

Security  
.Days

<Utrecht.NL>  
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GÉANT

restena

# When the Claw of TALON hit Cyber-fortress Restena

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Co-funded by  
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# Is there a need for crisis training?

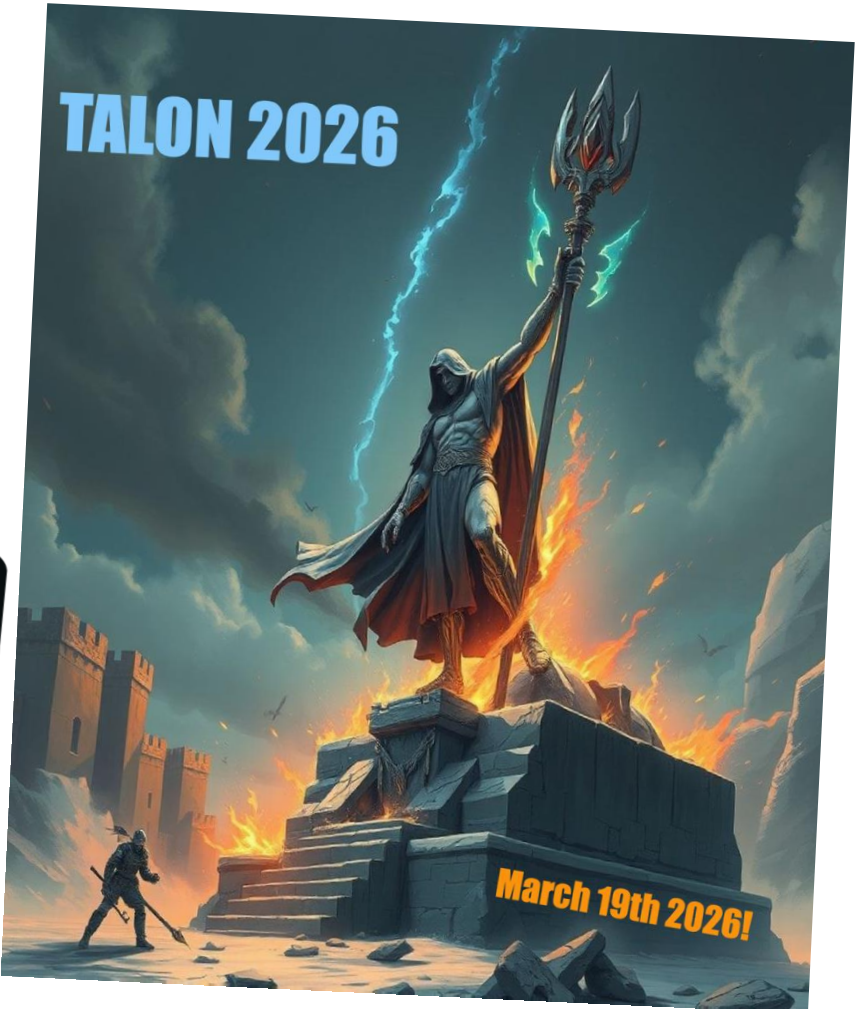
## Motivation:

- Information Security Management
- Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery
- Table-top exercises are good for testing procedures and processes and discuss but
- Crisis simulation exercises provide food for thought for the future planning!

# Restena: from 0 to “Game-Master”

- Past: Only table-top Exercises to discuss procedures
- 2-3 years ago: discovered the crisis management Exercises from GEANT
  - --> became regular participant
- Today: Participation & Game-Master in TALON for Restena

