SECURITY
CONCEPT EU UKRAINE STRATEGY CRITICAL STATE POLAND
CYBER GEOECONOMIC EAP TRANSFORMATIONS
RESISTANCE

RESILIENCE

CAPACITY
INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY NATO TERRORISM
SOCIETY ASYMMETRIC PROXY-WAR
ROMANIA HYBRID

- **RESILIENCE-BUILDING**
- **ASYMMETRIC RESPONSE**
- **EUROPEAN CONCEPTS**

UA: UKRAINE ANALYTICA

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Resilience

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESILIENCE-BUILDING AS A TOOL OF EU PRAGMATIC FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

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Resilience-building as one of the EU's major approaches to foreign and security policy enshrined in the EU Global strategy came about as a result of EU foreign policy and security identity shaping as well as the changing nature of its engagement in neighbouring areas. It reflected the declining share of the EU's soft interventionism and attempts to re-balance responsibility for policy failures. The article takes a look at the path the EU has made towards bringing resilience-building to the fore as a tool of its foreign and security policy; explains its essence and the role for the EU in the context of the changing environment and transformations in neighbouring areas, with a special focus on its Eastern neighbours. The article addresses the challenges the EU faces on the way to efficient resilience-building in the short-term perspective.

Resilience-building as a relatively new approach to security provision in the EU neighbourhood was named as one of the major EU strategic priorities of foreign and security policy in the EU Global strategy paper of 2016[1]. Resilience-building emerges as a result of a search for a new foreign policy and security identity by the EU, as well as its efforts to engage more efficiently in shaping a secure neighbourhood – in the East and South.

This article takes a look at the path the EU has made towards bringing resilience-building to the fore as a tool of its foreign and security policy, explains its essence and the role for the EU in the context of the changing environment and transformations in neighbouring areas with a special focus on its Eastern neighbours, and addresses the challenges the EU faces on the path to efficient strategic autonomy.

Shaping the Environment. The EU's Path to Resilience-Building

For many years on the way to finding approaches and tools for building relations with its neighbours, in particular its eastern ones, the EU has long sought a balance between ethical, normative, transformational power and geopolitical approaches. These first three aspects implied the ability to change the behaviour of others towards liberal democratic traditions, the conditionality of transformations through the incentive of EU membership, or the perspective of deepening integration. The

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1 *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, European Union, June 2016. [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf]

EU geopolitical approach was based mainly on value-oriented geopolitics, which hardly proved to be successful.

Along with these approaches, the EU has long been balancing between isolationism and soft interventionism, which ultimately laid the ground for a principled pragmatism approach as major foreign and security policy guidance. The Global Strategy of 2016 enshrined principled pragmatism with an emphasis on certain elements of hard security (war, crisis, the security of the EU and its neighbours) alongside cooperative regional order and effective global governance; as well as with resilience-building in neighbouring states.

At the same time, the application of the resilience-building concept, with American origin, without a specifically European interpretation, looks like a reduction of the EU's international engagement[2], evidenced by the involvement of multilateralism in global governance and the thesis of national governments' responsibility for the failure to implement their own policies. Thus, the prioritisation of resilience reserves for the EU the role of facilitator, acting as a coordinator, or consultant, who renders technical and financial assistance. And it is in this context that the development of resilience is treated not so much as creating conditions for building an order based on democracy and a market economy, but as a mechanism for adapting to

an ever-changing and increasingly dangerous environment. Some researchers[3] believe that such an evolution reflects the path of the EU from a normative Europe that looks beyond its borders to the pragmatic EU that looks inwards. According to Sven Biscop, the Global Strategy of 2016 marked the transition to "Realpolitik with European characteristics" and a retreat from the normative approach, which is a recognition of reality and of the lowering of ambitions[4].

