperlinks to multimedia part in which there are documents, publications, photos and audio-visual clips.

Additionally the service was equipped with a browser with an option for advanced information search. It helps find in fast and easy way desired information without exploring the service.

In summary, the portal of the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe presents itself a very high level. The website is very well developed and possesses uncountable number of hyperlinks. It shows full three-dimensionality of text. You will find here all most important, but also less important information concerning OSCE. The user will learn all and detailed information about activities and missions of OSCE according to regions. All information in the portal is presented in a very detailed and precise way. There is no lack of references to particular documents and links to similar sites. The portal fully exploits multimedia character of information transfer. We will find listed and detailed described photos, documents in PDF format, audio-visual materials and Internet databases.

## **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

The official internet website of the NATO (NATO. home) presents itself fairly interesting. It functions similarly as the portal of the Western European Union in the '.int' domain. The website has interesting and clearly located hyperlinks to particular sections. Information is presented carefully and showed thematically.

In the central top section of the portal we can see the latest information and events associated with the NATO. News appears on average every 5-10 days, equipped with a title, characteristic photo depicting the news, date, introductory part of the event and hyperlink to the entire news section. In this way the three newest notes on the portal are presented. The older information is showed a bit lower as 'more articles', equipped with date of appearance and title which also represents a hyperlink to the whole article.

On the portal left side we have 'Shortcuts' which lead via hyperlinks to sub-pages describing what the NATO is and presenting FAQ, news releases, speeches, news archive, internet bookshop, the NATO library and other important pages thematically linked with the portal.

On the right there were placed hyperlinks of graphic type thematically linked to a given issue. They are located almost in each part of the service. Clicking for example on 'Afghanistan' hyperlink directs us to a page describing current events and the NATO actions in Afghanistan (NATO in Afghanistan).

Viewing the page from the top, right below the NATO logo we can see a blue bar which serves as a menu with links to particular parts of the service. From the left side on the bar we can choose a language in which the language will be displayed. The portal displays automatically in English but if we want to change the language the authors give us possibility to view the site in French, Russian and Ukrainian (NATO. home). There is also 'more' option which should mean choice of more languages. Clicking on it directs us though to an English page of the NATO internet bookshop (NATO E-Bookshop). This gives us possibility of access to official publications in other languages, but only by buying a certain item.

Describing the official NATO portal it is worth to mention an interesting solution of alphabetical topic index (NATO. Index). It is located under a hyperlink 'NATO A to Z'. It is a file of quite large part of topics listed alphabetically which can be found in the portal. The name of the topic is also a hyperlink to broader content accompanied with additional materials in forms of documents or multimedia clips (NATO. Balkans).

Another way of information presentation about the NATO is present in a section dedicated to the structure of the NATO (NATO. Structure). There we have a graph showing the NATO bodies and by them 'WWW' blue spaces which are hyperlinks with which we will be transferred on the side of this NATO body.

Entering another item of the menu called E-Library gives us possibility to learn the offer of the e-Library created within the NATO portal. It makes available buying many publications and multimedia products referring to the Alliance. In the e-Library there is also e-documentation (NATO. E-Documentation). It contains various documents presented directly on the website or in PDF files. In this part of the service besides of opportunity to learn about speeches in text form, by clicking a certain link we can listen to account in form of sound recording or view enclosed photo account. In case of some

events we have possibility to view documentation recorded in form of a video film.

Because the official portal was equipped with a very wide multimedia base, in order to organize all multimedia clips and to ensure better access to them there was a 'multimedia' section created (NATO. Multimedia). We can find there all kinds of multimedia files. A very interesting solution used by the authors of the website was sorting all documents based on a clip format, topic and creation date. There are various documents in form of photos, audio and video files, logos, maps, wallpapers, virtual exhibitions information referring audio-visual recordings led by the NATO. The solution is a supplement to certain articles and information contained in the portal. It lets the viewer to quickly find the multimedia object of interest.

The portal authors provided also a browser which is located on the right directly under the choice of language box. The browser quality is maybe not of the highest level, but an accurately formulated question can get search results in which we are interested, in form of hyperlinks to the portal sides.

