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## Resilience

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# RESILIENCE CAN BE A SOLUTION TO WITHSTAND HYBRID ATTACKS

*Interview with Vice-Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine  
Olga Stefanishyna*

## **What does it mean to be a resilient state?**

First of all, it means for the state to be prepared to withstand, to counter, and to recover after various threats. To know their own vulnerabilities and to address them properly. To build internal system enabling people in the state to stay unaffected or minimally affected by those threats.

According to the NATO approaches outlined in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, being a resilient state means the ability of an Ally to withstand any threat until other Allies come to help. However, a lot has changed since Article 3 was formulated in 1949, and the current understanding of resilience is much wider than it was initially.



***The important element of the National Resilience Concept is developing cooperation between the non-state actors and the state institutions***

In recent years, resilience has become a global trend, being high on the agenda of many international organisations, as well as business companies. Civil structures play a key role in building and maintaining resilience. In the modern world, there are no isolated threats or challenges. The world we are living in is hardly predictable, leaving

aside the challenges that we might face. So, there is a need to be prepared for any kind of threats, should they come our way.

A resilient society also becomes an essential element in the overall national resilience of the state. This aspect covers, first of all, society's ability to withstand informational influence operations and disinformation campaigns, which is crucial in the era of deepfakes and highly developed and sophisticated attacks in cyberspace.

Resilience is an important part of many strategic documents, mainly the national security laws or strategies of many countries, including NATO and the EU member states.

## **What is the Ukrainian resilience concept about?**

The Ukrainian Resilience Concept, recently approved by Presidential Decree, is laying a foundation for the building of a national resilience system. The Concept identifies the goal, main principles, directions, mechanisms and timeframe for the establishing of national system of resilience. The system should enable both the state and society, in a timely manner, to identify threats and vulnerabilities, as well as to assess national security risks, prevent or mitigate their impact, effectively respond, and quickly and fully restore themselves after threats.

Establishment of the National Resilience System was provisioned by the Ukrainian

National Security Strategy, based on which I initiated the development of the Concept draft. The document was developed jointly by the state bodies and the research institution, taking into account NATO baseline requirements and guidelines.

The National Resilience System envisions security and protection of critical infrastructure, institutional resilience of the state agencies system, a unified state system of civil protection capable of operating under threat or emergency, social resilience (in particular to information influences), and financial-economic resilience, such as continuity of the key business processes.



***It is impossible to be prepared to react to each and every threat separately. We are aiming at an all-hazards approach, shifting focus from a response in itself to planning, preparedness and capacity building***

However, this list is not exhaustive and can be amended according to the existing security landscape.

The important element of the National Resilience Concept is developing cooperation between the non-state actors and the state institutions. In the process of joint training programmes, the representatives of private entities and state bodies should learn how to efficiently work together in times of crisis.

Moreover, the document also sets out common ground with regard to the terms and concepts used when we talk about resilience. It is important for ensuring mutual understanding between different actors in the process of future work. There should be established a government

coordination (decision-making) authority and an analytical structure, which can provide the necessary intellectual, research and training capacity to policy-making in the resilience area.

### **Is resilience an asymmetric answer to hybrid warfare?**

It is not an answer in itself, but it can be a solution to prepare and withstand hybrid attacks, and to be minimally affected by any of them. Hybrid warfare, with its quite complex nature, requires comprehensive measures to counteract it. It is impossible to be prepared to react to each and every threat separately. We are aiming at an all-hazards approach, shifting focus from a response in itself to planning, preparedness and capacity building.

For the last 7 years, Ukraine has been a target and a testing ground for the entire hybrid toolbox used by Russia. We do not have the luxury of a long-term development and polishing up of our system. So, we will need to create a flexible system that could be improved later, and make it operational as soon as possible.

### **Can resilience be a joint sphere for EU and NATO cooperation with Ukraine?**

This is already being seriously discussed with our partners in the EU and NATO. There cannot be a resilient European and Trans-Atlantic community without a resilient Ukraine, and Ukraine has a lot to contribute to the process of developing an effective response to the new generation of threats.

Though national resilience is a national responsibility, understanding of the global nature of threats and challenges makes it a major trend and an essential factor in addressing it on the international level.

Ukraine can offer unique expertise both to NATO and the EU, in order to withstand and counteract complex threats. Our experience can have significant importance for understanding and developing the different aspects of resilience – economic, cyber, societal, critical infrastructure resilience and many others.

Citing the director of one of the NATO CoEs – “When you are seen prepared – it is a powerful message by itself”. So, this is what we want to achieve – to be seen as a strong and prepared state, part of the Euro-Atlantic community, and a place which it is safe and secure to live in.

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***Olha Stefanyshyna***, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine since June 2020. She graduated from International Law Faculty, Institute of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and received a diploma in Finance and Credit from Odessa National University of Economics. She worked at the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine and had a private legal practice. In 2017-2019, she served as Director-General of the Government Office for Coordination of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

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# 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<sup>1</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> *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](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<sup>2</sup>, 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<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup>.

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***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***

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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<sup>5</sup>. Building a stable and secure neighbourhood through the mechanisms of democratisation

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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<sup>6</sup> 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 pragmatism 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”<sup>7</sup>. 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<sup>8</sup>

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](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](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”<sup>9</sup>.

## 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”<sup>10</sup>. 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<sup>11</sup> and the Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020<sup>12</sup> 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”<sup>13</sup>.

“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<sup>14</sup> (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

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](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](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](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](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](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](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<sup>15</sup>. 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<sup>16</sup>, 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<sup>17</sup>. 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.

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***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***

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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<sup>18</sup>.

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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](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](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](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<sup>19</sup>. 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<sup>20</sup>; and the joint EU-UNDP project aimed at promotion of inclusive economic growth and innovation in municipalities across the Eastern Partnership countries<sup>21</sup>.

The EU welcome<sup>22</sup> the Association Trio<sup>23</sup> 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<sup>24</sup>. 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](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](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-shvalenaglavami-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<sup>25</sup>. 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<sup>26</sup>, 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.

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

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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<sup>27</sup>, 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/gtssl?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<sup>28</sup>. 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.



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

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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<sup>29</sup>. 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>]

# THE EUROPEAN CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE AS A TOOL OF GEOECONOMIC COMPETITION WITH RUSSIA: THE CASE OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

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*This article aims to examine how the European Union (EU) exercises the concept of resilience to achieve its strategic foreign policy goals. Specifically, the case of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) is covered. The article proceeds as follows. First, the origins and definition of resilience are explored to provide the background for further reasoning. Second, the connections between the concept of resilience and the geoeconomic strategy of the EU are examined. Subsequently, Russia's geoeconomic approach is outlined to provide a counterexample and demonstrate the distinctiveness of the EU's policy. Finally, the approaches are compared emphasising the structural process of introduction of policy instruments, as well as their implications for the strengths and weaknesses of the EU as a geoeconomic power vis-à-vis Russia.*

## Introduction

The concept of resilience was coined as a response to the multifaceted and constantly changing set of risks and threats. Within the European context, the concept was developed specifically as an instrument directly intended to impact the policymaking in the European Union (EU). Moreover, the resilience concept seems to be not only designed for implementation within the EU member states but also to serve as a guiding principle for the neighbouring states. In this context, the instance of the Eastern

Partnership (EaP) is especially fascinating as the stand-off between Russia and the EU is also happening in the geoeconomic domain<sup>1</sup> where the interests of the two states clash through various policy instruments and approaches, thus delivering various outcomes.

## Origins & Definition of Resilience

The concept of resilience is relatively new. It first appeared in official European documents in the 2012 EU Approach to Resilience, where it was applied in the

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1 Here, to omit any complex discussion about the nature of geoeconomics and its differences from geopolitics, the term is understood as geopolitics conducted with economic means. In other words, security or political objectives are achieved through the application of economic means.

context of food security crises<sup>2</sup>. Resilience was there first defined as “the capacity of States and societies to reform, to resist and recover from internal and external crises”. However, the later EU Global Strategy document broadened the notion, and several more dimensions were included as structural parts of the concept. For instance, the Strategy mentions state and societal, economic, energy, and environmental resilience. An important role is devoted to the rule of law, good governance, and human rights which in the EU are considered as fostering peace and stability in the neighbouring countries.



***the European concept of resilience emphasises both security and humanitarian dimensions, acknowledging the existence of new kinds of threats and attempting to integrate them into the previously purely normative power-like policies***

An essential turning point can be traced when comparing the 2016 EU Global Strategy with the previous edition of 2003<sup>3</sup>. In the later version, Brussels emphasises the EU’s strategic interests in building resilience and stabilising the neighbouring region,

thus consigning the objective of civilian transformation to the backseat. Indeed, a great deal of attention has been put into securing the common neighbourhood, considering the geopolitical developments in Eastern Europe. The shift in the EU’s approaches to foreign policy was, therefore, demonstrated by the concept of resilience becoming central to the Global Strategy. While moving away from the under-ambitious objective of stability, the EU simultaneously avoided over-ambitious plans of liberal peace-building approaches, which had dominated the European, policymakers’ minds at the beginning of the century<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, the Global Strategy states that “principled pragmatism” represents both a “realistic assessment of the current strategic environment” as well as an “idealistic aspiration to advance a better world”<sup>5</sup>. However, the transformational features of European foreign policy thinking, as well as the basic premise of the democratic peace theory, were not entirely abandoned but rather transformed. In the Global Strategy, resilience still features as “democracy, trust in institutions, and sustainable development”<sup>6</sup> which reflects the basic European view on security. Resilience implies constant transformation as a response to a crisis and allows entities to build mechanisms of reformation and change to account for fluid international and internal environments. As it is put in the Global Strategy: “resilience – the ability

- 2 *The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises*, European Commission, 3 October 2012, [[https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com\\_2012\\_586\\_resilience\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2012_586_resilience_en.pdf)].
- 3 *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy*, Council of the EU, 8 December 2003, [<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf>].
- 4 W. Wagner and R. Anholt, *Resilience as the EU Global Strategy’s New Leitmotif: Pragmatic, Problematic Or Promising?*, “Contemporary Security Policy”, September 2016, pp. 414-430, [<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1228034>].
- 5 *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*, European External Action Service, June 2016 [[https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)].
- 6 *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*, European External Action Service, June 2016 [[https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)].

of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises”<sup>7</sup>.