> *the development of resilience is treated not so much as creating conditions for building an order based on democracy and a market economy, but as a mechanism for adapting to an ever-changing and increasingly dangerous environment*

To a certain extent, resilience-building as a compound of principled pragmatism reflects a broadening of foreign policy priorities and tools as well as a retreat from democratisation as a key tool for transformation of the neighbourhood. The European Security Strategy of 2003 prioritised the provision of EU security through the creation of a world of democracies with good governance[5]. Building a stable and secure neighbourhood through the mechanisms of democratisation

2   E. Baldaro, I. Costantini, *Fragility and Resilience in the European Union's security strategy: comparing policy paradigms*, Italian Political Science Review. 2020. p.1-16. [https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/italian-political-science-review-rivista-italiana-di-scienza-politica/article/fragility-and-resilience-in-the-european-unions-security-strategy-comparing-policy-paradigms/73F6866C2CAEC3918E943CF60A37CB38]

3   Ana E. Juncos, *Resilience as the new EU foreign policy paradigm: a pragmatist turn?* European Security, Vol. 26, 2017. p.1-18. [https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2016.1247809]

4   Sven Biscop, *The EU Global Strategy: Realpolitik with European Characteristics*, Security Policy Brief, No. 75, June 2016. [https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2016/06/SPB75.pdf?type=pdf]

5   *European Security Strategy*, European Union, 8 December 2003, [https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf]

and transformational power[6] should have led to an improvement in the Union's security. Conflicts that have taken place in the Eastern Neighbourhood have prompted the EU to rethink its foreign policy. That gave birth to a basic pragmatism with resilience-building as one of its pillars.

> **After the adoption of the Global Strategy, the EU faced the need to test the resilience-building approach in their Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods. Both areas experience threats and vulnerabilities entailing an insecure environment which is generating threats to the EU**

The shift in emphasis towards a pragmatising foreign policy and addressing resilience can also be explained by the changing geopolitical role of the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, proven by the Global Strategy mentioning "the direct link between European prosperity and Asian security"[7]. The connectivity function of the Eastern Neighbourhood countries in the context of China's relations with the EU presupposes the EU's interest, not so much in democratised but in predictable partners capable of preserving the political and economic status quo and sustainable development accomplishments. This makes resilience-building a strategic priority.

Therefore, unlike the strategy of 2003, the document of 2016 addresses the fragility of states as a threat to EU interests. Building resilience is considered as a path to sustainable growth and mature societies. This reflects political and socio-economic transformations and security processes in the Eastern Neighbourhood, as well as an expression of the EU's renewed foreign policy identity.

After the adoption of the Global Strategy, the EU faced the need to test the resilience-building approach in their Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods. Both areas experience threats and vulnerabilities entailing an insecure environment which is generating threats to the EU. Among these vulnerabilities are weak institutions and governance suffering from internal and external fluctuations, and migration crises with different roots for both areas but the same consequences for the Union. Crises over refugees from the Middle East alongside the migrant surge provoked by Lukashenko's regime on the EU borders (those coming from Afghanistan and Iraq) have been multiplying the security risks for the EU. Weak institutions make states vulnerable to external manipulations and promote corruption. On the other hand, improvements in state governance fail to prove stable and irreversible, as the experience of the Arab Spring demonstrated. Corruption and poor business-making conditions limit investments and do not breed strong and powerful institutions, help external actors infiltrate[8]

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6   В.Копійка, О.Хилько, *Процес європейської інтеграції України як індикатор спроможності трансформаційної сили Європейського Союзу* (The Process of Ukraine's European Integration as an Indicator of the EU's transformation power capacity), Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Міжнародні відносини, Київський університет, 2013. №1(40), p.5-9.

7   *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, June 2016. p.37. [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf]

8   *Гібридні загрози Україні і суспільна безпека. Досвід ЄС і Східного Партнерства* (Hybrid Threats to Ukraine and Societal Security. EU and Eastern Partnership States' Experience). Аналітичний документ. «Громадська синергія», Українська національна платформа Форуму громадянського суспільства, Центр глобалістики "Стратегія XXI" Східного партнерства. За заг. ред. В. Мартинюка. 2018. p.39. [https://www.civic-synergy.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/blok_XXI-end_0202.pdf]

into the security and defence sector, and make information operations easier. According to the EU Institute for Security Studies, "understanding how external pressures and domestic vulnerabilities interact – and how domestic reforms (including security sector reform) can contain external threats – is key to building durable and sustainable resilience in the east"[9].

