



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE SERVICE OF PEACE

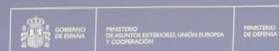
The city of A Coruña hosted the third global Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM 2026), where Margarita Robles advocated a framework focused on 'ethical values'



Opening ceremony of REAIM 2026, which hosted various activities relating to AI in the field of defence.

A Coruña / Spain 2026 / 4-5 February 2026
Responsible AI in the Military Domain Summit

REAIM



REAIM 2026

Defence Minister Margarita Robles together with Amparo Valcarce, Secretary of State for Defence; Esperanza Casteleiro, Secretary of State and Director of the National Intelligence Centre; and other civilian and military officials.

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence (AI) is changing everything. This is equally true in the field of defence, where its unrestrained application in an increasingly polarised geopolitical context can prove destructive. As a result, to identify principles aimed at preventing advanced analytics in the military domain from escaping human control, representatives from international organisations, governments, industry, academia and civil society gathered at the third global Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain. Held on 4-5 February 2026 at the Exhibition and Congress Centre in A Coruña, the summit was co-organised by the Spanish Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (MAEUEC), with the participation of over 1,000 people from some 85 delegations. The event featured round-table discussions, expert presentations and plenary sessions, while several industry stakeholders displayed a variety of practical AI applications in an exhibition area with live demonstrations of AI-enabled tools.

THE ETHICAL DIMENSION

Defence Minister Margarita Robles advocated a framework for the use and application of AI focused on 'ethical values' and the pursuit of peace. "We want to maximise the role of the Armed Forces, and we understand that artificial intelligence is crucial in any scenario; however, in these difficult times, the ethical dimension is paramount," declared the head of the Defence Department. During the summit in the city of A Coruña, she also held bilateral meetings with her counterparts from Bolivia, Cape Verde, Kenya, North Macedonia and Mauritania.

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Due to delays brought on by adverse weather conditions, neither Robles nor the Secretary of State for Defence (SEDEF), Amparo Valcarce, or the Secretary of State and Director of the National Intelligence Centre, Esperanza Casteleiro, were able to attend the opening ceremony. Lt Gen Miguel Ivorra, Director General for Strategy and Innovation of the Defence Industry (DIGEID), therefore delivered the SEDEF's speech, which argued that the summit should not only be a forum for reflection, but also for application.

According to Valentín González Formoso, President of the Provincial Council of A Coruña, "Summits like this one, which address accountability and ethics in the use of this technology, speak highly of those who promote them". For her part, Inés Rey, Mayor of A Coruña, home to the Spanish Agency for the Supervision of Artificial Intelligence (AESIA), highlighted this city's role in the military and technological fields and called for "an ethical governance that prioritises individuals and upholds compliance with international law".

Before the opening session, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CHOD), Admiral



Maria José Muñoz

In A Coruña, Minister Robles held bilateral meetings with her counterparts from several countries, including Janine Lélis from Cape Verde.

although capabilities and missions vary greatly and are quite different between the Army, the Navy and the Air and Space Force, in general terms AI should serve to support the decision-making process; however, its recommendations should not be interpreted as binding orders.

Soraya Artiles, Deputy Director General for Information Security and Artificial Intelligence of the CESTIC, who participated in one of the sessions, presented Spain's strategic plan to strengthen the capabilities of the future.

The official closing ceremony was led by Alberto Ucelay, Director General for Foreign and Security Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as neither Minister Albares nor the Minister for Digital Transformation and the Civil Service, Óscar López, were able to attend the summit due to adverse weather conditions. However, the Secretary of State for Defence, Amparo Valcarce, did attend this session.

Ucelay argued that "it is essential to enhance our commitment to multilateralism," stressing that "on its own, no country can face new challenges, nor can it harness the benefits that new technologies have to offer". In this regard, he emphasised that Spain seeks to "promote inclusive and effective international initiatives that enable the advancement of responsible AI use". He also insisted that the summit's conclusions be integrated into the United Nations open debates and

General Teodoro López Calderón, emphasised that our Armed Forces seek AI solutions that improve situational awareness, decision-making processes and our military capabilities, "but always within a transparent, legally compliant, ethical, moral, and strict control framework".

Lt Gen José María Millán, Director General of the Centre for Information and Communication Systems and Technologies (CESTIC) of the Spanish Ministry of Defence, stated during the summit that "we must continue to be responsible and accountable for the use of AI in the military domain". "We need to strengthen this joint project," added Millán in reference to the REAIM summit, "to ensure that AI is a force in the service of peace, stability and the common good". He also added that AI "does not replace human judgement, but it does amplify its consequences".

DAY TWO

The second and final day of the summit began with a discussion moderated by the Director General of the CESTIC, in which several speakers presented their views on the military use of AI, including Major General Fernando Morón, Director of Doctrine, Organisation and Materiel of the Spanish Army's Training and Doctrine Command; Rear Admiral Javier Vázquez of the Navy General Staff; and Major General Alejandro Chueca of the Air and Space Force General Staff. All three agreed that,

There was a formal call for the summit's conclusions to be integrated into the United Nations open debates



REAIM 2026

The Director General of the CESTIC, Lt Gen José María Millán, chaired a round-table discussion attended by representatives from the Spanish Army, Navy, and Air and Space Force.