Reflecting the developments in international politics, the European concept of resilience emphasises both security and humanitarian dimensions, acknowledging the existence of new kinds of threats and attempting to integrate them into the previously purely normative power-like policies. Apart from being well-governed, sustainable, and cohesive, a resilient state should also be able to resist hybrid threats (e.g., disinformation, terrorism, cyberattacks, disruptions of critical infrastructure, etc.), reacting to them, promptly recovering and, crucially, transforming the state itself as a response to the shock<sup>8</sup>. Considering the all-encompassing nature of the resilience concept, it is of no surprise that resilience does not substitute other policy goals but rather goes in parallel with them<sup>9</sup>. It provides the necessary common language to guide policymakers (in the EU and the Neighbourhood alike) towards the targeted state of resilience, as well as other established common goals, ranging from the rule of law and good governance to sustainable development and a green economy.

Naturally, the complexity of the term contributes to seeing resilience-building as a multi-level process, simultaneously happening at the state, society, community, and individual levels<sup>10</sup>. Resilience, thus, prevents the creation of universal solutions to various types of crises and conflicts. Indeed, the concept stresses societies’ interior abilities to deal with crises<sup>11</sup>, which enables local entities to become self-organised and to build their resilience projects with external help if necessary<sup>12</sup>. Resilience reflects the EU’s principle of subsidiarity, which indicates the adoption of decisions on a level closest to that of the citizens. Since the implementation of the resilience-building framework is left primarily within the EaP countries’ competence, the local context is included in the equation. This is another sign of the European “values export” underpinned by a more realistic stance on international relations. So, resilience is considered to be an internally developed protection left mostly on the shoulders of partnering states with external entities assisting in it or tampering with the resilience-building activities<sup>13</sup>.

Summing up, resilience in the context of European foreign policymaking focuses

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- 7 *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*, European External Action Service, June 2016 [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\_stories/pdf/eugs\_review\_web.pdf].
  - 8 N. Tocci, *Resilience and the Role of the European Union in the World*, “Contemporary Security Policy”, August 2019, pp. 176-194, [https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1640342]. S. Colombo, A. Dessi, & V. Ntsousas, (ed.), *The EU, Resilience, and the MENA Region*, Foundation for European Progressive Studies & Istituto Affari Internazionali, December 2017 [https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/9788868129712.pdf].
  - 9 N. Tocci, *Resilience and the Role of the European Union in the World*, “Contemporary Security Policy”, August 2019, pp. 176-194, [https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1640342].
  - 10 *A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU’s external action*, European Commission, 7 June 2017, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017JC0021].
  - 11 A. E. Juncos, *Resilience as the New EU Foreign Policy Paradigm: A Pragmatist Turn?*, “European Security”, September 2016, pp. 1-18, [https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2016.1247809].
  - 12 E. A. Korosteleva, *Reclaiming Resilience Back: A Local Turn in EU External Governance*, “Contemporary Security Policy”, November 2019, pp. 241-262, [https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1685316].
  - 13 K. Kakachia, A. Legucka & B. Lebanidze, *Can the EU’s New Global Strategy Make a Difference? Strengthening Resilience in the Eastern Partnership Countries*, “Democratization”, 2021, pp. 1-19, [https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1918110].

on creating an environment able to resist, promptly recover from the damage caused by the internal or external shocks, and, resulting from that, transform the state and society. Resilience is not simply protection from risks, but a state-society configuration in which constant updates of practices and institutional design are in place, providing constant evolution. To build a resilient state, crucial underlying realms should also be accounted for. Particularly, social trust, legitimacy of the governance actors, and effective design of governance institutions are important<sup>14</sup>, so that the political and social environment supports the necessary changes. The concept of resilience might seem ambiguous and flexible which, naturally, has positive and negative implications. On the one hand, elasticity allows resilience's application by a variety of actors and in different contexts<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, it also brings limitations to the measurement and operationalisation of resilience: while different communities have a distinct set of priorities to improve their resilience, universal measurement techniques become less useful. Still, resilience represents the ability to withstand crisis situations which can be measured via the parameters of recovery. For instance, Alessi et al. provide a measurement technique by testing the

actors' capacities for absorption, adaptation, medium-run absorption, and adaptation, as well as transformation (rebounding after the crisis)<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the EU is aiming not only at creating a safe surrounding region, but also establishing necessary conditions for the surrounding region to be able to create a safe environment for themselves.

## Resilience as a Policy Framework for Geoeconomic Competition

The EU is often referred to as a "civilizational"<sup>17</sup> or "transformative"<sup>18</sup> power, to reflect the Union's focus on non-coercive approaches to influence-building and establishing external ties. However, with the introduction of the concept of resilience in EU documents and the reorientation of foreign policy priorities towards its establishment in neighbouring states, it can be argued that the EU has become more concerned about geopolitical considerations than it was before<sup>19</sup>.

Moreover, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) at its roots included geopolitical elements (which, however, were not explicitly mentioned in ENP-related documents). Geopolitical issues were mostly included in the objective of stabilizing the surrounding states and keeping them

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- 14 K. Kakachia, A. Legucka & B. Lebanidze, *Can the EU's New Global Strategy Make a Difference? Strengthening Resilience in the Eastern Partnership Countries*, "Democratization", 2021, pp. 1-19, [<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1918110>].
  - 15 W. Wagner and R. Anholt, *Resilience as the EU Global Strategy's New Leitmotif: Pragmatic, Problematic Or Promising?*, "Contemporary Security Policy", September 2016, pp. 414-430, [<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1228034>].
  - 16 L. Alessi, P. Benczur, F. Campolongo, J. Cariboni, A. R. Manca, B. Menyhart, A. Pagano, *The resilience of EU member states to the Global Crisis*, "VOX EU CEPR", 26 September 2018, [<https://voxeu.org/article/resilience-eu-member-states-global-crisis>].
  - 17 T. Mario, *Europe: A Civilian Power? European Union, Global Governance, World Order*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2007. R. Niblett, *Strategic Europe: Still a Civilian Power*, "Carnegie Europe", 5 October 2011, [<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2011/10/05/strategic-europe-still-civilian-power-pub-45665>].
  - 18 T. A. Börzel, B. Lebanidze, *The Transformative Power of Europe Beyond Enlargement: The EU's Performance in Promoting Democracy in its Neighbourhood*, "East European Politics", February 2017, pp. 17-35, [<https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2017.1280473>]. H. Grabbe, *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization Through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2006.
  - 19 S. Lehne, *How the EU Can Survive in a Geopolitical Age*, Carnegie Europe, February 2020 [[https://carnegieendowment.org/files/2-24\\_Lehne-EU\\_Geopolitics.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/2-24_Lehne-EU_Geopolitics.pdf)]. I. Mihalache, *Principled pragmatism in EU foreign policy: A return to Realpolitik or rapprochement with Russia*, "Center for Geopolitics & Security in Realism Studies", 8 September 2016 [<http://cgsrs.org/publications/80>].

closer to the EU, thus excluding Russian influence in the region<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, in the EU Global Strategy, resilience is directly mentioned as a means to achieve security and prosperity: “Together with its partners, the EU will therefore promote resilience in its surrounding regions. A resilient state is a secure state, and security is key for prosperity and democracy”<sup>21</sup>. This objective is geopolitical, as it pursues security through establishing the EU’s influence vis-à-vis Russia. This is especially visible in the criticism of Russia by the Central European countries which tabled the geopolitical vision of the Eastern Partnership<sup>22</sup>.



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and resilience represent a  
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However, such influence-building activities largely contrast with the traditional geopolitical instruments of power politics. Instead of coercing states, the EU opted for stabilisation instruments, inducing domestic democratic processes through different association arrangements, to prevent negative security spillovers from the

neighbourhood. This logic was defining for the Union’s enlargement process in Central and Eastern Europe<sup>23</sup>. By exporting the values developed within the Union, the EU tried to exploit the conditionality approach: rewarding states for internal reforms and moving domestic legislation closer to the European model by providing neighbours with additional benefits. Most endorsements provided by the EU implied some sort of technical/economic assistance or, naturally, financial help which allows this approach to be perceived as a geoeconomic one though with more liberal features.

Generally, incentives included in the conditionality approach lie in three dimensions: financial aid and loans, gradual access to the EU markets (via free trade agreements), and visa-free regimes<sup>24</sup>. This approach builds on the experience of successful (although to various degrees) transformation of the countries that joined the EU during the 2004 enlargement wave.

Thus, the EaP initially was not deprived of geopolitical thinking, but it was only in the objectives, while the instruments remained on the liberal side of the aisle. Instead, “principled pragmatism” and resilience represent a mix of the EU’s liberal profile (conditionality, a transformational agenda as a source of security) trimmed by a realist’s notion of the external environment being a source of risks (recognition of the multiplicity of risks and challenges). Youngs calls this strategy “liberal-redux geopolitics”,

20 N. Hajdu, *Geopolitics on the EU’s Eastern Borders*, “Green European Journal”, 14 August 2020 [<https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/geopolitics-on-the-eus-eastern-borders/>].

21 *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*, European External Action Service, June 2016 [[https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)].

22 D. Cadier, *The Geopoliticisation of The EU’s Eastern Partnership*, “Geopolitics”, 2018, pp. 71-99, [<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1477754>].