The portal has also its education section. It is designated mainly for younger users and it is called 'e-generation' (NATO. E-Generation). This part of the portal differs significantly from the rest. It is titled 'Education and security'. It is presented in much colourful way. The icons are bigger, in form of school drawings. The education section is much more multimedia oriented, although information content does not differ much from the rest of the service. The e-generation section is strictly linked with the portal. We can notice it using links located on the left side of the service. Entering for example the video sub-page both the e-generation hyperlink as and next video from the main part of the service will lead us to the same site presenting video material. It looks differently if we use links located on the right side. Then colour icons serve as hyperlinks to particular parts of e-generation. We can find there various education materials in form of e-publications, colour maps related to the NATO, supplements and curiosities presented in form of posters or education games associated with the NATO (NATO. E-Generation).

At the bottom of the main site of e-generation we can find two parts, the first titled 'Teachers studio', designated for teachers and persons intending to deepen their knowledge about the NATO. This part through a hyperlink leads us to a page with helpful teaching materials about the NATO. There is also a training program concerning international relations and security policy available, of various level of advancement (training program).

The second part of 'Discover more' brings the user to educational sides of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA). This body deals with popularizing of the NATO priority values. It propagates and initiates the public debate aimed at understanding actions undertaken by the NATO. On the ATA pages we can find education materials, presentations sets and didactic aids created by academic lecturers.

In summary, the Internet portal presents itself a very high level. Except for the document files, reports and articles it possesses also multimedia files. It is a highly developed portal, using at fullest different forms of information transfer and its way of presenting. The user can read a report from a given meeting, listen to it using the recording placed on the side or view the whole video report. Additionally, there is also a possibility to view photographs from a conference or learn additional documentation placed in PDF files. The portal presents wide range of information and contains content addressed to people of different level of knowledge. Besides current information referring activities, the page contains also information about the history of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and information what this organisation is and what its goals are.

## **United Nations Organization**

The official portal of the United Nations Organization at its introduction directs the user to the language choice menu. You can choose between six versions: English, French, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish shown in form of welcome, each in different language. All documents, articles or biographies are available in all the above mentioned versions. The only exception is press reports and part of programs realized by UNO, which are presented only in English. After choosing the language the user is transferred to the home page of the portal (UN. home). The home page consists of thematically divided hyperlinks.

On the left side there are hyperlinks about general UN information, main bodies and member states. We can find here references to information centre and actual news connected with UN activities in the world – 'UN News Centre' (UN. UN News Centre) and conferences and events – 'Conferences & Events' (UN. Conferences & Events). It must be underlined that each sub-page is carefully worked out. Entering the news section the user has impression as entering a totally other page. The reason for this is completely different graphic view used in the news centre. The side, although differing graphically from the rest of the service, presents itself very well. There is a detailed menu here,

hyperlinks to the service resources and latest information equipped with a small photo, short description and hyperlink to the whole article. Additionally, the user has a browser at his disposal, located in the lower part of the UN News Centre.

On the right side there are hyperlinks referring to a given events and actions of UN, such as for example situation in Iraq – ‘Situation in Iraq’ (UN. UN News Centre – Iraq), situation in the Middle East – ‘Situation in Middle East’ (UN. UN News Centre – Middle East), and actions of UN against terrorism – ‘UN Action against Terrorism’ (UN. UN Actions against Terrorism). Additionally, there are hyperlinks placed here to reports and reforms on UN (UN. Renewing the UN), global problems, taken up by UN (UN. Issues on the UN Agenda), multimedia sphere and educational section of the portal. The accurateness of the accounts is also on a very high level.

The upper menu has been divided into certain sections concerning: peace and security, economic and social development, human rights, humanitarian problems, and international law. In the bottom part of the portal there is a possibility to change the language in which the portal is displayed, using of browser and index presenting all main issues from A to Z.

