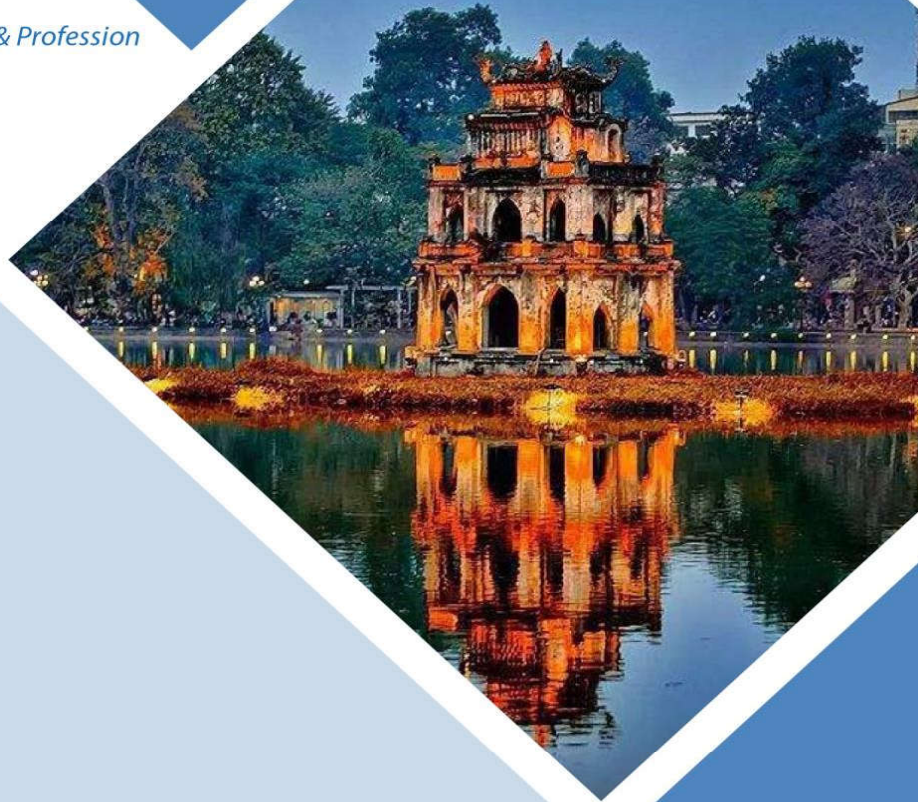


August 25-29, 2025
Hanoi, Vietnam



**Association for
Computing Machinery**

Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession



ACM ASIACCS 2025

**Proceedings of the 20th ACM ASIA
Conference on Computer and Communications Security**

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Message from General Co-Chairs

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to AsiaCCS 2025, the 20th ACM Asia Conference on Computer and Communications Security (AsiaCCS 2025). This year's event will be held at the Meliá Hanoi in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 25 to 29 August 2025.

AsiaCCS 2025 marks a special milestone - its 20th anniversary - and we are proud of how the conference has grown into the premier venue for cybersecurity research in the Asia-Pacific region. To commemorate two decades of development, AsiaCCS 2025 is introducing a Test-of-Time Award and will host a special 20th-birthday celebration. This year also marks the first time Vietnam will host AsiaCCS, and we hope AsiaCCS 2025 will further strengthen Vietnam's cybersecurity community and foster new collaborations across the region.

The main conference features three keynote talks by world-renowned researchers - Prof. Moti Yung (Google / Columbia University), Prof. Wenyuan Xu (Zhejiang University), and Prof. Yier Jin (Huawei) - alongside our full-paper presentations and a vibrant poster session.

As in past years, we offer a rich program of workshops and keynotes. On the first day, eight workshops will explore cutting-edge topics:

- 12th ACM ASIA Public-Key Cryptography Workshop (APKC)
- 7th ACM International Symposium on Blockchain and Secure Critical Infrastructure (BSCI)
- 11th ACM Cyber-Physical System Security Workshop (CPSS)
- Workshop on Privacy in Large Language Models (LLM) and Natural Language Processing
- 2nd Workshop on Security-Centric Strategies for Combating Information Disorder (SCID)
- 3rd ACM Workshop on Secure and Trustworthy Deep Learning Systems (SecTL)
- 4th Workshop on Security Implications of Deepfakes and Cheapfakes
- International Workshop on Secure and Efficient Federated Learning