23 V. Jakovlevski, *The Logic of the E.U. Enlargement: Exporting Stability or Inheriting an Empire*, “Journal of Public and International Affairs”, Spring 2010 [<https://jpia.princeton.edu/sites/jpia/files/logic-of-eu-enlargement.pdf>].

24 D. Cadier, *Eastern Partnership vs Eurasian Union? The EU–Russia Competition in the Shared Neighbourhood and the Ukraine Crisis*, “Global Policy”, October 2014, pp. 76-85, [<https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12152>].

highlighting the enhanced orientation of the EU's strategy towards security objectives<sup>25</sup>. Interestingly, realists might argue here that the pursuit of resilience towards external shocks might conversely diminish the overall resilience of the system and lead to the security dilemma<sup>26</sup>.

However, the concept of resilience introduces some of the *realpolitik* features in the EU foreign policy toolbox, since after the Global Strategy, resilience has added another dimension to the EU's transformational profile. Resilience is understood as a method to resist hybrid threats. Hybrid warfare is intended to exploit vulnerabilities in democratic states and institutions in various areas: political, economic, military, societal, or information<sup>27</sup> (e.g., societal division, lack of political cohesion, corruption, inefficient law enforcement, weak and dependent media infrastructure, or vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure<sup>28</sup>). Considering the clandestine nature of the hybrid threats<sup>29</sup>, which makes them difficult to detect, the resilience framework serves as a measure to prevent damage caused by hybrid intervention, as demonstrated by the

joint NATO-EU declaration<sup>30</sup>. A resilience framework aiming at strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, and institutional trust should undermine hybrid efforts which would be less efficient in systems with transparent, trustworthy, corrupt-free institutions, high social and political cohesion, as well as a sustainable economic development model. Exploiting vulnerabilities in EaP countries<sup>31</sup>, Russian policies resemble hybrid tactics, usually aimed at excluding European and Western influence. Furthermore, while the effect of resilience might be limited in a military hybrid domain, it still reduces social division, thus diminishing the basis for such interventions.

Still, this resilience-fostering via conditionality instruments is not part of an offensive strategy – it puts much of the burden on the participating states. The choice of which path of development to follow is largely left up to the EaP states, as no punishments for policy deviations are included in the agreements. Nevertheless, the tailor-made partnerships and resilience as a flexible concept allowing variation

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- 25 R. Youngs, *Is 'hybrid geopolitics' the next EU foreign policy doctrine?*, "LSE blogs", 19 June 2017 [<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/06/19/is-hybrid-geopolitics-the-next-eu-foreign-policy-doctrine>].
- 26 C. Nitoiu & F. Pasatoiu, *Resilience and the World Order: The EU and the RIC States*, "International Politics", July 2020, pp. 444-61, [<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-020-00259-z>].
- 27 The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, *Hybrid threats as a concept*, [<https://www.hybridcoe.fi/hybrid-threats-as-a-phenomenon>]. Council of the EU, *Countering hybrid threats: Council calls for enhanced common action*, [<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/12/10/countering-hybrid-threats-council-calls-for-enhanced-common-action/>].
- 28 Y. Yanakiev, P. Dimov & D. Bachvarov, *Conceptualizing the Role of Societal Resilience in Countering Hybrid Warfare*, "Information & Security: An International Journal", 2018, pp. 77-89, [<https://doi.org/10.11610/isi.3907>]. M. Wigell, *Hybrid interference as a wedge strategy: a theory of external interference in liberal democracy*, "International Affairs", February 2019.
- 29 M. Wigell, *Hybrid interference as a wedge strategy: a theory of external interference in liberal democracy*, "International Affairs", February 2019.
- 30 NATO, *Joint declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 8 July 2016, [[https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133163.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm)].
- 31 K. Zarembo & S. Solodkiy, *The Evolution of Russian Hybrid Warfare: The Case of Ukraine*, "Center for European Policy Analysis", 29 January 2021 [<https://cepa.org/the-evolution-of-russian-hybrid-warfare-ukraine/>]. I. Romanchyshyna, *Hybrid Wars in Post-Soviet Spaces as a Challenge to the West*, "Humanity in Action", October 2016 [[https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge\\_detail/hybrid-wars-in-post-soviet-spaces-as-a-challenge-to-the-west](https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge_detail/hybrid-wars-in-post-soviet-spaces-as-a-challenge-to-the-west)]. K. Gogolashvili, V. Pasa, M. Hovhannisyán, V. Ohienko, *Hybrid Threats in the EaP Area: Building a Common Response*, "Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies", 2016.

across countries sends signals about the EU abandoning attempts to universalise the EaP region based on common strategies. The pragmatism of European foreign policy towards the EaP is visible and also enhanced by the new focus and acceptance of variety on the EU's eastern flank. Resilience as a common goal becomes particularly useful, providing a rationale for reforms as a direct path towards better protection against external shocks. It is not directly connected to the hard security; however, strengthening of resilience is seen in the EU as a necessary element of this hard security<sup>32</sup>.



***Despite the hardships in the operationalisation of resilience (which is one of the concept's major points of criticism), its flexibility allows resilience to be applied as a guideline for the ultimate objective: adaptation to a fluid insecure international environment, while not abandoning the more concrete aims of state-building in EaP countries***

Naturally, some of the conflicts in the Eastern Partnership countries have played a role here. Eastern Partnership countries have become a nexus of interests of the EU and Russia, which has caused the deterioration of Russia's relations with the EU and the West in general. What is striking is the different approaches which Russia and the EU take in pursuit of their foreign policy goals. Primarily the difference is in the various degrees of acknowledgment of the EaP countries' sovereignty. These various stances on sovereignty manifest themselves

in different policy tools. Resilience is a loose policymaking instrument that leaves the primary responsibility for its implementation with the countries participating in the resilience-building. Despite the hardships in the operationalisation of resilience (which is one of the concept's major points of criticism), its flexibility allows resilience to be applied as a guideline for the ultimate objective: adaptation to a fluid insecure international environment, while not abandoning the more concrete aims of state-building in EaP countries (anti-corruption and rule of law reforms, macroeconomic and fiscal stability efforts, etc.).

### **Counterexample: Russian Geoeconomic Strategy**

Russia's policies, aimed at establishing security in the neighbouring region, follow a completely different logic. While the EU aims to build resilient and stable states on its eastern flank, and, thus, limit negative spillovers from the region, Moscow intends to accomplish EaP countries' policy alignment with Russian preferences, and to ensure their loyalty. Two underlying points help to explain the Russian geopolitical stance concerning its geoeconomic strategy.

First, Russia's immediate neighbourhood plays a major role for Moscow, both historically and politically. The Kremlin's focus on its regional neighbourhood was even more strengthened by the dissolution of the USSR<sup>33</sup>, as Russia's vulnerable position put it on the defensive, instead of looking for ways of extending its influence globally. Second, Russian decision-makers have seen the international arena as a zero-sum contest, where major powers compete for dominance over initially

32 *Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*, European Commission, 18 March 2020 [[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v6.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf)].

33 M. Urnov, "Greatpowerness" as the Key Element of Russian Self-consciousness under Erosion. "Communist and Post-Communist Studies", September–December 2014, pp. 305–322, [doi:10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.10.001].

neutral territories<sup>34</sup>. Moscow aims to bind up Russian neighbours, because “if they are not controlled by Russia, they are dominated by another, competing power”<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, Russia condemns the expansion of NATO and EU<sup>36</sup>, which contributes to the zero-sum logic, since it is perceived as a threat to Russia and drives Moscow to engage in counteractions based on the logic of limited sovereignty, as Russia does not believe in the Westphalian type of sovereignty being granted to the FSU countries<sup>37</sup>.

Different values embedded in separate political contexts might lead to distinct sets of instruments. While values are not necessarily the only predictors of these foreign policy instruments, the EU’s identity serves as an anchor for remaining within the liberal framework in the EU’s geostrategy – the Union focuses on cooperation and negotiation practices. Brussels still believes in the basis for the idea of European integration, which consists of the notion of interdependency leading to peaceful coexistence: “The first steps were to foster economic cooperation: the idea being that countries that trade with one another become economically interdependent and so more likely to avoid conflict”<sup>38</sup>. The EU understands its attractiveness in terms of standards of living, which allows Brussels to

push EaP states to reform so as to be closer to the European models of governance. It is strongly believed that good governance, rule of law, and diversified competitive economies will make states more resilient and less prone to external shocks.

Here lies the core difference in the approaches of the EU and Russia towards the EaP countries. Since in a modern world it is almost impossible to decrease states’ vulnerabilities, the EU aims to increase its partners’ resilience to external shocks, and, thus, counterbalance harmful spillovers from other states, so that any disruptions would not bring critical damage. On the contrary, Russian strategy is aimed at using a complex environment of threats by relying on hybrid methods of influence and coercion. In particular, in the geoeconomic context, asymmetrical interdependencies are weaponised by expanding vulnerabilities and exploiting them to coerce other states, while the less dependent actor enjoys increased bargaining power over a more dependent counterpart, since the former can impose high costs on the latter by limiting access to the object of dependency<sup>39</sup>. This situation is visible in bordering countries’ dependence on Russia’s energy supply and markets<sup>40</sup>. For instance, Russian energy policy often incorporates blackmail and

34 M. Leichtova, *Misunderstanding Russia*, Ashgate Publishing Group: 2014. S. G. Feinstein, & E. B. Pirro, *Testing the World Order: Strategic Realism in Russian Foreign Affairs*, “International Politics”, February 2021, [<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-021-00285-5>]. M. Galeotti, *We need to talk about Putin: Why the West gets him wrong*, Ebury Press: London 2019.

35 L. Jonavicius, L. Delcour, R. Dragneva, & K. Wolczuk, *Russian Interests, Strategies, and Instruments in the Common Neighbourhood*, “Freie Universitaet Berlin Working Paper”, March 2019.