The documentation dedicated to UN is in the part titled ‘UN Documentation Centre’ (UN. UN Documentation Centre). Here we can find detailed listed hyperlinks leading to the proper documents and maps. All documentation located in this section is contained in PDF files.

The service is also rich in multimedia resources. On the UN official pages we can find recorded TV programmes, conferences and debates, illustrated articles, audio-visual files and large photo gallery associated with activity and meetings of UN (ONZ. UN Multimedia). TV programmes, conferences and debates are located in ‘UN Webcast’ (UN. UN Webcast). It is a multimedia centre where we can find actual and archival audio-visual recordings listed according to storing date from the newest to oldest. It is contained in a table which shows briefly what a particular clip refers and its length. The multimedia section was enriched with UN internet radio (UN. UN Radio). The user has opportunity to listen to archive or current broadcasts concerning a given region of the world. The internet radio functions in all languages provided by the UN portal.

The educational part of the UN portal is located under ‘CyberSchoolBus’ hyperlink (UN. CyberSchoolBus). The section is very extensive and diverse. It is designated both for students as well as teachers. For students, the UN specialists offer an educational programme consisting of 15 main topics with

enclosed proper materials and didactic help (UN. CyberSchoolBus. Curriculum). Except for exercises fostering creative and critical thinking, the authors enable possibility to play in simple educational games or take part in a quiz (UN. CyberSchoolBus. Quizzes and Games). In the games there are issues described directly in news, articles, statistics, and photo reports referring to contemporary world problems.

In sum, on the UN website we can find information of different level of accuracy, from very general description, information concerning UN, press information and publications to articles, official reports and legal acts. The portal has also a very well developed educational section. From multimedia side it presents itself excellently. The authors offered the user a wide range of multimedia. The internet radio, photo gallery, multimedia clips, maps and illustrations – all this confirms that the UN portal must be recognized as highly multimedially and very carefully developed, presenting all information regarding this organization.

## **Portals of science and research institutions**

### **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute was founded in 1966. The idea of its creation was introduced by Swedish Prime Minister **Tage Erlander** in 1964 in order to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuous peace in Sweden.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1966 the Swedish parliament decided to found the Institute giving it a legal status of independent foundation (SIPRI. History).

The aims of the Institute are scientific researches on questions of conflict, cooperation, security and peace to help understand conditions needed for peaceful solution of world conflicts. SIPRI enables information about arms development, arms spending in particular countries, production and sales of arms, its control and disarmament as well as about conflicts, their prevention and regional security. The SIPRI research results are published in books, reports and other publications of the Institute, and also on the Institute website. All researches undertaken by SIPRI are based on open sources (SIPRI. History).

The internet portal of SIPRI (SIPRI. home) is available only in English. On the main page the authors of the service placed selected main events which

happened recently, new publications, debates, lectures and scientific and research conferences. This information is accompanied by photos and short description what topic or event they refer to. At the very bottom of the home page there are hyperlinks to twelve of latest added SIPRI publications.

On the left side of the website there are shortcuts to all latest information within range of issues undertaken by SIPRI.

On the right side the user has an opportunity to navigate directly to the selected research conducted by SIPRI. There are hyperlinks leading to reports, project descriptions or books about armed conflicts, arms transfers, documentation related to arms control and disarmament. Each issue is described in detail, has hyperlinks to similar topics and bibliography in form of books concerning the given issue. Under the references to these issues there is a simple browser servicing SIPRI.

The shortcuts to actual news, researches and browser accompany the user at each stage of service exploration. It is a convenient facilitation because if there is a need to get to certain research or news for analysis or confrontation with publication located deeper in the service, the user does not have to back every time to previous pages. At this moment he can immediately transfer to desired information with these shortcuts.