We would like to express our deep gratitude to our organizing committee, including

- **Program Chairs:** Michail Maniatakos and Yinqian Zhang
- **Local Organizing Chairs:** Huynh Thi Thanh Binh and Tran Quang Duc
- **Workshop Chair:** Khoa Nguyen
- **Poster Chairs:** Pham Van Thuan and Yue Duan
- **Sponsorship Chair:** Le Xuan Thanh
- **Web Chair:** Tran Hai Anh
- **Publicity Chairs:** Vo Quang Viet and Cao Minh Phuong
- **Publication Chairs:** Dinh Tien Tuan Anh and Tong Van Van

In particular, we owe a special debt of gratitude to Tran Quang Duc as a lead coordinator, his tireless efforts behind the scenes have kept every piece of this conference running smoothly - without him, AsiaCCS 2025 simply would not have happened.

We would also like to acknowledge our generous supporters: Calif Global Inc. as Supporting Partner, sponsoring a large portion of local participants, and the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) as a sponsor.

We hope you enjoy the program, the city of Hanoi, and that AsiaCCS 2025 provides an inspiring forum for collaboration for all participants.

General Chairs

Huynh Quyet Thang and Phan Duong Hieu

Message from Program Co-Chairs

It has been an exciting journey for us to serve as PC Co-Chairs of AsiaCCS 2025. Selecting the papers to be presented is the ultimate responsibility and the most important part of a conference organization. We would like to express our gratitude to all authors, PC members, the organizing committee, as well as the steering committee for their great support in the past months. This team effort led to the formation of an exciting program!

Submissions were received from researchers worldwide, from both academia and industry. These submissions present novel contributions related to real-world aspects of security, privacy, and cryptography, with real world impact and applications. A total of 558 submissions were received: 289 in the first Cycle and 269 in the second Cycle. The reviewing process for each Cycle consisted of two rounds.

- In the first Cycle, 12 papers were desk rejected for violation of submission policies, 133 papers were early rejected in the first round, and 80 were rejected in the second round. 34 papers were invited for a major revision, 19 were accepted with shepherding, and 11 were accepted straight away. Out of 34 major revision papers, 31 were accepted, for a total of 61 papers accepted in Cycle 1.
- In the second Cycle, 24 papers were desk rejected for violation of submission policies, 109 papers were early rejected in the first round, and 83 were rejected in the second round. There was no Major Revision process in Cycle 2. 39 papers were accepted with shepherding, and 14 were accepted straight away, for a total of 53 papers accepted in Cycle 2.

In total 114/558 submissions were accepted, for an acceptance rate of 20.4%.

The AsiaCCS 2025 technical program consists of 114 talks corresponding to the accepted papers, a poster session, as well as three keynote talks by internationally prominent and active researchers. Also, for the first time in the history of AsiaCCS a Test-of-Time nomination process was initiated with the awards to be given during the conference.

We offer our deepest gratitude to:

- Authors of every submission to AsiaCCS 2025. We thank them for considering AsiaCCS as their preferred venue for demonstrating their research outputs and for their trust in us and the PC to thoroughly and faithfully conduct the reviewing process.
- Local Chairs Tran Quang Duc and Huynh Thi Thanh Binh for being very responsive, answering every query promptly, supporting us and keeping us on track with timely follow ups!

- Publication Chairs Dinh Tien Tuan Anh and Tong Van Van for taking care of the proceedings and handling numerous requests from the authors.
- The Test-Of-Time award committee who joined us, namely Debin Gao, Alvaro Cardenas, Surya Nepal and Gene Tsudik, for their input, nominations, and participation in the award selection process.
- General Chairs Phan Duong Hieu and Huynh Quyet Thang, who demonstrated great leadership and dealt with all the logistical and organizational matters.
- The AsiaCCS Steering Committee for their confidence in selecting us as PC Co-Chairs and their support throughout the process leading to the program and successful conference.
- And last but certainly not least, all PC members who are the main driving force of success and whose hard work yielded the excellent program. Special thanks to the recipients of the “Outstanding PC Members”, William Blair, Kristen Moore, Andreas Kogler, George Stergiopoulos, Nir Drucker, Ding Wang, Sofia Celi, Xianghang Mi, Jianliang Wu, for going the extra mile to provide high-quality reviews and volunteering to shepherd and review more papers.

In closing, we look forward to the exciting conference days in beautiful Vietnam in August and hope that all attendees enjoy the conference.

