Technology. Chapter Summary

When the technology panel was asked to imagine what "technical human enhancement" may look like, we immediately venture into the world of science fiction and, in particular, Hollywood's vision of people and humanity in the future. There are plenty of examples where technologies that were once dreamt up as gadgets in such films are now in everyday use in the real world. James Bond is definitely among the best examples. It just so happens that in 2024, when this book was being written, Agent 007's third big screen outing, "Goldfinger", marked its 60th anniversary. In the film, Mr Bond uses a system called "Homer", which allows him to secretly track other vehicles and people worldwide. Being shown on-screen in the 1960s as technology of the future, which appeared to be difficult to implement, is now a real and useful form of technology that is widely used around the world, such as in Navigation Systems and AirTags, as well as GPS collars for tracking domestic animals. In addition, possible technologies such as nanobots like those which appeared in the most recent James Bond film are not as far-fetched as you might think in these times of mRNA and miniaturisation.

The technology topic block in the Human Enhancement project is divided into the following three sections: a consideration of the current and historical developments of the general interest in human enhancement; an overview of the common phases of human enhancement on the basis of existing technical and human medical achievements; and a look into the future based on relevant films that can currently be placed in the "science fiction" category. The common link between these three topics is the consideration of the paths to human enhancement from a 'yesterday-today-tomorrow' perspective. Current technical obstacles for the real-world development of possible future technologies can be identified from this, which in turn form the basis for separating promising approaches from those that currently seem rather utopian. In addition to establishing our own development programmes in this area, the foundations are being laid for research to determine where and how other armed forces and countries stand in the race to create technically feasible military technologies. Since there are separate panels focussing on legal and ethical aspects, these topic blocks are not examined in detail in our technical analysis.