It is worth paying attention that the main page of the Institute does not present all materials and publications available on the portal. The user will find here the main, less or more detailed information. To get to know the SIPRI activity one can use the navigation panel located at the upper part of the website. There are hyperlinks here, leading to the information centre, researches, publications, data bases, library and personnel. Additionally, at the top right part there are references to the main information about SIPRI, including contact, most frequently asked questions, links, and employment information. In the main information concerning the Institute there is an interactive schedule of the organization discussed, its history, statute, finance and donations and inheritance (SIPRI. About). Under the contact hyperlink there are precise contact data and address of SIPRI headquarters (SIPRI. Contact). 'Job' references (SIPRI. Jobs) present work offers, trainings and internships while in the links we will find internet page addresses of other institutes and international organizations, for example the Institute of Politics and Security in Stockholm, or the Institute of Science and International Security (SIPRI. Links). In most cases the references presented lead to Institutes having their locations in Sweden.

While the selected research and main information as mentioned above are located on the right and left side of the portal, to get to a detailed list and issue description you need to choose respective hyperlinks from the main menu. The actual information, so called news, is listed from the latest (SIPRI. News). Respective research areas conducted by SIPRI are ordered alphabetically (SIPRI. Research). Entering more into a certain research the user has possibility not only to learn about the project's description but first of all with latest information about the project, publication and profiles of persons undertaking the research activity. Additionally, when for example entering the research regarding the arms transfer we will find information on arms trade embargoes or finance amounts of arms transfer (SIPRI. The Arms Transfers).

The Stockholm International Research of Peace Institute also releases publications on its website. They are under the 'Publications' hyperlinks (SIPRI. Publications). SIPRI publishes annual reports, research results and publications referring certain issues for example „*Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects*, By **Ekaterina Stepanova**, *SIPRI Research Report no. 23*” (SIPRI. Publications). Directly on the Internet page there is a short description available, contents, information about the author and cover photo of the printed edition. To study the whole publication you need to download it or open a document with a proper hyperlink. The documents published on the Institute pages are written in PDF format, about which informs in a brief note under the hyperlink.

Under the 'Databases' hyperlink (SIPRI. Databases) there were placed reports and statistic registers of researches undertaken by SIPRI. On example of '*SIPRI data on arms transfers*' (SIPRI. Databases. SIPRI data on arms transfers), the user has opportunity to learn: main information about the arms transfer and trade, latest reports summarized in PDF files, view commercial registers and maps and diagrams showing the biggest twenty arms importers and exporters. In a database on the arms production '*SIPRI data on arms productions*' (SIPRI. Databases. SIPRI data on arms production) there were 100 biggest firms producing arms introduced. The table contains precise statistical data on the arms trade, their market value and share. There were also maps of regions where these firms are located. In a database on military spending '*SIPRI data on military expenditure*' (SIPRI. Databases. SIPRI data on military expenditure) there is possibility to watch spending on military in particular countries of the world. After choosing a State these are shown in a form of a table of military expenditure in local currency and dollars. The table shows also

percentage of the gross natural product on military expenditure (SIPRI. Databases. The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database). Careful analysis of tables lets us know which countries and to what degree currently spend money on arms and how their expenditures have been shaped during last years.

The next hyperlink is 'Library' (SIPRI. Library). This section contains a list of articles and publications available in the SIPRI library. On the library website there are catalogues which are updated on a current basis and have the newest documentation. We can also find here news and general information concerning the SIPRI library.

Under 'Staff' hyperlink (SIPRI. Staff) there is a list of all the SIPRI personnel with contact data to all particular persons.

The Internet portal of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute is very well prepared concerning its content. It undertakes important security issues. It leads research on security, conflicts and arms spreading in the world, and presents results in numerous publications, articles and statistics. Publications and statistics are presented in form of PDF documents, tables and maps. The portal is also abundant with substantial amount of photo documentation. All latest information, events and reports are directly placed on the Internet page. The authors did not create multimedia sections with audio-visual materials. This is the reason that among others, the SIPRI website makes impression of a place where only results of research, reports and statistic data are published on problems undertaken by this Institute.