PC Co-Chairs

Mihalis Maniatakos and Yinqian Zhang

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POSTER

POSTER: Policy-driven security-aware scheduling in Kubernetes

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POSTER: Policy-driven security-aware scheduling in Kubernetes

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Abstract

Nowadays, Kubernetes is the leading platform for managing containerized application workloads. These are built of numerous *Pods*, groups of one or more containers that are always co-located and co-scheduled on the same node. Given a pod, the *scheduler* performs a critical task, i.e., it finds the best possible node for its execution. This process is affected by several factors, including resource availability, hardware requirements, data processing restrictions (e.g., GDPR and CCPA), workload sensitivity, and the presence of other workloads. Developers can control the scheduling process through several methods, such as node selectors, affinity, anti-affinity, and topology spread constraints. However, this activity is cumbersome, error prone, and can easily lead to security incidents.

In this paper we propose an approach to constrain and validate pod scheduling decisions without relying on complex, handwritten node selection policies. The idea is to combine the node filtering capabilities of Kubernetes with the use of OPA Gatekeeper for automated policy enforcement. We discuss how this approach overcomes the limitation associated with existing solutions, and then describe how it is used to support corporate governance policies in common scenarios. Preliminary experiments confirm the applicability of our proposal.

CCS Concepts

• **Security and privacy** → **Software and application security**;
Access control.

Keywords

Kubernetes, Security, Scheduling, Multi-tenancy, Data sovereignty, Workload isolation

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1 Introduction

Since its announcement in 2014, Kubernetes has become the industry leading solution for the orchestration of containerized workloads. According to a 2023 Cloud Native Computing Foundation's survey [1], 71% of respondents are using Kubernetes in production, and another 18% are evaluating its adoption. The reason of this success is Kubernetes' ability to automatically deploy, scale, and manage applications in a declarative way, independently of the size and complexity of the underlying cluster of nodes. To do so, it leverages the concept of *pod*, a group of containers that are tightly coupled, always co-located and co-scheduled, and share the same execution context and resources (e.g., storage, network).

However, companies that rely on Kubernetes also face some challenges. Indeed, as reported by Red Hat in the 2024 State of Kubernetes security report [2], nearly 9 in 10 organizations experienced security incidents, causing delays in application development to approximately 67% of companies, and even revenue or customer loss to 46% of all respondents. Indeed, when a vulnerable container is compromised the damage easily spreads to the entire pod due to the shared execution context, and when the vulnerability is severe and compromises the security of the node, it undermines all the co-located workloads.

Given this scenario, it is critical to provide developers and organizations with tools to improve the isolation between workloads. In particular, there are three common situations that can benefit from this: (i) *multi-tenancy*, where multiple tenants (e.g., customers or teams) run applications on the same cluster and need strong access control guarantees; (ii) *data sovereignty*, where several regulations (e.g., GDPR in Europe, and CCPA in California) require to control the geographical area where data is either stored and/or processed; and (iii) *incompatible sensitivity levels* for different workloads, as some may process personal data, implement critical services such as authentication and identity management, while others are exposed to untrusted input and/or depend on third-party code. In all these cases, it is crucial to select the execution node appropriately. While Kubernetes allows customizing the decision of the execution node during *scheduling*, this is done using verbose handwritten node selectors, affinity, anti-affinity, and topology spread constraints in the pod specification. Therefore, this process is tedious, error prone, and depends entirely on the developer.

In this paper we address this limitation by proposing the use of policies that are defined at cluster level, and are evaluated automatically every time pod creation requests are submitted to Kubernetes.

These policies are tailored on the previously mentioned use cases (i.e., multi-tenancy, data sovereignty, incompatible security levels), and mutate each pod creation request to ensure the selection of a policy-compliant execution node. In the following sections, we will first look at the native Kubernetes capabilities for limiting pod assignment, and then provide a detailed explanation of our solution. Finally, we will illustrate the experimental evaluation, showing the limited overhead associated with our approach.¹

2 Native node filtering capabilities

As mentioned in Section 1, Kubernetes assigns pods to nodes based on many factors like the availability of resources in the cluster, the pod’s resource requirements, and the distribution of the workloads. It also provides native methods to customize this process. We briefly explain the advantages and drawbacks associated with each of them.