# Exercise Exercise!



# Cyberfortress 2026 (Mini-LockedShields)



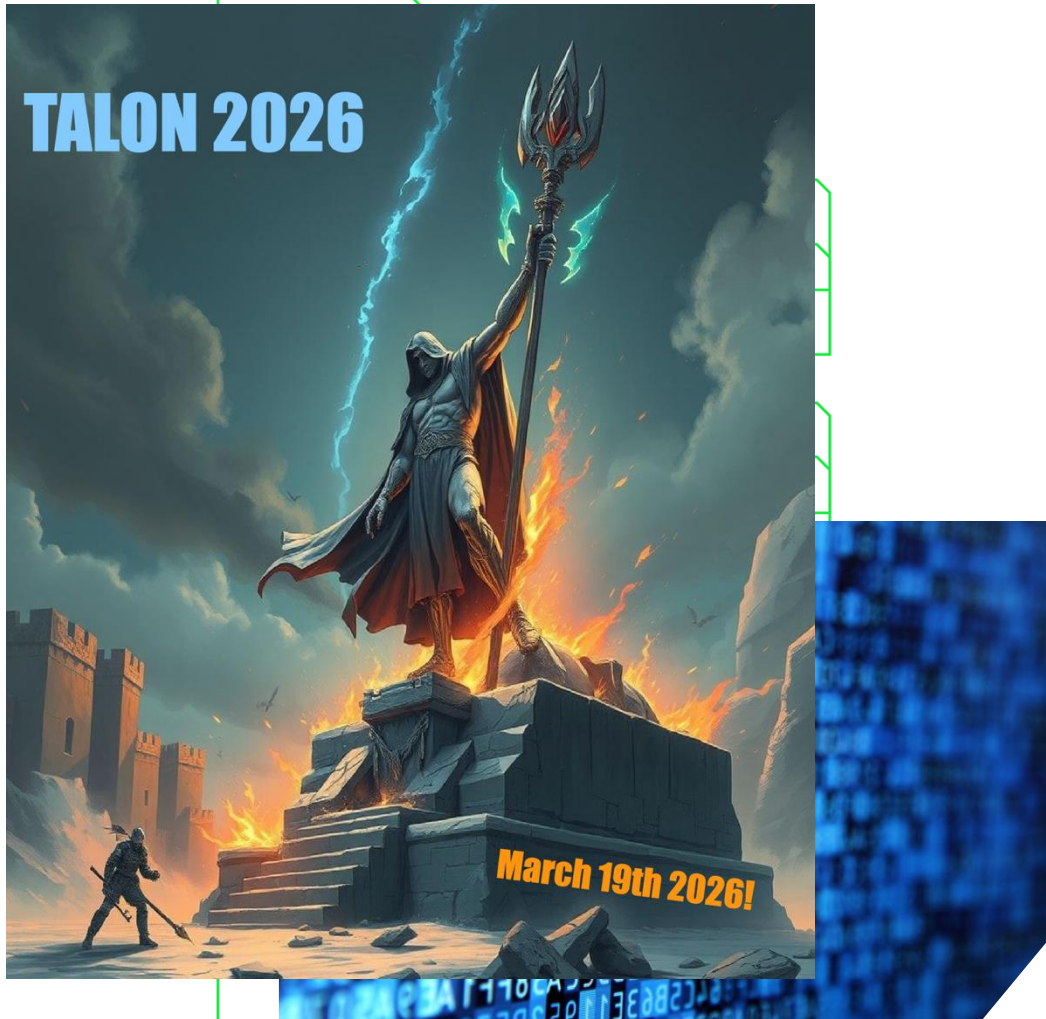
- Organised by the Ministry of Defense and Luxembourgish Army → preparation for LockedShields
- Very technical oriented
- Communication is new
- Can be intense depending on attacks carried out
- Difficulties to communicate with more (unknown) people around
- 1 full day exercise on-site
- 3 staff members participated

# CLAW 2025



- Crisis management for GEANT Community
- 2 days workshop with 0.5 day exercise
- Workshops on various topics
  - → learning experience is high
- Played on-site in groups
  - Techs (NOC, CSIRT),
  - Management,
  - Communications, ...
- 3 staff members participated

# TALON 2026



- 1st cross-border Crisis Exercise for NRENs
- 1 short day crisis exercise
- Involved 10 NREN staff members of 4 teams (NOC, System, CSIRT, MarComm)
- Involves 9 other NRENs
- Played online

# CLAW & TALON

## CLAW:

- + Everyone was on site
- + Team lead discussion was done in person
- + Every team got the same news at the same time
- + Applying what is learned in the training

## TALON:

- + Online only
- + Internal & external communication focus
- + Testing (non-)existing **internal** procedures and processes
- + Surprising initiatives taken (TI Rocketchat)

# CLAW & TALON & Cyber-Fortress

Claw to focus on individual skills in a group in crisis management

Talon to focus on communication within NRENs in a crisis scenario

Cyber-fortress to focus on individual stress management and group skills

# TALON 2026 from the organisational perspective

- Align with Objectives: Every scenario element must directly support the intended learning goals.
- Maximize Plausibility: Base scenarios on real threats, tools, and stressors for authenticity.
- Balance Challenge: Adjust difficulty to keep participants engaged, not overwhelmed.
- ⇒ When you have the "God view" of the scenario, you get to witness the gap between the technical reality of the attack and the human perception of the crisis
- Being "passive" in the game-play allows you to see the underlying mechanics of teamwork and decision-making that players often miss when they are in the heat of the moment.
- The most "stressful"—"and exciting"—part for an Exercise Leader!
  - ➔ When players deviate from the "expected" path, it usually reveals a lot about their internal culture and how they handle pressure.