Artificial intelligence and human accountability



**Admiral General
Teodoro López
Calderón**
Chief of the
Defence Staff

THIS third edition of the REAIM summit has served as a magnificent platform for exchanging views on how military AI can contribute to strengthening peace and security —avoiding risks derived from irresponsible use or system failure— while ensuring combat superiority in current and future operating environments. This is achieved through ethical standards that permit the exploitation of AI advantages while closely managing and monitoring its risks.

We can affirm that we are already engaged in what is often referred to as information-age warfare. It is characterised, among other things, by battlefield transparency, in which every platform is likely to be located, tracked, acquired by weapon systems and engaged, particularly close to the front line. All this takes place on a highly sensor-driven battlefield that generates an enormous amount of data from six different domains. This information must be updated in near-real time, fused, analysed and presented appropriately to each level of command and operational planning: strategic, operational and tactical.

For several years now, there has been a clear need to introduce new, emerging and disruptive technologies in order to achieve combat superiority, thereby partially offsetting the need for large amounts of material resources and, in particular, personnel, which is the hardest resource to acquire.

Amongst these disruptive technologies, AI stands out as an operational and strategic necessity, as I already outlined in the ‘Visión de la Inteligencia Artificial en las Fuerzas Armadas’ (Vision of Artificial Intelligence in the Armed Forces) in March 2024.

In fact, AI is already a key driver of our defence digital transformation. It will allow us to achieve decisive operational advantages in today’s complex security environment, as it is applicable not only to combat, but also to logistics or force readiness. It will also pave the way for advances in predictive and prescriptive maintenance and simulation, which directly translate into greater systems availability and improved training standards, essential aspects in the current climate in which the demand for enlisted personnel is ever-increasing. If we accept these assertions as true, the development of our own sovereign capabilities, which limit our external dependence on these

systems, becomes one of the structural and urgent strategic priorities of defence policy, both our own and that of our Allies.

Spain has adopted and expanded upon the principles of responsible use set out in the NATO strategy. These principles are not mere recommendations, but mandatory requirements for any system employing artificial intelligence within the Alliance. These include legality, responsibility, accountability, explainability, traceability, reliability, governance and the mitigation of unintended biases. It is crucial that the governance framework overseeing the use of this promising technology ensures strict adherence to our values and code of conduct during its implementation, and this should be considered a non-negotiable objective of our activity in this field. Consequently, we must continue to facilitate the integration of artificial intelligence into our military capabilities in order to maintain superiority over the adversary, paying special attention to improving interoperability and protecting ourselves from the use of AI by both state and non-state actors who oppose us. However, as the Spanish strategy points out, artificial intelligence must be an enabler, not a substitute for human accountability: individuals must always remain ultimately accountable for actions undertaken by an AI-enabled system.

This ‘Human in the loop’ concept is a non-negotiable legal and moral requirement for our Armed Forces. This summit on the responsible use of AI in the military domain is undoubtedly an important initiative to try to expand the responsible use of a crucial technology that many knowledgeable thinkers have compared to the turning point marked by the advent of the nuclear weapon.

As mentioned earlier, the vision of the Spanish Armed Forces focuses on seeking AI solutions that improve situational awareness, decision-making processes and our military capabilities, but always within a transparent, legally compliant, ethical, moral, and strict control framework.

In the face of this challenging technological landscape, we must remember that the men and women serving in our Armed Forces are their greatest asset, and that their conduct in compliance with our ethical code, as set out in the Royal Ordinances of the Spanish Armed Forces, is absolutely essential, whether it involves AI or any other technology.

**Artificial
Intelligence
must be an
enabler, not
a substitute,
for human
responsibility**

Speech at the opening day of REAIM 26



Several companies, including Navantia, presented various initiatives related to the military use of AI.

called for an ongoing dialogue between the REAIM and the United Nations.

Navantia was among the defence contractors and tech firms showcasing AI-driven solutions. During the summit, this state-owned company presented its Integrated Services System (ISS), developed in partnership with the University of Vigo as part of a broader naval digital transformation strategy to provide a secure and intelligent digital structure aboard ships.

PATHWAYS TO ACTION

The final declaration, entitled “Pathways to Action”, underscores that the responsible use and development of AI “can and should contribute to international peace and security”. This declaration points out that artificial intelligence can help reduce the exposure of personnel to danger, improve the protection of civilians, and support more timely and better-informed decision-making, but warns of risks such as miscalculations, bias or loss of control. In this regard, the document reiterates that “states and individuals (rather than machines and algorithms)”

bear legal and ethical accountability and emphasises that AI-enabled decision-support systems “should support, not replace, the exercise of human judgement”.

The declaration sets out specific measures: conducting risk assessments of AI-enabled military systems prior to deployment; performing legal reviews of weapons, means and methods of warfare enabled by this technology; strengthening

measures to protect the integrity, availability and confidentiality of data and mitigating its manipulation by non-state actors, including terrorist groups; ensuring the delineation of clear chains of command to avoid accountability gaps; designating a national focal point —such as a designated AI director— to facilitate government-wide coordination, etc.

Furthermore, the text stresses the importance of strengthening international cooperation, promoting capacity-building —including for developing countries—, and involving industry and academia more closely in promoting responsible AI in the military domain and in boosting research.

The A Coruña summit was a continuation of two previous meetings held in The Hague (Netherlands) in 2023 and Seoul (Republic of Korea) in 2024. These meetings already established a common understanding of the vital importance of AI in areas such as military operations, command and control, intelligence, training, information management and logistical support.

Santiago F. del Vado

There was a formal call for the summit’s conclusions to be integrated into the United Nations open debates