Node labels and selectors. Node labels [4] are key-value pairs attached to nodes. When paired with the definition of node selectors in the pod specification, they allow to restrict the group of nodes eligible for execution to the ones matching all required node labels. While this is a viable solution, it has limited flexibility, hence it is only suitable for simple use cases.

Node affinity. Node affinity [3] complements node selectors creating a set of additional rules. These rules can express requirements (i.e., `requiredDuringSchedulingIgnoredDuringExecution`) and preferences (i.e., `preferredDuringSchedulingIgnoredDuringExecution`), allowing the scheduler to assign a pod even when it cannot find a node that satisfies all the constraints. Node affinity rules can quickly become complex to write and hard to validate, especially when using multiple `matchExpressions` clauses (e.g., `In`, `NotIn`, `Exists`, `DoesNotExist`, `Gt`, `Lt`).

Taints and tolerations. While node selection and affinity attract pods to a set of nodes, taints [7] allow nodes to repel pods that do not specify the corresponding taint tolerations. This capability is useful when a hardware feature is present only on few nodes in the cluster, and needs to be reserved for a specific set of pods that benefit from it. Taints are represented with simple key-value pairs and their resulting effect (e.g., `NoSchedule`). Therefore, they lack flexibility and do not allow the definition of complex expressions.

Although these features offer a solid starting point, it is essential to acknowledge their limitations. Indeed, they require all developers operating on the cluster to manually introduce a compliant and effective set of constraints. Moreover, since this activity is cumbersome and error prone, it can easily lead to security incidents due to lack of training, unclear company guidelines, or misconfigurations.

3 Our approach

The primary goal of this work is to improve workload isolation by automatically enforcing governance guidelines at the cluster level, without relying solely on handwritten policy constraints. In the following we clarify the threat model and illustrate our approach.

Threat model. In a Kubernetes cluster there is a risk of security incidents when workloads with incompatible security requirements and/or sensitivity levels are deployed on the same nodes. Indeed, workloads that process untrusted input can be compromised by an

¹The code is available at <https://github.com/matthewrossi/k8s-secure-scheduling>

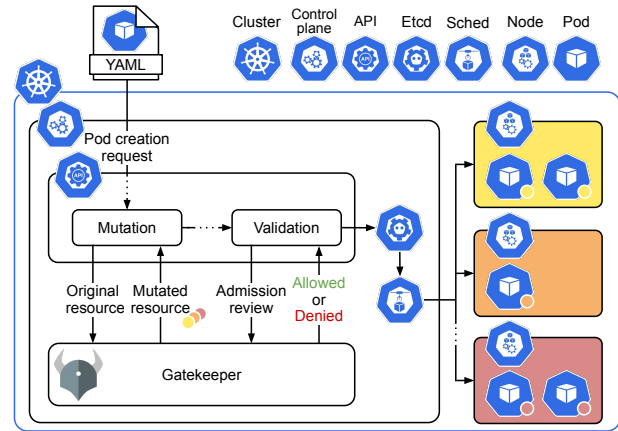


Figure 1: The architecture of our solution: Kubernetes scheduling capabilities are enhanced by OPA Gatekeeper, which automatically mutates and validates pod creation requests to enforce cluster-defined policies

attacker, potentially gaining code execution at node level. When this happens, all workloads running on the node are exposed to the attacker, hence applications can suffer disruptions and failures, user data can be lost or leaked, and the company can be held liable and suffer financial and reputational damage.

Our solution. We propose to strengthen Kubernetes scheduling decisions using OPA Gatekeeper [6], an open source policy and governance framework for Kubernetes built on the Open Policy Agent (OPA) engine. In detail, Kubernetes delegates runtime policy decisions to the Gatekeeper admission controller. Gatekeeper acts as a bridge between the Kubernetes API server and OPA, fetching the relevant information associated with the pod resource definition, and invoking OPA to evaluate a set of cluster policies. Policies operate at the cluster level, and implement the use cases presented in Section 1. OPA Gatekeeper employs them in two stages: mutation and validation. During mutation Gatekeeper modifies the pod resource definition to include elements from a policy template, supporting the developer in the correct definition of pod scheduling constraints. During validation instead, OPA ensures pod creation requests comply with the cluster policy guidelines, allowing to admit (or reject) pod creation requests at runtime.