# TALON 2026 from the organisational perspective



- Scenario vs. Reality

- Detection Lag: Time between inject and team's "Aha!" moment
- Fixation & Rabbit Holes: Focus on minor details, missing big threats
- Unexpected Pivots: Creative solutions that bypassed planned hurdles

- Process & Tool Effectiveness

- Playbook Agility: Followed plans or defaulted to ad-hoc troubleshooting?
- Analyzing whether existing incident response plans were followed or defaulted to "ad-hoc" troubleshooting!!
- Visibility Blind Spots: Injects missed due to log gaps or access / notifications issues



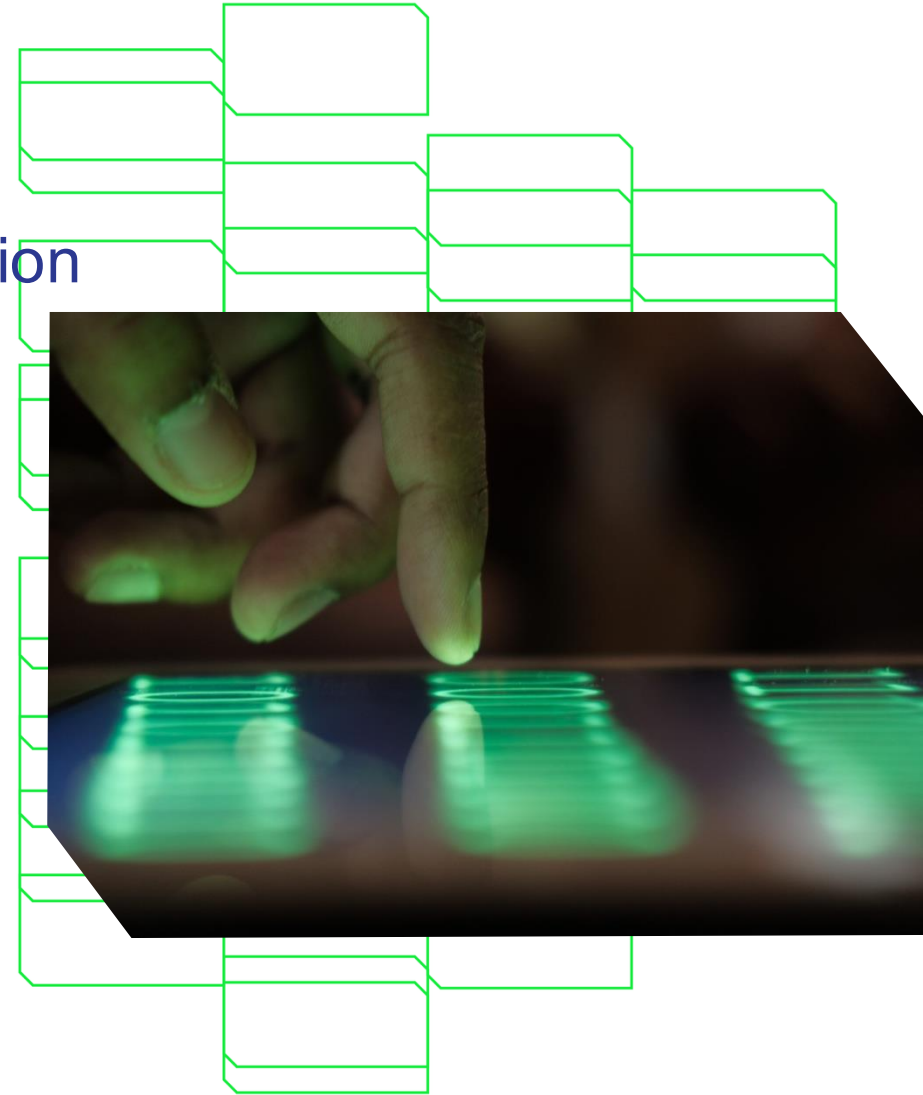
# TALON 2026 from the organisational perspective