36 *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1 December 2016 [[https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptICk6B6Z29/content/id/2542248](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICk6B6Z29/content/id/2542248)].

37 J. Nixey, R. Sakwa, *The Russia question: Sovereignty and legitimacy in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, 9 October 2020 [<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2016/12/russia-question-sovereignty-and-legitimacy-post-soviet-eurasia>].

38 The European Union, *Goals and values of the EU*, “The European Union official website”, [[https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en)].

39 R. O. Keohane, J. S. Nye, *Power & Interdependence*, Longman: Boston 2012.

40 M. Wigell, *Conceptualizing Regional Powers’ Geoeconomic Strategies: Neo-imperialism, Neo-mercantilism, Hegemony, and Liberal Institutionalism*, “Asia Europe Journal”, 2015, pp. 135-151. [<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-015-0442-x>]

threats to cut energy supplies<sup>41</sup> (e.g., one might remember the Russia-Belarus gas clashes of 2004, 2007, and 2010 and Russia-Ukraine energy disputes of 2006 and 2009). Russia also offered economic concessions and services to endorse “appropriate” behaviour (e.g., Russia allowed reduced gas prices to test Ukraine’s resolve to join the Eurasian Customs Union in 2012<sup>42</sup>, or to lobby for the extension of the Sevastopol naval base lease agreement in 2010<sup>43</sup>). Similarly, Russia also provides energy subsidies to Belarus in exchange for political concessions<sup>44</sup>. Russian strategy implies the “carrot and stick” approach, where one yardstick is the alignment of foreign and internal policies with those of Russia. The EU’s policy towards the EaP is instead focused on the gradual provision of endorsements provided to external partners which follow the European “guidelines” where a yardstick is the alignment of foreign and internal policies with the EU’s values and norms.

## Comparing the Approaches

When directly comparing the approaches, it becomes visible that the differences are deep – even at the level of basic assumptions about the international system, there are conceptual distinctions that lead to different geoeconomic strategies.

The internal values and self-identity currently prevailing in the two powers serve as a starting point from which their foreign policy outlook is formulated, and respective policy instruments are created. The geoeconomic strategies of

the EU and Russia both imply the exercise of conditionality, but in different ways. Indeed, their viewpoints for assessing the risks in the common neighbourhood are different. The EU considers EaP countries’ alignment with European values as a pathway towards resilience and, hence, security both for the partnership states and for the EU itself. Moreover, the deviation from the established common goal of resilience-building is not punished by the Union. Instead, the deviating government simply does not receive endorsements from the European side.

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***Resilience also implies internal capabilities to overcome the challenges; hence, the EaP states are perceived as sovereign actors, with multiple levels on which resilience could be built***

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Resilience also implies internal capabilities to overcome the challenges; hence, the EaP states are perceived as sovereign actors, with multiple levels on which resilience could be built. On the contrary, Russia assesses risk in the common neighbourhood by comparing EaP countries’ policies with the Kremlin’s preferences, ultimately ignoring national level reforms and developments. Their deviations are punished via the weaponisation of asymmetrical interdependencies of dependent states. Moreover, the EU relies on institutional arrangements, and being a multi-level actor

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41 P. Aalto, & T. Forsberg, *The Structuration of Russia’s Geo-economy Under Economic Sanctions*, “Asia Europe Journal”, June 2016, pp. 221-237, [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-015-0446-6]

42 A. Moshes, *Will Ukraine Join (and Save) the Eurasian Customs Union?*, “PONARS Eurasia”, 17 April 2013, [https://www.ponarseurasia.org/will-ukraine-join-and-save-the-urasian-customs-union].

43 K. Wolczuk, *Managing the Flows of Gas and Rules: Ukraine between the EU and Russia*, “Eurasian Geography and Economics”, April 2016, pp. 113-137, [https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2016.1174072]

44 N. Martin, *Belarus’ Soviet-era economy still propped up by Moscow*, “Deutsche Welle”, 25 August 2020, [https://www.dw.com/en/belarus-soviet-era-economy-still-propped-up-by-moscow/a-54694876].

Brussels cannot easily instrumentalise geoeconomic tools, as it is constrained by internal identity and joint decision making. Moscow enjoys a high degree of freedom in choosing geoeconomic tools since there are no identity-constructing values that could limit policy choices.

The complexity of the international environment acts as an intervening factor, changing the set of geoeconomic tools applied by the EU and Russia. In the EU, the multiplicity of threats is an incentive to push EaP countries to becoming more resilient. While in the EU's 2003 Security Strategy the focus was placed on the transformational agenda, the Global Strategy has changed the vector towards flexibility and resilience-building, so that EaP states could be better equipped for resistance against the negative impact of the international environment. On the Russian side, Moscow also acknowledges the international complexity, but instead of building a safe region and strengthening the EaP capabilities per se, the Kremlin ensures security through controlling policy outcomes in the former Soviet Union countries. Thus, international complexity serves both as a source of threats (since EaP countries might deviate from Moscow's preferences) and as a source of power (since interdependencies might be weaponised following the "carrot and stick" approach).

Logically, such differentiated policy approaches developed in regional powers have their particular strengths and weaknesses. Assessing the exact successes or failures in achieving foreign policy goals might be a challenging separate task, however, it is still possible to sketch gaps in them.

The EU's approach to building a resilient EaP region is more long-term. The concept of resilience itself implies creating conditions for long-term resistance and flexibility in response to shocks. Thus, the long-

term strength of the European approach is that it brings potential win-win results both for the EU and EaP at all levels, while trusty relations with the EaP countries are supported based on the coherence of interests (provided that the neighbouring countries are interested in resilience-building activities). Yet, resilience-building is not deprived of weaknesses that mainly lie in spoiler activities, both internal (e.g., elites' corrupt interests) and external (e.g., external intervention in the internal political process). In the long-term, resilience might provoke a security dilemma and lead to escalation and, thus, undermine initial security objectives. However, considering the all-encompassing nature of resilience, its promotion has limited chances of being over-securitised.

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***Resilience in the European context focuses less on defence capabilities, but rather on civic, economic, political, and institutional agendas aimed at fast "rebounding" to the pre-crisis conditions, and transforming in the process***

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The Russian approach is, conversely, better suited for their short-term tactics because Moscow exercises prompt operational capacity to change policy outcomes in the EaP countries through heightening the costs of countries' deviations from Russia's desired policies. In the long-term, no conditions on internal reforms are placed on the states, which creates less of a burden on the political elites and allows for the omission of long-term internal strategic developments. Simultaneously, Russian actions might be sometimes harmful to Moscow itself, especially in cases with a limited level of asymmetry in the interdependency. Moreover, the strategy of weaponised interdependence impedes long-

term policy planning for the EaP countries, as Moscow's strategy limits policy options and, thus, leads to EaP countries focusing on the reduction of asymmetries and dependencies.

In this context, the EU should, jointly with EaP participants, develop policy frameworks designed to promptly react to potential "spoiler" activities, which might undermine the resilience-building efforts in participating states. Resilience in the European context focuses less on defence capabilities, but rather on civic, economic, political, and institutional agendas aimed at fast "rebounding" to the pre-crisis conditions, and transforming in the process. To counteract spoiling activities, the EU might create systems of loss compensation after the crisis in return for more deep reforms, thus expanding the conditionality approach, and providing an additional dimension of incentives for resilience-building. This move would be largely consistent with the European foreign policy profile, where liberal instruments are backed up by pragmatic security concerns in the external environment.

In contrast, the Russian approach is effective in the short run, as it imposes on EaP countries additional costs for deviation from Moscow's national interests. However,

it simultaneously impedes long-term orientation towards Russia as a partner, since avoiding additional costs requires constant policy coordination and leads to the limitation of EaP countries' policy options. This leads in turn to the countries' retaliation in the form of economic diversification and political reorientation, as they attempt to cover the losses from weaponised interdependence. Politically speaking, the Russian approach to security building also brings weaknesses, because trust between the partners is undermined. To avoid these failures, Russian thinking on realpolitik and limited sovereignty should be abandoned, but considering the depths of this outlook in their psyche, it is doubtful whether these changes will occur in the near future.

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# HYBRIDISATION OF STATE TERRORISM AND SECURITY CHALLENGES TO RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF PROXY-WARS

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*In the era of hybrid threats, international security has become more complex in content and meaning, especially when dealing with state terrorism. When identifying key features of state terrorism, it is argued that hybridisation as a process of careful concealment of aggressive foreign policy objectives generates prerequisites for external aggression, as well as conditions for terrorist attacks of both a conventional and unconventional nature. This article investigates the correlation between the hybrid aggression of Russia and Ukraine's vulnerabilities to resile from state terrorism, as Russia's proxy-war against Ukraine at some point could be identified as such.*

## Introduction

Once hard security tensions on a global level decreased at the end of 1980s, a focus of the global concern shifted to the threat of international terrorism. With tremendous impulse on the eve of the new millennium, it culminated in the unprecedented terrorist attack of 9/11. International terrorism not only received a regular counter-terrorist response but also instigated a global war on terror. It was not accidental that the US called its foreign policy actions and those of its allies in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001-2004 the "War on Terror" and established the Department of Homeland Security with a special focus on domestic anti-terror efforts in November 2002. It was a war indeed, because not only were anti-terror units and intelligence involved, but so were the military and other Special Forces, as well

as the public interest and national budgets to combat terrorists domestically and internationally.

At the same time, civilians appeared to be extremely vulnerable to asymmetrical attacks. Leaving aside a discourse on the general risks to democracy, and particular challenges to human rights, "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act) Act of 2001"<sup>1</sup> could be seen as an integral part of a resilience strategy to pre-empt potential threats in the future. Parts of it, like enhancing the variety of law enforcement investigatory and other preventative tools, could be implemented into the resilience strategy of any other country today, in order to deter and punish terrorist acts worldwide and inside their own borders.