This approach does not require to modify extensively the architecture of an existing cluster (Figure 1). We only assume that (i) nodes in the cluster have already been labelled meaningfully (e.g., with information about tenant, geographical location, and sensitivity level), and (ii) the developer can leverage a comprehensive set of labels to classify pods based on their security needs (e.g., a pod processes sensitive data, it must be deployed in given region).

Our solution brings several advantages: (i) policy enforcement is automated by Gatekeeper, this avoids manually replicating error-prone node filtering definitions; (ii) policies are decoupled from the pod specification, simplifying pod definition and improving developer productivity; and most importantly, (iii) Gatekeeper ensures policies are applied consistently over the cluster, independently of the tenant that implements or deploys the workload.

Table 1: 90th percentiles for the evaluation of policies regarding data sovereignty (DS), multi-tenancy (MT), and incompatible security levels (ISL) scenarios. Mutation does not introduce scheduling changes in unconstrained use cases

Scenario	Latency [μ s]		
	Mutation	Validation	Scheduling
DS (EEA)	900.09	900.73	942.77
DS (US)	900.12	900.57	982.35
DS (unconstrained)	900.17	900.76	925.56
MT (tenant-A)	900.23	900.32	951.11
MT (tenant-B)	900.21	900.41	944.19
MT (unconstrained)	900.07	900.14	926.24
ISL (sensitive)	900.12	900.50	942.34
ISL (unhardened)	900.30	900.54	936.39
ISL (unconstrained)	900.21	900.24	916.22

4 Evaluation

We performed a set of experiments to measure the time associated with the mutation and validation stages of pod creation requests, along with their subsequent pod scheduling latency.

The experiments have been performed on a server with Ubuntu 24.04 with kernel 6.8.0, a 128 cores AMD 7985WX CPU, 256 GiB of DDR5 RAM, and 2 TB SSD. To setup the Kubernetes cluster we used kind 0.27.0, Docker 28.0.1 for control plane nodes, the containerd 1.7.25 container runtime, KWOK² v0.6.1 to simulate worker nodes, and ClusterLoader2³ to run performance tests. OPA Gatekeeper 3.18.2 was used to mutate and validate scheduling requests, and Prometheus 2.25.0 to gather the test metrics.

To assess the accuracy of our test environment in measuring the impact of our solution on control plane components, we initially run a small-scale test with 3 control plane nodes, comparing the performance associated with the use of 10 real versus 10 simulated worker nodes. As expected, simulating workers still provides accurate control plane performance measures. So, we proceeded with the creation of 3 control plane nodes, on which our solution is run, and a total of 1k simulated worker nodes for the creation of 30k pods (with 500 qps). Table 1 shows the results for each use case. The measures report the 90th percentile of the latency introduced to mutate and validate pod creation requests, as well as the pod scheduling time. In all use cases these steps are completed within 1 ms. Finally, we monitored the API availability and confirmed that our solution does not affect the normal functioning of the cluster, as availability always remains at 100% even under heavy load.

5 Related Work

Several approaches improve the isolation in a Kubernetes cluster.

Kubernetes namespaces. Namespaces [5] provide a mechanism for isolating groups of API resources within a single cluster. They are useful to avoid name clashes and play a significant role in the definition of resource quotas (e.g., memory, CPU). However, namespaces are not meant to influence scheduling decisions, so

²<https://github.com/kubernetes-sigs/kwok>

³<https://github.com/kubernetes/perf-tests/tree/master/clusterloader2>

a privileged pod or a container breakout can affect workloads in other namespaces on the same node.

Sandboxing. In Kubernetes, workloads can benefit from the isolation provided by sandboxed runtimes, such as gVisor [16] and Firecracker [11], as well as take advantage of common kernel-based sandboxing solutions [8–10, 13, 14]. While all these techniques offer strong security guarantees, they also increase complexity, and inevitably introduce higher overhead and resource utilization.

Node isolation. With node isolation, a set of nodes is dedicated to running pods having a particular security profile. In Workload Security Rings [12], a proposal by Google, this technique is used to mitigate the risk of lateral movement, as sensitive workloads are never co-located with the ones that process untrusted data. However, their approach is only available in Borg [15], while our solution can replicate this behavior on Kubernetes.

6 Conclusions and future work

The results achieved by our approach are promising: not only it permits to automatically apply cluster-level policies during pod creation without significant architectural changes, but it is also associated with a negligible performance impact. Future work includes the exploration of real-time threat-informed policy adaptation and the extension of our solution to multi-cluster deployments.

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