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# Microsoft conference: A catastrophic cyber security event is most likely to happen in the next 2 years

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"Business (86%) and cybersecurity (93%) leaders believe that global geopolitical instability will most likely or very likely lead to a catastrophic cyber security event in the next 2 years," said Arthur Mattli, Swiss Ambassador to Romania, at the opening of the Microsoft conference "Cybertech or Science Fiction: What investors need to know about cybersecurity trends and vulnerabilities in 2023".



Arthur Mattli, ambassador of Switzerland in Romania. PHOTO Adrian Pogîngeanu

Arthur Mattli quoted from a report presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, which took place from 16-20 January 2023. The report is produced by the WEF in collaboration with Accenture and can be read [in full here](#).

## Arthur Mattli, ambassador of Switzerland in Romania about Cybersecurity trends



The ambassador described this information as a "wake-up call" and went on to talk about cyber security trends:

- home&office cyber security - companies must extend security measures to the devices used by employees at home;
- IoT (Internet of Things) - 43 billion devices are active today, the problem is updating these devices to keep them safe;
- against the backdrop of political instability, more and more state-supported cyber attacks appear;
- artificial intelligence (AI) cybersecurity can be used to identify security breaches in organizations and can save each large company up to \$3 million (according to a report);
- in 2023 there will be elections in 77 countries and they are exposed to massive cyber manipulations;
- increasing the number of cyber danger awareness events;
- there will be a cyber security audit that all private and state / government organizations will have to pass in order to operate;

- establishing security strategies at the level of states and companies.

The conference held at the headquarters of Microsoft Romania was organized together with the Chamber of Commerce Switzerland – Romania and Swiss Webacademy.

The next topic of discussion was "how companies can cope with trends in technology and better protect their IT infrastructure. The dialogue was moderated by Maria-Manuela Catrina, Deputy Director DNSC (National Directorate for Cyber Security). We extracted some ideas from what each participant said:

- **Maria-Manuela Catrina, DNSC Deputy Director**

\*an average attack, at an average company in Romania, can lead to losses of 150,000 euros on average;

\*it is always better to prevent than to go through this situation;

\*a team to take care of the company's security certainly costs less, and the amount of 150,000 euros does not include reputation costs;

\*the money is asked twice, once the data is encrypted and money is asked and our very serious recommendation is not to pay, because in 30% of the cases where the data was paid, the data was still not recovered. The second time they ask for money for the stolen data (extracted by the attackers) which is processed in various forms and which is sold on the black market at various prices;

\*it is very good to invest in a security team, maybe even a small one, not just to make plans.

- **Moe Jame - CEO, Team Extension**

\*current technologies will be combined with emerging ones, for example drones with AI or autonomous cars with IoT;

\*these combinations raise data security and privacy issues, as there is a lack of qualified cybersecurity people;

- **Eugen Rusen - Security Cloud Solution Architects Lead CEE, Microsoft**

\*cyber security is based on public-private partnership with the support of local

companies for part of the services;

\*Microsoft acquisitions, in the IoT area the [CyberX company](#), in the Cloud Knox identity area ;

\*ChatGPT trends introduced not only in Office, but also in the security part, a massive automation to counter external attacks as well as internal attacks in an organization;

- **Cătălin Zetu, head of the Bureau of Investigation of Crimes against computer systems in the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (IGPR)**

\*companies must protect themselves very well because in the case of successful hacker attacks on their infrastructure, the probability of data recovery even if the ransom is paid is small;

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\*ransomware appeared about 30 years ago in various forms, but the important change comes from its transformation into a service - there are platforms where not very technical criminals can access this type of "tool" and carry out extremely complex attacks affecting infrastructures and companies ;

\*the malicious platform is as easy to use as a regular online commerce one, everything is automated and the profit obtained from the payment of the ransom is made automatically (in-app) between the developers and affiliates, those who buy the services or use them (attackers);

\*in 2018-2019 affiliate attacks have become better targeted, "big game hunting" type, large and very large companies are being pursued in the case of which ransoms of millions or tens of millions are demanded;

\*the data of companies that fall prey to attacks are not only encrypted, but also stolen by attackers who threaten victims with their online publication;

\*ransomware attacks can be associated at a certain level with attacks on national security;

\*attackers try to find out if the targeted companies have insurance in case of a

attackers try to find out if the targeted companies have insurance in case of a cyber attack, because that way they are more sure of paying the reward, at the

same time the insured companies are obliged to comply with security measures according to a contract;

\* [the no more ransomware project](#) in which the Romanian state collaborates through its institutions (DNSC) can help some companies recover their data without paying the reward;

\* mobile malware - Flubot is an early stage threat;

**- Sorin Ioan Stănică - Chief Police Commissioner, Head of the Prevention Office within the Institute for Research and Prevention of Crime;**

\*computer crime is a dynamic field in constant innovation and development;

\*all the benefits of the internet also come with some risks;

\*awareness is good but not enough, let's do prevention;

\*The Institute for Research and Prevention of Crime is a structure of the Romanian Police, which deals with everything related to prevention, not just cybercrime;

\*the most important project that we have been working on for two years already, in partnership with DNSC, the Romanian Association of Banks, Microsoft and Swiss Webacademy, is the campaign dedicated to children, called "Online Safety " ;

\*the [safetyonline.ro](#) site has a series of "quizzes" to test the user's ability to recognize certain threats and vulnerabilities that he may face in the online environment, but also offers him the opportunity to develop these skills;

\*the "quizzes" are aimed at the malware, phishing part and are dedicated exclusively to children;

\* after all, each of us is the main element of protection, if we are not aware and do not act as such, neither the updated and powerful antivirus, nor the operating system with all the security elements it has can protect us provide protection;

\*known brands are used in phishing attacks, for example from banks or from large companies, such as Microsoft, etc.





From SD, Maria-Manuela Catrina, Moe Jame, Eugen Rusen, Cătălin Zetu and Sorin Ioan Stănică.

**Also read:** [Microsoft begins phased implementation of EU Digital Border for Microsoft Cloud](#)

At the end of the presentation, I talked for a few minutes with Sorin Ioan Stănică - Chief Police Commissioner, Head of the Prevention office within the Crime Research and Prevention Institute, to whom I asked a few questions.

**There is a lot of talk in Romania about hackers from Russia, Ukraine,**

## **generally about foreign hackers. Are there hackers in Romania who operate locally or abroad?**

From the perspective of the Romanian Police, we are talking about perpetrators of computer crimes and there are perpetrators of computer crimes in Romania as well as abroad.

### **Do you know such hackers, have you caught them in recent years?**

Of course, my colleagues in the investigation area are working on files and have had files in which perpetrators of computer crimes from Romania were involved. There were organized crime groups that were dismantled over time by my colleagues. We are usually talking about networks that have a transnational character, in which several people are involved, both from Romania and outside, with various types of involvement, from people who actually contribute to the commission of the crime, to people who contribute to money laundering of money or capitalization of goods.

What to say in the public consciousness is recognized as the so-called hacker, in reality, from our perspective, we are talking about a perpetrator of crimes, which does not always correspond to the image of that hacker in the movies - an ultra-specialist in using the computer, in breaking into databases data and other such supposed miracles that the said author does, using the computing technique. No, we are talking about perpetrators of crimes who have a more or less technical role in this criminal chain.

### **So the hacker in public perception, the geek, is unrelated in reality...**

No, without a doubt the vast majority of those involved in cybercrime do not fit this image. If you allow me a parallel, just as the perpetrator of home burglaries does not come with a hood on his head and enters the house with a crowbar, neither does the hacker in the movies correspond to the perpetrator of computer crime.

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