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1 *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act) Act of 2001*, U.S. Congress, 26 October 2001  
[<https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ56/PLAW-107publ56.pdf>].

## Resilience vs. Terrorism: Political Dilemmas and Security Concerns

Twenty years after 9/11, in an era of hybrid global warfare, the world is facing even more diverse and complicated threats to security and stability than during the previous three decades, hence the necessity for a wider inter-disciplinary approach to security issues connected to various types of terrorism. For example, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) defined “resilience” in politics and international relations as “a new form of governance that endorsed the impossibility of predicting threats, shifting away from the logic focused on known threats and prevention of the (post) Cold War period.”<sup>2</sup>

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***Changes in the nature of security – a shift from the global to the human – almost erased the differences between “hard” and “soft” security and their respective threats, the military and non-military components of defence***

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In Ukraine, national resilience is a narrative that is slowly emerging as an alternative to the traditional approach of managing national security in which all threats are clearly identifiable, government is always in charge of responding to them and non-state actors – formal civil society organizations (CSOs) or informal volunteer movements

and networks – have only a minimal role<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, the state remains almost the sole actor when it comes to identifying, preventing and combating both domestic and international terrorism.

Changes in the nature of security – a shift from the global to the human – almost erased the differences between “hard” and “soft” security and their respective threats, the military and non-military components of defence. As Ambassador Uğur Ziyal admits, the EU identifies terrorism as one of the key threats being both hard and soft in nature in line with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failing states and organized crime.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, “in reality, there are no clear-cut dividing lines between hard and soft threats” as “a soft threat can easily turn into a hard one.”<sup>5</sup> That demands engagement of all the resources, which only a state as a key international actor possesses.

At the same time, this does not mean that civil society should be excluded from the anti-terror strategy of a state: there are a lot of spheres where CSOs may be effective in dealing, for example, with brutal propaganda in a counter-propaganda mode, to prevent the incitement of hatred and the infiltration of fakes. The most vivid example is a Ukraine-based *InformNapalm* investigative initiative, a purely volunteer endeavour which does not have any financial support from any government or donor, wishing “to inform the world about the real role of the Russian government in ongoing hybrid conflicts in Ukraine, Georgia and other countries

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2 *Resilience – Resilience Fact Sheet*, The European Partnership for Democracy, 2018 [<https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Resilience-Fact-Sheet.pdf>].

3 M. Boulègue, O. Lutsevych, *Resilient Ukraine: Safeguarding Society from Russian Aggression*, Chatham House, 11 June 2020 [<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-06-09-resilient-ukraine-boulegue-lutsevych.pdf>].

4 U. Ziyal, *Re-Conceptualization of Soft Security and Turkey’s Civilian Contributions to International Security*, “Turkish Policy Quarterly”, 5 September 2004 [<http://turkishpolicy.com/images/stories/2004-02-globalsecurity/TPQ2004-2-ziyal.pdf>].

5 *Ibid.*

of Eastern and Central Europe, and in the Middle East.”<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, CSOs are able to ensure internal support for a state in democratic transformation, and create conditions under which threats of both domestic and international terrorism would be if not totally excluded, at least minimised.

Many countries, after experiencing traditional and hybrid forms of aggression are facilitating their “resilience”, defined as “the ability to be happy, successful again after something difficult or bad has happened” by the Cambridge Dictionary<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, the challenge of elaborating an effective anti-terror strategy at the highest political level globally, regionally and domestically, is connected to the complicated essence of terrorism itself. Indeed, “the definition of terrorism is a difficult concept to map and has been the source of contention in academia and policy for several years now.”<sup>8</sup> From the academic point of view, this is so because “where some scholars and experts have chosen to work with open-ended definitions, others have delineated several different types of definitions, all exploring and attempting to encompass the many elements that typify what terrorism is.”<sup>9</sup>

In practice, those who fail to achieve their goals by political means turn into terrorists. At the same time, those who achieve their goals by both political means and acts of terrorism usually proclaim

themselves as revolutionaries. History knows many examples. In the Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks, supported by other revolutionary parties, had a special terror brigade inside the officially existing party at the beginning of the 20th century. Dualism in the nature of terror leads to dualism in the nature of a terrorist. For some people, desperate guerilla fighters, who carry out suicide bombings, are heroes. For others, they are terrorists, criminals, killers. On the top political level, there is also no clear understanding of what entities could or could not be classified as terrorist organisations. For example, most Western governments, including the European Union and the United States, have classified Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Norway and Switzerland are notable exceptions. Both adopt a strictly neutral position and maintain diplomatic ties with the organisation that has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007<sup>10</sup>. It looks even more challenging when trying to initiate a discourse on state or state-sponsored terrorism, setting aside quite a provocative attempt to give a clear definition of state terrorism.

### Can the State Be a Terrorist?

It was not by chance that questions like “Can the state be a terrorist?” and “Can the state commit acts of terrorism?” entered an expert discourse in the 1990s, as the original titles of articles by Peter Alan Sproat<sup>11</sup>, who

6 InformNapalm: core purpose [<http://informnapalm.rocks/>].

7 *Resilience*, Cambridge Dictionary [<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/resilience>].

8 Z. Stuurman, *Terrorism as Controversy: The Shifting Definition of Terrorism in State Politics*, “E-International Relations”, 24 September 2019 [<https://www.e-ir.info/2019/09/24/terrorism-as-controversy-the-shifting-definition-of-terrorism-in-state-politics>].

9 *Ibid.*

10 B. Restle, *What is Hamas? Who supports Hamas? What you need to know*, “DW”, 11 May 2021 [<https://www.dw.com/en/who-is-hamas/a-57537872>].

11 P. Sproat, *Can the state be a terrorist?* “*Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*”, Vol. 12, Issue 1, 1991, pp. 19-29 [<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10576109108435854?journalCode=uter19>]; P. Sproat, *Can the state commit acts of terrorism?: An opinion and some qualitative replies to a questionnaire*, “*Terrorism and Political Violence*”, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 1997, pp. 117-150 [<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546559708427433>].

complains that there is “a far smaller amount of academic literature on state terrorism than there is on insurgency terrorism.” Sproat also notes, that “the literature on state terrorism, like that on terrorism generally, suffers from a lack of work on the definition of the term.”<sup>12</sup>



***when ensuring protective and recovery mechanisms as a platform for a sustainable resilience to preserve statehood, it is essential to analyse the much broader context of the potential objects of state terrorism, when primarily civilians are the targets***

One of the key problems is about proper identification both of the subject and of the object of the terrorist activity. As Joseph M. Brown admits, “some scholars argue that the concept of terrorism should only be applied to the behaviour of nonstate actors. Others argue that certain government behaviours may be understood as terrorism if the intent of state violence and threats is to stoke fear and influence the behavior of a wider audience.”<sup>13</sup> Steve Hewitt in answering a question “What is state terrorism?” explains that “it is similar to non-state terrorism in

that it involves politically or ideologically or religiously inspired acts of violence against individuals or groups outside of an armed conflict. The key difference is that agents of the state are carrying out the violence.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, as Joseph M. Brown points out, “analytical tools developed in the field of terrorism studies may be useful in helping us understand state behaviour, when violence and threats appear to have a broader communicative function in influencing an audience beyond the immediate target.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus, when ensuring protective and recovery mechanisms as a platform for a sustainable resilience to preserve statehood, it is essential to analyse the much broader context of the potential objects of state terrorism, when primarily civilians are the targets. Richard Jackson defined state terrorism as “the use or threat of violence, intimidation or frightening by a state or their proxies towards a broader audience.”<sup>16</sup> As a distinctive feature of state terrorism, such authors as Mark Seldon and Alvin Y. So name civilians as the key subjects of terror: “In state terrorism, a state systematically directs violence against the civilian population of its own or another state.”<sup>17</sup>

One example is the case of the Salisbury Novichok poisoning. For Ian Blackford, a Scottish politician serving as Leader of

12 P. Sproat, *An Investigation of the Concept of State Terrorism*, University of Newcastle upon Tyne 1997, p. 4.

13 J. Brown, *State terrorism*, International Studies, Oxford University Press, 26 April 2021 [<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-600>].

14 S. Hewitt, *Terrorism by the State is still Terrorism*, University of Birmingham, 2020 [<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/terrorism-by-the-state-is-still-terrorism.aspx>].

15 J. Brown, *State terrorism*, International Studies, Oxford University Press, 26 April 2021 [<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-600>].

16 R. Jackson, *The 9/11 Attacks and the Social Construction of a National Narrative*, [in:] M. Morgan (ed.), *The Impact of 9/11 on the Media, Arts, and Entertainment: The Day that Changed Everything?* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2009 p. 26.

17 M. Seldon, A. Y. So, *Introduction: War and State Terrorism*, [in:] M. Seldon, A. Y. So (eds.), *War and State Terrorism: The United State, Japan & the Asia-Pacific in the Long Twentieth Century*, Rowman and Littlefield: Lanham, Md. 2004, p. 10.

the Scottish National Party (SNP) in the British House of Commons, it was clear that the attack against Sergei Skripal and Yulia Skripal on 4 March 2018 was an “act of state terrorism”.<sup>18</sup> Investigation of the Salisbury Novichok poisoning has been carried out by the Counter Terrorism Police – a collaboration of UK police forces working with the UK intelligence community to help protect the public and national security by preventing, deterring and investigating terrorist activity<sup>19</sup>.

The U.S. Department of State defines state terrorism as acts of terrorism conducted by governments, or terrorism carried out directly by, or encouraged and funded by, an established government of a state (country), or terrorism practised by a government against its own people or in support of international terrorism<sup>20</sup>. The official site of The FBI gives definitions both of international and domestic terrorism where the international one stands for “violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organisations or nations.”<sup>21</sup> The case of Russian policy towards Ukraine since 2014 may be disputable, but is still an attempt to elaborate more on the (in) direct interconnection of state policy with a number of aggressive tools for waging hybrid wars, with all the appearance of state-sponsored terrorism.