## **European Union Institute for Security Studies**

European Union Institute for Security Studies – EUISS is an independent agency acting within the frame of the second EU pillar – Common Foreign and Security Policy. It has been created in 2002. The Institute headquarters is located in Paris. EUISS is a non-profit organization it deals with data analysis and formulating recommendations necessary for shaping the security policy of the European Union. It conducts research and discussion on issues associated with security matters of the EU. It deals with developing transatlantic dialogue on topics associated with security. The main goals of the Institute are, among others: helping to develop Common Foreign and Security Policy, defending the EU interests in security area and supporting the common European security culture. European Union Institute for Security Studies in its activity does not represent any national interests of particular members of the Union. It acts in the interest of all countries of the European Union (EUISS. About us).

The Internet page of (EUISS. home) is available in two languages: English and French. The graphic look presents itself a high level; the portal is aesthetic and clear. On the home page there are the most actual opinions, analyses and events, accompanied with miniature photo, description and hyperlink to the full text of an article. Additionally, under opinions and analyses there is a part called 'ISS Monitoring' describing an issue of elections in the United States of America and situation in the Balkans. At the very bottom of the home page moderators placed seminars and conferences related to the European security policy. It is worth to note that all information placed on the home page is constantly updated, so the content of the website can change on daily basis. In the top right corner of the official portal of EUISS there is an advanced document browser and hyperlinks to a detailed website map (EUISS. Site map) and contact data with contact form enabling sending a direct electronic message to the Institute (EUISS. Contact).

The menu was placed on the left side of the service. The user can find here main information about the Institute, short history, main goals and tasks undertaken by the Institute.

Below there are 'Research areas' divided into sections related to: EU foreign policy, security and defence policy, and there are specified particular research areas divided into the United States, Western Balkans, Africa, Mediterranean region, Near East, Russia, East European region and Asia. The name of each section is a hyperlink to a particular site dedicated to a given region. Respective pages differ only in their content. The layout of graphics is similar. The only difference in graphics is photos which show specificity of each region.

The subsequent menu item is publications. They contain the same documents which were placed in research areas i.e. event books, analyses, bulletins and opinions. The difference is in fact that they are divided in archive way, according to years and months of publication. A kind of a new facility is the 'Books' section (EUISS. Publications. Books), where e-books are published. Each item has a description and hyperlinks to full publications contained in enclosed PDF files. Some items are available in several language versions.

The last two items in the menu are 'Seminars' and 'Networks'. The seminars hyperlink leads to seminars and conferences organized similarly as publication archive (EUISS. Seminars). 'Networks' contains information on the latest events and publications among some EUISS partners (EUISS. Networks).

To sum up, the website of the European Union Institute for Security Studies, both as when it comes to the content as well as graphics, presents itself very

well. Exploration of the portal is easy thanks to proper and simple layout of hyperlinks by the authors. All publications placed in the service are listed in a clear way and ordered according to defined categories. A very good solution introduced by the authors is division of research areas into regions. This helps the user in finding information and deepening the knowledge about a certain world region. The portal is also richly equipped with photo documentation which accompanies descriptions of particular research issues. Unfortunately, the service does not have a multimedia section with audio-visual materials. This cannot be considered much of a disadvantage because the user of the EUISS website will find a lot of professional information and studies which do not need supporting them with audio-visual documentation.

### **International Institute for Strategic Studies**

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) is British research institute in the area of International Relations. It was founded in Great Britain. The Institute headquarters is located in London. It gathers 2500 individual and 450 corporate and institutional parts from over 100 countries. IISS is described as the main source of solid and objective information on the international strategic issues for politicians and diplomats, foreign affair analysts, international companies, economists, army, journalists, scientists and society (IISS. About us). The Institute is independent on any government, political forces or other organizations. IISS publishes information and comments on main events regarding domestic, regional, and global security. It leads researches on international security. Besides London, the offices of the Institute are located in Washington and Singapore.

The portal of IISS (IISS. home) is highly developed. The website is available only in English. It consists of three parts: menu located on the left, main part of the service presenting latest news, added with a photo, and description 'Read more' hyperlink. On the right side there are: graphic hyperlinks leading to publications, Institute members, forum and conferences run within IISS. The photos located on the home page referring to actual events are in form of hyperlinks.

