

## **First Cyber Security Challenge Organised by “Pôle d’Excellence Cyber” Cluster in Partnership with Airbus Defence and Space and Thales**

- Contest challenges students to test their knowledge of information systems security
- Top 48 participants will compete in the final held on 24 November in Rennes during European Cyber Week

The first edition of a new cyber security challenge organised by the “Pôle d’Excellence Cyber” cluster in partnership with Airbus Defence and Space and Thales will see its final competition on November 24 during European Cyber Week in Rennes from 21-25 November. This challenge for all grandes écoles and university students in France specialised in computer science aims to showcase the variety of professions in the high-growth sector of computer security (+ 10% a year on average).

The competition began on 21 October with a series of technical tests to be solved online in areas such as cryptography, ‘forensic’ analysis or software vulnerability analysis. At the end of this initial qualification phase, the top 48 students will be selected to form 16 teams of cyber-defence specialists, to take part in the final on 24 November 2016 in Rennes.

The task of the finalists will be to defend critical infrastructures in the field of energy (fossil, nuclear or gas) in thwarting cyber-attacks from an ‘international organisation’. Their aim will be to minimise losses to protect the natural sites located near each target. The three teams with the highest score will be declared the winners. They will be awarded technology prizes (computers, tablets or smartphones) and training courses and/or job offers at Airbus Defence and Space or Thales, who are major players in the cyber security sector.

“This first challenge organised during the European Cyber Week will allow us to interact with prestigious graduate schools in the field of computer security and to raise student awareness of the great career prospects now offered by the exciting, technologically advanced professions in cyber security,” said Paul-André Pincemin, from the “Pôle d’Excellence Cyber” cluster.

François Lavaste, Head of Airbus Defence and Space's CyberSecurity unit, added: “This challenge is a unique opportunity to spark an interest amongst young talent in the field of IT security. In addition to this challenge held in France, we are taking similar steps in Germany and the United Kingdom, aimed at recruiting profiles of special relevance to cyber security, such as system architects, security and risk analysis engineers or pentesters, all requiring excellence and creativity.”

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“For France alone, Thales plans to recruit at least 200 engineers specialised in cyber security in 2016. We are constantly on the lookout for talent, whether young graduates or confirmed experts, with very specialised profiles. Thales supports innovative recruitment initiatives such as the European Cyber Week student challenge. I've only one more thing to add: good luck to all the candidates!”, said Laurent Maury, Vice President, Critical Information Systems and Cybersecurity.

**For further information:**

- European Cyber Week : <https://european-cyber-week.eu/>
- Challenge website : <https://challenge-ecw.fr/>

**About « Pôle d'Excellence Cyber »**

Set up under the aegis of the French Ministry of Defence and with the support of the Regional Council of Brittany, the “Pôle d'Excellence Cyber” cluster operates nationwide and aims to extend its scope internationally. The “Pôle d'Excellence Cyber” is focused on 3 areas : basic & continuous training and higher education ; research ; development of the industrial sector.

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**About Airbus Defence and Space**

Airbus Defence and Space, a division of Airbus Group, is Europe's number one defence and space enterprise and the second largest space business worldwide. Its activities include space, military aircraft and related systems and services. It employs more than 38,000 people and in 2015 generated revenues of over 13 billion Euros.

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**About Thales**

Thales is a global technology leader for the Aerospace, Transport, Defence and Security markets. With 62,000 employees in 56 countries, Thales reported sales of €14 billion in 2015. With over 25,000 engineers and researchers, Thales has a unique capability to design and deploy equipment, systems and services to meet the most complex security requirements. Its exceptional international footprint allows it to work closely with its customers all over the world.

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