## State Terrorism in Hybrid Aggression: The Case of Russia vis-à-vis Ukraine

In attempts to define state terrorism by academia and at the institutional level, there is a common approach to violence against individuals and society in general as a tool of suppression and submission by a state. In Russia’s hybrid war against Ukraine, different types of violence have been applied. They range from the terrorist-like behaviour of the Russian “green men” during the attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014, through the hybrid war in Donbas with the involvement of the Russian military, and up to the selective terror of the Russian FSB against those Ukrainians who had to stay in Crimea after 2014.

Herewith, “military aggression is just one element of the Russian hybrid warfare against Ukraine. Other elements encompass: 1) propaganda based on lies and falsifications; 2) trade and economic pressure; 3) energy blockade; 4) terror and intimidation of Ukrainian citizens; 5) cyber-attacks; 6) a strong denial of the very fact of war against Ukraine despite large scope of irrefutable evidence; 7) use of pro-Russian forces and satellite states in its own interests; 8) blaming the other side for its own crimes.”<sup>22</sup> Such instruments of the hybrid war as informational fakes, the propaganda of hate, and the manipulation of history by

18 *Salisbury Novichok poisoning: SNP MP calls for action against Russia*, “BBC.com”, 6 September 2018 [<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-45432713>].

19 *Investigation into the Salisbury and Amesbury Novichok Incidents*, Counter-terrorism policing [<https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/>].

20 *Chapter 3: State Sponsors of Terrorism*, Country Reports on Terrorism 2009, U.S. Department of State, 5 August 2010 [<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2009/140889.htm>].

21 *Terrorism Definitions, What we investigate, FBI* [<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism> access 13 September 2021].

22 *10 facts you should know about Russian military aggression against Ukraine*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 19 December 2019 [<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/10-facts-you-should-know-about-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine>].

the official state informational agencies and broadcasting institutions, could not, probably, be identified as terrorist acts. But such extreme and even marginal manifestations of anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian moods in the Russian discourse in the mass media with engaged “experts”/propagandists do inspire some outsiders to arrive in Ukraine bearing arms as mercenaries. Their intention is to fight against the Ukrainian army, including carrying out acts of violence against civilians for whatever reasons.

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**Modern information wars waged by state institutions and state information agencies with their propaganda and disinformation could be, at some point, identified as “soft” terrorism**

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The involvement “of foreign fighters – whom the Russian side presented as ‘volunteers’” concerned about “the fate of Russian speakers in Ukraine” – played into Moscow’s narrative that Russia is ready to stand up for its compatriots abroad.”<sup>23</sup> They do perform different functions, “ranging from information-propaganda to (para)military (a.k.a. mercenary) functions. As such, non-Russian mercenaries and “volunteers” in Russia’s shadow wars have served as both a tool of “soft power” and an actual instrument of “hard power” politics.”<sup>24</sup>

Modern information wars waged by state institutions and state information agencies with their propaganda and disinformation could be, at some point, identified as “soft” terrorism. It appears to be part of the conventional proxy war as an unconventional part of hybrid warfare. Following Steve Hewitt’s approach to the definition of state terrorism, some of the characteristics of that kind of state behaviour could be seen and heard well enough when observing the (dis) informational flows of the Russian state both domestically and abroad.

All these require not only external military reaction, but internal counteraction. The stability of the Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine depends on the ability and willingness of the local authorities to counteract external threats and disinformation from the aggressor – the Russian Federation. This is just one of the key conclusions reached by the International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS) in the just-released report in the framework of their “Resilient Ukraine” programme.<sup>25</sup>

By annexing Crimea the way Russia did in 2014, the Kremlin has introduced a new type of warfare, one which Mykhailo Honchar has abbreviated as *hybresia* – the aggression of hybrid type warfare “where military means are not dominant, their use is carefully disguised and denied, and the act of aggression itself generates uncertainties that complicate its identification”.<sup>26</sup> According to the Global Terrorism Index 2020 “Ukraine

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23 S. Sukhankin, *Foreign Mercenaries, Irregulars and ‘Volunteers’: Non-Russians in Russia’s Wars*, Jamestown Foundation, 9 October, 2019 [<https://jamestown.org/program/foreign-mercenaries-irregulars-and-volunteers-non-russians-in-russias-wars/>].

24 Ibid.

25 *Стойкая Украина – хрупкая мозаика? Сентябрь 2021 Общество, медиа, безопасность и перспективы*, International Centre for Defence and Security, Report, September 2021 [[https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ICDS\\_Report\\_Resilient\\_Ukraine\\_Delicate\\_Mosaic\\_Teperik\\_et\\_al\\_September\\_2021\\_RU.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ICDS_Report_Resilient_Ukraine_Delicate_Mosaic_Teperik_et_al_September_2021_RU.pdf)].

26 *Війни – XXI: полігібресія Росії [Wars – XXI: polyhybression of Russia]*, М. Гончар (ред.), Авега: Київ 2017, с. 34.

remains the country in the region with the highest impact of terrorism,<sup>27</sup> reaching a peak in 2014 with 407 attacks and 651 deaths, jumping from 3.14 points in 2013 up to 7.2 and remaining at a level of 7.13 in 2014 and 2015 respectively<sup>28</sup>.

This *Hybresia* of Russia against Ukraine in the East of Ukraine does include certain features of state terrorism, as could be seen within the approach elaborated by Gus Martin. In "Essentials of Terrorism",<sup>29</sup> he considers state terrorism with the help of two models of state sponsorship: the patronage model and the assistance one. "State patronage for terrorism," as Martin explains, "refers to active participation in and encouragement of terrorist behaviour. Its basic characteristic is that the state, through its agencies and personnel, actively takes part in repression, violence, and terrorism. Thus, state patrons adopt policies that initiate terrorism and other subversive activities – including directly arming, training, and providing sanctuary for terrorists."<sup>30</sup> "State assistance for terrorism," as Gus Matrín continues, "refers to tacit participation in and encouragement of terrorist behaviour. Its basic characteristic is that the state, through sympathetic proxies and agents, implicitly takes part in repression, violence, and terrorism. In contrast to state patrons of terrorism, state assisters are less explicit in their sponsorship, and links to state

policies and personnel are more ambiguous. State assistance includes policies that help sympathetic extremist proxies engage in terrorist violence, whereby the state will indirectly arm, train, and provide sanctuary for terrorists."<sup>31</sup> He suggests identifying terrorism as a foreign policy tool of a state when it has been manifesting itself in the form of Moral support (politically sympathetic sponsorship), Technical Support (logistically supportive sponsorship), Selective Participation: (episode-specific sponsorship), and in the form of Active participation (joint operations).

In fact, the constant inflow of Russian troops, weaponry, ammunition and fuel to the occupied territory through the uncontrolled section of the Ukrainian-Russian state border, in order to strengthen the units of its regular troops, deployed in Donbas, as well as the illegal armed formations it backs, is the main obstacle to peace in Donbas.<sup>32</sup> Not going deeply into examples of Russia fitting into both models of state-sponsored terrorism, we may find certain features of both models of state-sponsored terrorism (which include moral, technical, and direct participation) in relations of Russia with the so-called "LNR" and "DNR", which the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), and the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice have referred to as "terrorist organizations" since 2014<sup>33</sup>.

27 *Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*, Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney, November 2020  
[<https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>].

28 *Terrorism Index*, Trading Economics: Ukraine, 2020  
[<https://tradingeconomics.com/ukraine/terrorism-index>].

29 G. Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*, SAGE Publications Inc. 2010.

30 G. Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*, SAGE Publications Inc. 2010, p. 68.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *10 facts you should know about Russian military aggression against Ukraine*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 19 December 2019  
[<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/10-facts-you-should-know-about-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine>].

33 ГПУ, СБУ і Мін'юст готують позови про визнання «ДНР» та «ЛНР» терористами, "Radiosvoboda.org", 19 січня 2015 [<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/26801594.html>].

The Ukrainian government's attempts to restore sovereignty in the temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast were officially entitled as "Anti-Terrorist Operation" from April 2014 until February 2018.

The Academic approach to describing state terrorism correlates with the identification of state sponsors of terrorism by the U.S. Department of State: "State sponsors of terrorism provide critical support to many non-state terrorist groups. Without state sponsors, these groups would have greater difficulty obtaining the funds, weapons, materials, and secure areas they require to plan and conduct operations."<sup>34</sup> There are doubts if the so-called "LNR" and "DNR" would be able to express any decent resistance to the Ukrainian Joint Forces Operation without Russian patronage and assistance. Nevertheless, even when Russia does not officially recognise the quasi-state structures of the so-called "LNR" and "DNR", alongside a loud anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian narrative, it openly supports separatists by all possible means, up to granting locals Russian citizenship and the right to participate in elections. This also falls in line with the behaviour of the governments, which corresponds to the evidence of state-sponsored terrorism. As Martin admits, "terrorism by states is characterized by official government support for policies of violence, repression, and intimidation. Such violence and coercion are directed against perceived enemies that the state has determined threaten its interests or security."<sup>35</sup>

Even if the official adjudication is still ahead, the ongoing investigation of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 crash could also be seen as a process of identifying Russian traces in a chain of other terrorist acts sponsored by Russia. As long as there is no officially proclaimed status of war between Ukraine and Russia, and Russia is permanently denying any kind of connection to the shooting down of the Malaysian airplane, and any other manifestation of terrorism on the territory of Ukraine, it is important that the UN International Court of Justice in 2019 accepted that there was a case in Ukraine's claims under the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism against Russia<sup>36</sup>. Ukraine had alleged that Russia supplied funds, weapons and training to illegal armed groups that have engaged in acts of terrorism in its territory. Thus, Russia also allegedly caused or supported the downing of MH17, among other violent acts.