- Key Recommendations for Future Leaders
  - Reach-Back: Access real-world experts (Legal, PR, Tech) in real-time
  - Pre-Scripted Decision Trees: Standard responses for common inquiries  
--> aka. local response team / catch-all
  - Dynamic Inject Scaling: Adjust injects based on team stress/progress
  - Information Asymmetry
    - Sometimes, you might accidentally give away too much information—or too little—messed up your role!
  - Catch-all/ local response team / Domain Expertise Gaps
    - A National CSIRT asks different technical questions than the Police



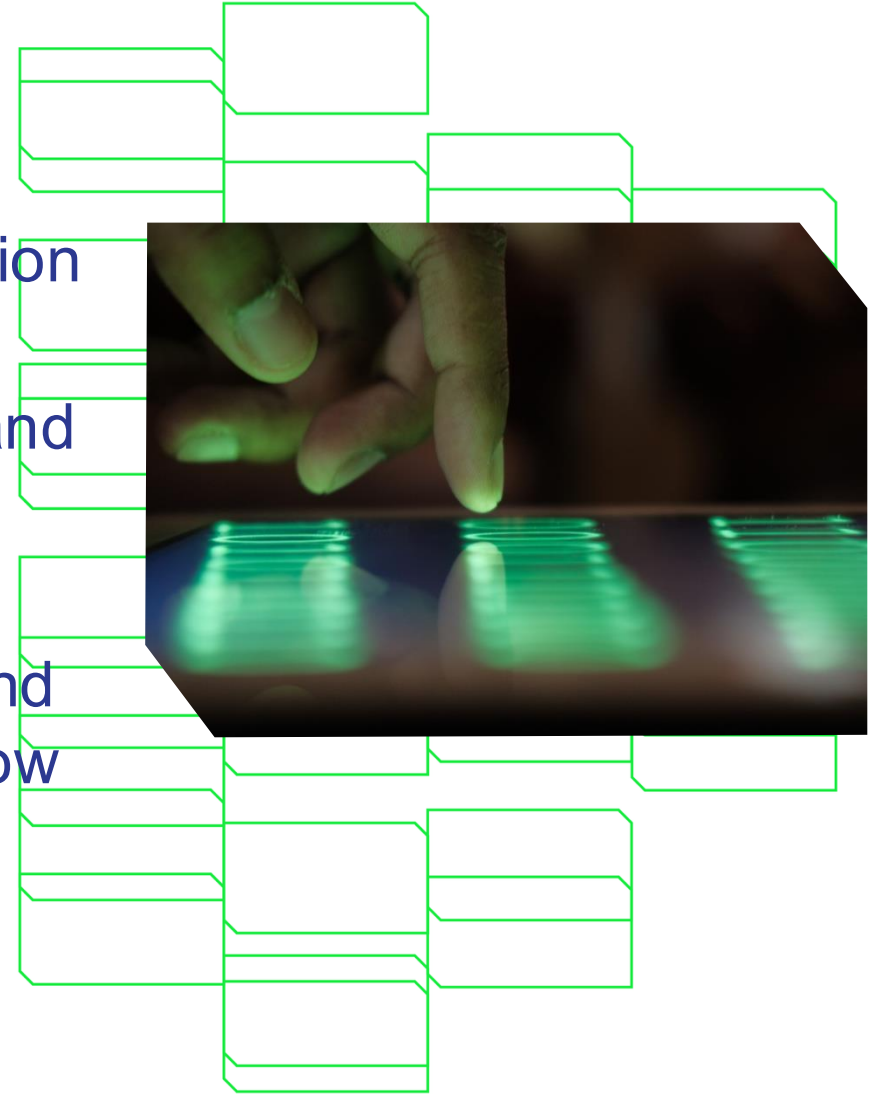
# Outcomes of a training!

- Is playing relevant for people?
  - Yes playing crisis scenarios helps in crisis preparation on all levels!
  - Personal development and skill sets
    - People learn about themselves!
    - See how others do it
    - Strengthen their analytical skills
    - See problems quicker and react (chain reactions)
  - Communication testing



# Outcomes of a training!

- Is playing relevant for the organisation?
  - Yes playing crisis scenarios helps in crisis preparation on all levels!
  - Possibility to think about your internal procedures and processes and test them!
  - Get another view on crisis and processes!
  - By playing people think about internal processes and ask the question “would our process work here? How could we tackle this”
  - Communication testing
    - Test plans or get ideas about plans



# Security Days

