The cyber defence research project ECHO, promoted by Zanasi & Partners and under the coordination of the Royal Military Academy of Belgium, has been accepted by the European Commission and will be funded under the Horizon 2020 programme.

ECHO (European network of Cybersecurity centres and competence Hub for innovation and Operations) is a research project having the objective of establishing a European-wide network of research and competence centres dedicated to cyber defence.

The ECHO project aims to deliver an organised and coordinated approach to strengthen proactive cyber defence of the European Union, through effective and efficient multi-sector collaboration.

The members of the ECHO consortium, which comprises 30 organisations from 15 EU countries (plus Ukraine) representing 13 existing cyber security competence centre, will execute on a 48-month work plan to develop, model and demonstrate a network of cyber research and competence centres, with a centre of research and competence as the hub. The Central Competence Hub serves as the focal point for the ECHO Multi-sector Assessment Framework enabling multi-sector dependencies management with:
• the provision of an ECHO Early Warning System;
• an ECHO Federation of Cyber Ranges;
• management of an expanding collection of Partner Engagements.

The ECHO Multi-sector Assessment Framework refers to the analysis of challenges and opportunities derived from sector specific use cases, transversal cyber security needs analysis and development of inter-sector Technology Roadmaps involving horizontal cyber security disciplines.

The Early Warning System, Federation of Cyber Ranges and Inter-sector Technology Roadmaps will then be subject of Demonstration Cases incorporating relevant involvement of inter-dependent industrial sectors.

The ECHO Cyber Skills Framework provides the foundation for development of cyber security education and training programmes including a common definition of transversal and inter-sector skills and qualifications needed by cyber security practitioners.

The ECHO Cyber Security Certification Scheme provides a sector specific and inter-sector process for cyber security certification testing of new technologies and products resulting from the proposed technology roadmaps.

The project will develop and operate under an ECHO Governance Model, by which the efforts across the EU Network of Cybersecurity Competence Centres can be coordinated and optimized to provide lasting and sustainable excellence in cybersecurity skills development; research and experimentation; technology roadmaps delivery; and certified security products for improved cybersecurity resilience of Europe, its citizens and its industrial capacity.

Zanasi & Partners (http://www.zanasi-alessandro.eu) is an Italian research and advisory company specialised in security and defence.

Amongst the ECHO project partners