The behaviour of the Russian president is quite telling. First stating that there was no Russian involvement, the Russian president, during a question-and-answer session on April, 17th, 2014 with Russians in a studio audience, had to confess twice in the end, that those "green men", masked Russian troops without insignia who took over the local Crimean parliament and captured strategic sites across Crimea, were Russian soldiers. The Russian president pointed out, that special armed groups of the Russian Armed Forces "did back the Crimean self-defence forces"

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34 *Chapter 3: State Sponsors of Terrorism*, Country Reports on Terrorism 2009, U.S. Department of State, 5 August 2010 [<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2009/140889.htm>].

35 G. Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*, SAGE Publications Inc. 2010, p. 66.

36 *Top UN court will consider Ukraine allegations against Russia of treaty violations*, United Nations News, 8 November 2019 [<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/11/1051001>].

and “created conditions” “for the free expression of the will of the people living in Crimea and Sevastopol”<sup>37</sup> during the so-called “Crimean status referendum” on 16 March 2014. Such an approach to combine “free expression of the will” with “the help of special armed forces” to reach Putin’s goals through the illegal and illegitimate referendum backed by the guns of Russian servicemen is also part of the Russian *hybresia*, where “everything looks different, nonlinear. A key role plays, together with the factor of suddenness, the factor of uncertainty. For the enemy and third parties it is difficult to identify and classify what is happening.”<sup>38</sup>

In fact, links between regimes and terrorism can range from very clear lines of sponsorship to very murky and indefinable associations. According to Gus Martin, “governments inclined to use terrorism as an instrument of statecraft are often able to control the parameters of their involvement, so that they can sometimes manage how precisely a movement or an incident can be traced back to personnel. Thus, state sponsorship of terrorism is not always a straightforward process. In fact, it is usually a covert, secret policy that allows states to claim deniability when accused of sponsoring terrorism.”<sup>39</sup> Later Putin did not deny the usage of terrorist tactics on

the part of those “polite people” who dared to use “human-shields” in a “decisive and professional manner”: “I want to be very clear on that. If we make this decision we’ll do it to protect Ukrainian citizens. And we’ll see afterwards if any of their servicemen will dare to shoot on their own people who we’ll stay behind, not in front, but behind! I dare them to shoot women and children – I’d like to see who would give such an order in Ukraine.”<sup>40</sup>

Such an approach to one of the elements of the Russian *hybresia* could even be identified as a fragment of this war of a new type which is notable for its “barbarism, violence and total disregard for established norms and laws.”<sup>41</sup> As Matt Killingsworth from the School of Social Sciences at the University of Tasmania continues, “new wars” which are distinguished by avoidance of large-scale battles, are “thought to consist of rolling skirmishes, objectives advanced through control of the population, population displacement and violence directed against civilians. The new war literature emphasizes that force is no longer directed ‘against the enemy’s armed force, but against the civilian population, the aim being to either drive it from it a certain area [...] or to force it to supply and support certain armed groups on a permanent basis.”<sup>42</sup> This is also true about the use of terrorism.

37 *Transcript: Vladimir Putin’s April 17 Q&A*, “Washingtonpost.com”, 17 April 2014 [[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-vladimir-putins-april-17-qanda/2014/04/17/ff77b4a2-c635-11e3-8b9a-8e0977a24aeb\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-vladimir-putins-april-17-qanda/2014/04/17/ff77b4a2-c635-11e3-8b9a-8e0977a24aeb_story.html)].

38 *Війни – XXI: полігібриція Росії [Wars – XXI: polyhybression of Russia]*, М. Гончар (ред.), Авега: Київ 2017, с. 30.

39 G. Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*, SAGE Publications Inc. 2010, p. 67.

40 P. Gregory, *Mr. Putin: Tear Down that Potemkin Village in Crimea*, “Forbes.com”, 26 March 2014 [<http://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2014/03/26/mr-putin-tear-down-that-potemkin-village/>].

41 M. Killingsworth, *The transformation of war? New and old conflicts in the former USSR*, [in] M. Sussex (ed.), *Conflict in the Former USSR*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2012, p. 180.

42 *Ibid.*

## Conclusion

After 9/11, since the start of the global war on terror, terrorism has persistently changed its course from an extreme tool of marginal groups towards the key instrument of the foreign policy of marginal political regimes. That does not mean that non-state and state terrorism is something new to world politics, but that both types of destructive behaviour by aggressive actors are making a new splash in the advanced technological environment and international law(lessness) of the present world disorder.

Counter-terrorism today is not just about “hard” security measures, military components, and 24/7 surveillance; it is about strengthening democracy, the rule of law, human rights, transparency, informational clarity, cyber security, beneficial economic interaction, environmental safety, sanitary and medical sustainability, ideological and geopolitical pluralism, etc., all of which modern resilience strategies should be equipped with.

The hybridisation of terrorist acts, which such political regimes as that in Russia are trying to use as a tool in their foreign policy, undermines all the above-mentioned conditions for the sustained long-term human, national and international security, and complicates resilience as such, particularly for Ukraine. In this context, hybridisation is understood as an artificial policy to hide aggressive intentions under the cover of uncertainty, double standards, “empty signifiers”, but “good intentions” – all that complicates and weakens the ability of the objects of the violence to resist. Hybridisation as a process of careful concealment of these extreme foreign policy objectives, makes neither actors nor methods of its achievements clear at first sight to outsiders. Hybridisation generates prerequisites for aggression, as well as conditions for the terrorist attacks of a different nature (ranging from military to

humanitarian) in the targeted areas of the initiated proxy-wars. As long as the main targets of terrorist attacks are civilians, it is vitally important to expand more on the interaction between hybrid threats, hybrid aggression, and the resilient capacity of state institutions in unified tandem with civil society to combat both “hard” and “soft” terrorism in a frame of the commonly accepted “national interests.”

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***Counter-terrorism today is not just about “hard” security measures, military components, and 24/7 surveillance; it is about strengthening democracy, the rule of law, human rights, transparency, informational clarity, cyber security, beneficial economic interaction, environmental safety, sanitary and medical sustainability, ideological and geopolitical pluralism***

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Depending on the scale of a hybrid act of aggression, the actions of state-sponsored terrorism could range from just pinpoint strikes like the one in Salisbury, up to a full-scale hybrid act of aggression with the use of a variety of “hard” and “soft” offensive mechanisms and techniques. Following this, all the appropriate methods, tools, and procedures to resile from attacks should be driven by an existential idea – by a goal that the state be restored to previous conditions by regaining its original shape as much as possible, taking into account irreplaceable losses, including the casualties of hybrid terrorist attacks.

In the case of Ukraine, resilience strategically means complete peace and restoration of territorial integrity and the state’s sovereignty over the temporarily occupied territories. The Crimean Platform – a recent diplomatic initiative

of the Ukrainian President – which is designed to be turned into an international coordination mechanism on the way to full and complete restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea, may serve as an example of today’s Ukraine’s resilient strategy, alongside a number of activities of the Ukrainian Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories. As soon as the hybridisation of state terrorism combines a number of “hard” and “soft” security threats, resilience should also foresee and include mechanisms of strengthening both conventional and unconventional components of defence (especially in the field of information, energy, and cyber security) in both pre-emptive and preventive formats, in order not to let them relapse again either from abroad, or from inside the country.

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# RESILIENCE IN STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND PRACTICE OF ROMANIA

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*In recent years, Romania has been paying increased attention to the topic of resilience. In its National Defence Strategy 2020-2024 basic approaches to strengthening the resilience of Romania are described and it is assumed that resilience covers all stages of a crisis, from prevention (where possible) to adjustment and limitation of effects (when necessary), and includes positive transformations that strengthen the ability of current and future generations to provide what they need. In practice, enhancing Romania's resilience was realised in establishing the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience, a public institution under the authority of the MFA of Romania. This article attempts to analyse the steps Romania is taking to build resilience, and the ability for Ukraine to benefit from Romania's experience.*

Global changes in the security environment (the increasing role of informational warfare and disinformation, cyber-attacks, lawfare, economic coercion, etc.) force NATO member states to pay more attention to the resilience of state and society. The world is returning to a state of global confusion, with the existence of "grey zones", and the active use of methods of irregular warfare. The enemy tries to use the weaknesses of government to split and disorganise society, make chaos.

The turning point was Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in 2014 and continues to the present day. During this war, Russia has used the entire arsenal of hybrid warfare, from disinformation to the participation of regular troops. In these conditions, it becomes obvious that

the state's ability to resist hybrid threats depends not only on the level of technical equipment and the level of training of the army, but also on civil preparedness.

In July 2016, at the Warsaw NATO Summit, Heads of State and Government made a commitment "to continue to enhance [...] resilience against the full spectrum of threats, including hybrid threats, from any direction. Resilience is an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and effective fulfilment of the Alliance's core tasks."<sup>1</sup> Seven baseline requirements for civil preparedness, which need to be achieved, were identified:

- 1) assured continuity of government and critical government services;
- 2) resilient energy supplies;

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1 Commitment to enhance resilience. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw, 8-9 July 2016, NATO, [\[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133180.htm\]](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133180.htm)

- 3) ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people;
- 4) resilient food and water resources;
- 5) ability to deal with mass casualties;
- 6) resilient civil communications systems;
- 7) resilient civil transportation systems.<sup>2</sup>

Another great challenge for the North Atlantic Alliance was the COVID-19 Pandemic, which raised doubts about the ability of NATO to resist collectively such a kind of threat. NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoaană, during a webinar with the American Enterprise on Resilience in December 2020, said “In the years ahead, we have to put a much greater emphasis on resilience, and this is not only about resilience of our governments, it’s a whole of society resilience and engaging with the triple helix of government, of private sector, essentially importantly engaging the private sector, and also engaging our civil societies”<sup>3</sup>

At the Brussels NATO summit on 14 June 2021, Heads of State and Government affirmed “that national and collective resilience are an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and the effective fulfilment of the Alliance’s core tasks, and vital in our efforts to safeguard our societies, our populations and our shared values.”<sup>4</sup> In this commitment there was also mention of the COVID-19 Pandemic, a response to which was “has underlined the importance of civil-military engagement and cooperation, and demonstrated the vital roles that our armed forces play in supporting our societies.”<sup>5</sup>

## Resilience in Strategic Documents of Romania

The Black Sea region in the current conditions looks the most vulnerable spot in the NATO system of deterrence. NATO’s three littoral states – Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey not only have different levels of economic development and military potential but also different kinds of relations with Russia.