Using the main menu the user has a possibility to learn detailed information about the Institute contained under 'About us' hyperlink (IISS. About us) and issues studied by the Institute. There is also a possibility to learn the structure and regional offices of IISS.

The service enables to search for the employees of the Institute in two ways: according to alphabetical list and according to list of experts as to areas of speciality.

The user has at his disposal such sections as 'Publications', 'Conferences' and 'Events Calendar'. In publications we can find documents and bulletins published by IISS (IISS. Publications). Graphic objects depicting publications are also hyperlinks to pages treating about given publications. For instance, after entering area of publication titled 'The Military Balance 2008' (IISS. Publications. The military Balance) we will find a detailed description of the publication supplied with photos from the conference. The user has a possibility to learn the introduction and summary of the publication. However, if the user wants to deepen his knowledge by reading the whole article then it is possible in three ways: by purchase of the book via the Internet; by subscribing to a certain item; or by logging in with login and password which give us a status of an official IISS portal user. For registered user the service has been considerably enlarged in terms of publications of articles and reports.

The conference section (IISS. Conferences) contains files of commented and photographically documented international scientific and research conferences realized within frames of IISS around the world. By clicking on a particular conference, for example 'The IISS Regional Security Summit' (IISS. Conferences. The IISS Regional Security Summit) the user has a possibility to see the documentation in form of PDF files or photo documentation located in a photo gallery. There is all information concerning the meeting available, for example number of members attending, remarks referring the conference, final report and resolutions. This section is very well and precisely constructed.

The Events Calendar (IISS. Events Calendar) presents the nearest events associated with IISS. Descriptions and information located here refer only to those publications and discussion meetings which will take place. Here we can find the hyperlinks which transfer the user to the website telling details about the given event.

The Institute first of all conducts research in area of international relations and security. Research conducted is to be found in the 'Research programme' section. The research areas are divided into two categories: according to the topic and world region. Thematically, the research programmes refer to conflicts, fight against terrorism, transatlantic relations and arms non-proliferation. The division into regions is as follows: Europe, Persian Gulf and Near East, Latin America, Africa, Russia and Eurasia and South Asia, North

East and South East Asia. Each research problem is described in detail on the portal and documented in form of comments, reports and articles.

For persons interested in latest news associated with IISS activity there was created the 'What's new' section. There are ordered news here, with division on new publications and press information. They are present in form of hyperlinks leading to documents and information. Because all parts of service are directly related themselves via hyperlinks then there is a possibility to copy references. For example a user viewing 'What's new' section can enter the same publications using 'Publications' hyperlink' because this section contains all documents published both latest and older, while in 'What's New' there are references only to the latest documents. It is some improvement because if a person exploring the service is interested only in the latest materials, it will be enough when he/she enters the list of latest publications and older items will not be displayed (IISS. What's New).

The portal was equipped with a 'Library' section. Here we can find files of books, articles, magazines and newspapers located in the Internet catalogue of library resources. All items are available in the IISS library building.

To sum up, the official portal of IISS owns vast files of publications and documented conferences. Additionally, there are analyses and reports enclosed in form of files and hyperlinks featuring with certain publications. During exploration of IISS service you cannot find statistic and comparison data as it was in the SIPRI portal discussed above. Special attention should be paid to the main menu which is very carefully and clearly developed. Entering the particular section the user has a possibility to navigate into even wider service area through sub-section hyperlinks. There is a possibility to enter from the main menu into each part of the service. It was constructed in such way that the user exploring the portal does not feel lost. However, if such developed service and its menu appear chaotic to the user, then there is a possibility to use a browser integrated with the portal or a site map which presents the whole service division.

## **Summary**

The portals of international organizations and research institutes discussed here present themselves in a high professional level. They have extensively developed base of documents, reports and conducted research. Most of presented portals show large multimedia facilities. The most developed

educational section are to be found at two portals: NATO and UN. Among portals of international organizations the most wide, interesting and extensive are showed by service of OSCE and UN. Between science and research Institutes it is difficult to indicate definitely the best one. Each Institute undertakes different research area but all present equally high level information transfer.

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