The Essence of Resilience-Building in the EU and International Cooperation

The fragility of states, and resilience-building as a response to it, have traditionally been considered in academic discourse within security studies since the late 1990s and early 2000s. The EU followed the practice of the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in considering resilience-building as readiness for disaster, an approach illustrated by the 2012 European Commission report "The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises"[10]. Gradually, the EU has integrated the concept of resilience-building into the security discourse, and applied it to explain the capacity of institutions to adjust to shocks and crises.

The Conclusions of the EU Council of 2013[11] and the Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020[12] focus more

on resilience as a transformational and security tool. The reviewed Communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy of 2015 enriches the resilience-building process with "tackling terrorism and preventing radicalization in neighbouring states; disrupting serious and organized cross-border crime and corruption; improving judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and fighting cybercrime, in full compliance with the rule of law and international law, including international human rights law"[13].

"The European Union's Global Strategy. Three Years On, Looking Forward" report, dated 2019, combines resilience-building with an integrated approach to conflict and crisis[14] (which considers as identical, the social and economic, political, military, energy, and environmental components of the conflict) as a single EU goal, given the environment surrounding the Union for the three years after the issuing of the Global Strategy. This emphasises the inextricable link between security and development.

Given the definition of resilience in the above-mentioned documents, we might assume that the EU understands it as the capacity of states and societies to govern, withstand, adapt and recover from crises and shocks, and to absorb shocks, as well as the capacity

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9   *After the EU global strategy – Building resilience*. Ed. by Florence Gaub and Nicu Popescu. European Union Institute for Security Studies. May 2017,
     [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/After_EU_Global_Strategy._Resilience.pdf]

10   *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises*, Brussels, European Union, COM (2012) 586, 3 October 2012,
     [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2012_586_resilience_en.pdf]

11   *Council Conclusions on the EU's approach to Resilience*, European Union, 28 May 2013.
     [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/137319.pdf]

12   *Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020*, Brussels, European Union, 19 June 2013.
     [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2013_227_ap_crisis_prone_countries_en.pdf]

13   *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*. Brussels, EEAS, 18 November 2015. P.12.
     [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2019-01/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf]

14   *The European Union's Global Strategy. Three Years On, Looking Forward*, EEAS, 2019.
     [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_global_strategy_2019.pdf]

to reform. That provides resources to resist internal and external crises and to quickly recover from them. And in the broadest sense, resilience equals security. Resilience deals with the institutional capacity to perform functions efficiently with resistance to pressure, policies, mechanisms, and procedures.

The Global Strategy defines a resilient society as one which demonstrates commitment to democracy, trust in institutions and sustainable development[15]. Accordingly, the priority areas for building resilience in the Eastern Neighbourhood are the fight against corruption, judicial reform, security and defence sector reform, respect for human rights, free market development, civil society support, the development of strategic communications, the protection of energy and other infrastructure, cybersecurity, connectivity improvement, and the transit of migrants.

Resilience-building pursues multi-level goals which include the sustainability of progressive transformations in cases where crises / wars / conflicts occur, the rule of law, human rights, open opportunities for development and other values. From the security and defence perspective, resilience is seen as resistance[16], i.e. resistance to external threats (including hybrid ones, provoked by the Russian Federation in the case of the Eastern neighbours). And this approach resonates with the 2019 Report, which recognises the internal stability of the EU as an integral part of the EU's policy towards Russia[17]. With a focus made on hybrid threats, energy security and strategic communications, resilience-building in these areas aims at providing the EU and neighbouring countries with freedom of choice – political, diplomatic, economic – by reducing external pressures. Respectively, the EU's task towards its neighbours, as well as towards itself, is prevention, response and recovery as the quintessence of resilience.

> **With a focus made on hybrid threats, energy security and strategic communications, resilience-building in these areas aims at providing the EU and neighbouring countries with freedom of choice – political, diplomatic, economic – by reducing external pressures**

The EU's early Communication on Resilience contains recommendations on the tools for its enhancement. They include support for preparing national resilience strategies, disaster management plans and efficient early-warning systems in disaster-prone countries, innovative approaches in risk management through collaboration with the insurance industry, and others[18].

15 Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, EEAS, June 2016. p.23.
[https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf]

16 Nathalie Tocci, Resilience and the role of the European Union in the World, Contemporary Security Policy, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020), p. 176-194.

17 *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action"*, Bruxelles, EEAS, 07 June 2017.
[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/27711/joint-communication-european-parliament-and-council-strategic-approach-resilience-eus-external_en]

18 *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises*, Brussels, COM(2012) 586, EEAS, 3 October 2012.
[https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2012_586_resilience_en.pdf]

The EU is specifically efficient in rendering technical assistance. Its contribution to the security sector reforms (Ukraine's case) is a good example of its successful activity in adaptation and recovery performed together with other security actors like the OSCE and NATO. The EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine on civilian security sector reform successfully implemented projects and measures to reform law enforcement and rule of law institutions in Ukraine and re-establish trust with the people[19]. Other projects which have targeted regional capacity-building to avoid separatist intentions are the joint EU-Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) "EU4ResilientRegions – Special Assistance Program Ukraine" with support for local communities, notably in eastern and southern Ukraine[20]; and the joint EU-UNDP project aimed at promotion of inclusive economic growth and innovation in municipalities across the Eastern Partnership countries[21].

The EU welcome[22] the Association Trio[23] consisting of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, perceiving it as a tool of horizontal resilience-building in line with previously existing formats of cooperation (the Visegrad, Benelux, and Nordic groups).

Challenges the EU Faces on the Way to Resilience-Building

The EU faces a number of challenges in implementing a resilience approach in the Eastern Neighbourhood.

A certain level of resilience implies the capacity of a state to recover after a crisis or a shock. Resilience presupposes that a body does not return to its original position after a shocking experience[24]. It changes qualitatively, updates and reorganises. And the key problem for it is the ability to identify and maintain its own path of renewed development without external interference. This issue is highly correlated with the principled pragmatism approach, since in the case of the Eastern neighbours, there will always be another player on hand, to propose or impose its own views – Russia. The question is to what extent is the EU ready to predict exactly how the neighbouring state will recover after being hit by a threat/shock, and to what extent is it ready to adjust its trajectory? To what extent will the EU be able to uphold its principles and maintain the desired transformations? This is an important challenge for the Union. Therefore, without developing a risk reduction strategy, fragile accomplishments might be lost.

19 *The European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine.* [https://www.euam-ukraine.eu]

20 *New EU4 Resilient Regions Programme Finances Implementation of Best Practices of Local Development in up to 80 Communities.* Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, 16 June 2021, [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/100159/node/100159_en]

21 *EU and UNDP Launch New Mayors for Economic Growth Facility in Ukraine.* UNDP, 30 June 2021. [https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2021/eu-and-undp-launch-new-mayors-for-economic-growth-facility-in-ukraine.html]

22 *Eastern Partnership: Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell following the meeting with Foreign Ministers of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.* Brussels, EEAS, 24 June 2021. [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/100628/eastern-partnership-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-following-meeting_en]

23 *Batumi Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State of Association Trio – Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.* 19 July 2021. [https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/deklaraciya-batumskogo-samitu-shvalena-glavami-derzhav-asoci-69609]

24 Nathalie Tocci, *Resilience and the Role of the European Union in the World*, Contemporary Security Policy, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020), p.181.

Building resilience is a good way to work with neighbours in terms of achieving the Union's long-term goals. At the same time, in this way the EU may lose the neighbours it wants to have. The reason is a permanent loss to Russia's pragmatic geopolitical approach. The events of the past five years – concerning Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, have resulted in such losses. The main problem in the shared neighbourhood has always been the clash of Russia's pragmatic geopolitics and the EU's value-oriented geopolitics[25]. Therefore, if the principled pragmatism, within which the resilience-building approach is developed, presupposes efforts and money to achieve the result without compromising the ideals, the EU must include into its strategy of relations with Russia the covering of critical risks for the common neighbours in their resilience-building efforts. Until the EU worries about the risk of being accused by its opponents of interventionist policies, Russia will apply harsh measures with a higher level of external intervention.

The above-mentioned challenge is very much connected with the question of the duality of the principled pragmatism standards, as raised by a number of European researchers[26], emphasising the impossibility of combining universal moral principles and pragmatism, which might lead to the ineffectiveness of foreign policy. Respectively, the EU loses in terms of values and does not win in pragmatic interests. The principles are traditionally based on the values which the EU not only professes to represent but extrapolates externally as well. Pragmatism calls into question the priority of values and ideas over decisions, which bring situational benefits, differing from case to case. In building a strategy for relations with Russia, the EU may be much more interested in rapprochement than in concentrating on the terms of such rapprochement. Therefore, the next challenge for the EU will be to find a balance between fundamental pragmatism in relations with Russia and the preservation of the desired accomplishments in the Eastern neighbourhood.

> **Building resilience is a good way to work with neighbours in terms of achieving the Union's long-term goals**

Given the merging of resilience-building and an integrated approach to conflict and crisis management, a question arises about the EU's capacity to manage crises through containment rather than completion. According to some researchers[27], this will be the future trend of crisis management given the declining share of the EU's soft interventionism.

Some concerns are raised within the EU internal political discourse about a possible transformation or promotion

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25 R. Youngs, K. Pishchikova, *Smart Geostrategy for the Eastern Partnership*. November 14, 2013.
[http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/11/14/smart-geostrategy-for-eastern-partnership/gtsl?reloadFlag=1]

26 Steve Wood, *Pragmatic Power EUrope?* Cooperation and Conflict, 46(2), 2011. p.242-261.
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/45084640?seq=1]; Ana E. Juncos, *Resilience as the new EU foreign policy paradigm: a pragmatist turn?* European Security, Vol. 26, 2017. p.1-18.
[https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2016.1247809]

27 E. Baldaro, I. Costantini, *Fragility and Resilience in the European Union's security strategy: comparing policy paradigms*. In Italian Political Science Review. 2020. p.1-16.
[https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/italian-political-science-review-rivista-italiana-di-scienza-politica/article/fragility-and-resilience-in-the-european-unions-security-strategy-comparing-policy-paradigms/73F6866C2CAEC3918E943CF60A37CB38]

of authoritarian regimes into even more repressive ones as a consequence of growing resilience[28]. Although such concerns are largely expressed about the Southern neighbourhood, the 2020 elections in Belarus raise questions about the applicability of this approach to the Eastern neighbourhood. Therefore, special priority must be given to the need to build not only a state but also a social resilience.

> **The EU's ability to build resilience in the neighbourhood will directly depend on its own internal resilience to external challenges**

The next question is whether the EU is able to apply individual approaches for building resilience to each neighbour, given the features of both the neighbour and its environment. The Global Strategy declares such readiness. However, given the specifics of institutional practices and the history of the EU's relations with its neighbours, the EU has traditionally preferred universal unified formats of cooperation that might jeopardise the accomplishments of the front runners.

The EU's ability to build resilience in the neighbourhood will directly depend on its own internal resilience to external challenges, such as the consequences of Brexit, Russian intervention, fragmentation as a result of the competition for participation in China's infrastructure projects, and divergent views on the prospects of transatlantic relations.

When talking about pragmatism as a political method, the EU appears not as a unified entity but as a mechanism consisting of many components, where the pragmatism of individual components undermines the collective power[29]. Today, when the role of the European Council is growing and the role of the European Parliament is declining, the strengthening of intergovernmental trends does not contribute to the shaping of the EU as a strong integral power centre capable of being an equal competitor with other world powers.

All these challenges require both the EU's response and a willingness of the Eastern Neighbourhood states to respond to the above-mentioned problems in the context of assessing their own ambitions towards the pace and depth of integration and cooperation.

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28 Nathalie Tocci, *Resilience and the role of the European Union in the world*, Contemporary Security Policy, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020), p. 176-194.

29 Steve Wood, *Pragmatic Power EUrope?* Cooperation and Conflict, 46(2), 2011. p.242-261. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/45084640?seq=1]

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