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 **Another great challenge for the North Atlantic Alliance was the COVID-19 Pandemic, which raised doubts about the ability of NATO to resist collectively such a kind of threat**

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As noted by Romanian researchers Ionela Ciolan and Amanda Paul “for decades, the Black Sea has played second fiddle to the Baltic Sea in NATO’s priorities. This is partly due to fears that a Russian attack on the Baltic states was more likely than conflict in the Black Sea, and also a lack of consensus from allies over the need to enhance its presence in the latter. While NATO’s engagement in the region improved after Crimea’s annexation, it remains insufficient.”<sup>6</sup>

The presence of NATO in the Black Sea region is limited by the 1936 Montreux Convention, while the occupation of Crimea and its militarisation have changed the military balance in Russia’s favour.

2 Roepke W-D., Thankey H., *Resilience: the first line of defence*. NATO, 27 February, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/02/27/resilience-the-first-line-of-defence/index.html]

3 *Building transatlantic resilience: Why critical infrastructure is a matter of national security*. NATO, 10 December, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\_180067.htm]

4 *Strengthened Resilience Commitment*. NATO, 14 June, 2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\_texts\_185340.htm?selectedLocale=en]

5 Op.cit

6 Ciolan I., Paul A., *Kremlin’s quest for mare nostrum: Enhancing Black Sea security to stop Russian encroachment*. The European Policy Centre, 18 June, 2021, [https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Kremlins-quest-for-mare-nostrum-Enhancing-Black-Sea-security-to-stop~3fcff0]

Romania remains the most consistent supporter of strengthening the presence of the North Atlantic Alliance in the Black Sea region. At the same time, Bucharest seeks to advance initiatives to enhance NATO's capabilities in the region. Recently, Romania has paid significant attention to resilience issues. This has been reflected in strategic documents of the country.

While in the National Defence Strategy 2015-2019 the term "resilience" was practically not mentioned, in the National Defence Strategy 2020-2024, it is mentioned more than 20 times. The whole chapter 1.2 is titled "Romania – a state resilient to threats, security and prosperity provider for its citizens".



***Bucharest seeks to advance initiatives to enhance NATO's capabilities in the region.***

***Recently, Romania has paid significant attention to resilience issues***

The concept of Romania's resilience, according to the National Defence Strategy is addressed from a double perspective: "the inherent capacity of entities – individuals, communities, regions, state – to resist and adapt articulately to violent, stress-causing events, shocks, disasters, pandemics or conflicts, on one hand, and the ability of these entities to return, as soon as possible, to a functional, normal state, on the other hand."<sup>7</sup>

The Strategy assumes that strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerabilities require a flexible multi-dimensional strategy,

as well as a broad perspective on all systems, in order to limit the risks related to a crisis, but also to improve the capacity to quickly manage the adjustment mechanisms at local, national and regional levels. "Resilience covers all stages of a crisis situation, from prevention (where possible) to adjustment and limitation of effects (when necessary), and includes positive transformations that strengthen the ability of current and future generations to provide for what they need."<sup>8</sup>

The Strategy stresses that in 2020-2024, more than ever, efforts to strengthen resilience need to be calibrated, in order to respond to new types of subtle and subversive threats, including those generated by technological developments. "A central role is therefore given to multi-faceted collaboration: public-private, citizen-community and civilian-military aimed at strengthening society and critical infrastructures' resilience, as this responsibility is at the junction point between the society and the individual levels with the institution-public and private levels."<sup>9</sup>

The Strategy involves measures to develop effective tools to strengthen society and critical infrastructures' resilience, which can be divided into four main areas of activity:

- information security: enhancing awareness of hostile/influence actions carried out in the public space via classic or online media or think-tanks, increasing the capacity of education, research, think-tanks and media institutions to identify and counter disinformation movements supported by hostile state or non-state actors;
- health care: supporting health education and education programmes for emergency situations;

7 *Strategia Națională de apărare a țării pentru perioada 2020-2024*. Administrația Prezidențială, 2020, [[https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia\\_Nationala\\_de\\_Aparare\\_a\\_Tarii\\_2020\\_2024.pdf](https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_2020_2024.pdf)]

8 Op.cit

9 Op.cit

- cyber security: the start of comprehensive secondary and higher education programmes, e-skills and online security, as well as the development of the skills needed to combat false/fake information;
- critical infrastructure protecting: enhancing the awareness of the population, central and local public institutions, as well as of the business environment on the importance of measures to protect critical infrastructures in order to provide for the continuous and safe operation of basic public services and utilities (electricity, water, heat, sanitation, public transport, social services).<sup>10</sup>

The topic of resilience is also developed in another strategic document of Romania – National Military Strategy 2021-2024. In particular, among national military objectives for 2021-2024 is recommended “removing the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and strengthening national resilience.” Also, a term “military resilience” is introduced in the document as “an ability of forces to absorb kinetic and non-kinetic shocks associated with actions specific to the military, conventional and hybrid conflict, including fighting in conditions of CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear), degraded electromagnetic and cybernetic. In essence, military resilience is the ability the military instrument to build up credible forces and successfully carry out the defence operation, even in the conditions of the realization of the surprise by the opponent.”<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the main attention in enhancing resilience even in areas of health care and protecting of critical infrastructure is concentrated primarily on measures to counter disinformation. This may be due, inter alia, to the fact that Romania occupies one of the last places in Europe in terms of the number of vaccinated,

which is associated with a lack of public confidence in vaccination. If we compare these measures with seven NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness, we can see that some important requirements (for example, assured continuity of government and critical government services or resilient civil communications systems) have not been mentioned at all. Such an approach limits the range of tasks that the state sets for itself.

### **Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience: Tasks and Perspective**

The practical step in enhancing the resilience of Romania was in opening the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience. It was created by the Government’s Emergency Ordinance in 2020. The organisation and the functioning of the Centre are regulated by the Government Decision.

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 **among national military objectives for 2021-2024 is recommended “removing the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and strengthening national resilience”**

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The Centre was created by an inter-institutional working group established and coordinated by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It included the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Romanian Intelligence Service, the Romanian Foreign Intelligence Service, the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG) and the Special Telecommunications Service.

The initiative of Romania to establish such a centre was supported by Bucharest 9 partners. In a joint declaration of the heads of state at

<sup>10</sup> Op.cit

<sup>11</sup> *Strategia militară a României*, Ministerul Apărării Naționale, 2021, [<https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/STRATEGIA-MILITAR-A-ROMANIEI-1.pdf>]

the Bucharest 9 meeting on 10 May 2021, it was mentioned that evolving challenges to security and to societies, stemming from exploiting systemic vulnerabilities and weaponising new technologies, require strengthened resilience efforts at national and allied level, as underscored by the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. It was welcomed that the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience was to be launched by Romania, as well as the work of the dedicated Centres of Excellence in Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius.<sup>12</sup>

On 31 May 2021, the inauguration ceremony of the headquarters of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience was hosted with the attendance of the Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, Prime Minister Florin Cîțu, the NATO Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoaană, and the Vice-President of the European Commission for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič.

As was mentioned by Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Bogdan Aurescu, for a start the centre will function as a domestic institution. At a second stage, after reaching the initial operating capacity, it will be internationalised, and open to the participation of experts from EU member states, NATO or partners of these organisations who wish to join.<sup>13</sup>

The activity of the centre is led by a President with the rank of Secretary of State, assisted by a Vice President with the rank of Undersecretary of State, appointed and removed by the Prime Minister, at the proposal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>14</sup> drian Bratu, a career diplomat, director for

diplomatic strategies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was appointed a President of the Centre.

According to the Government Decision the Centre will:

- elaborate and develop concepts, doctrines, working methodologies, develop and provide trainings in the field of resilience;
- ensure consultancy in the post-disaster stage or crisis situation, in order to return as quickly as possible to the state of normality;
- develop and manage national and international experts and practitioners in order to increase resilience, elaborate and implement collaborative programs with the national and international academic environment;
- on request, participate in the planning and development of the scenarios of national and international exercises in the field of resilience, international exercises, hosted by partner countries, involving Romania;
- develop platforms for the exchange of information in the field, with public, civil and military, academic and civil society partners in the NATO and EU allied states;
- conduct information, education and popularization campaigns on the role of NATO, the EU and national deterrent institutions in deterrent and civil training for non-military crisis management;
- facilitate the transfer of expertise between public institutions and public authorities and public institutions and

12 *Joint declaration of the heads of state Bucharest 9 Meeting*. President of Poland, 10 May 2021, [<https://www.prezydent.pl/en/news/art,1251,joint-declaration-of-the-heads-of-state-bucharest-9-meeting.html>]

13 *ForMin Aurescu: Euro-Atlantic Resilience Center*. STIRI-COVID.eu, 31 May, 2021, [<https://stiri-covid19.eu/formin-aurescu-euro-atlantic-resilience-centre/>]

14 *Hotărîre privind organizarea și funcționarea Centrului Euro-Atlantic pentru Reziliență și pentru completarea Hotărîrii Guvernului nr. 16/2017 privind organizarea și funcționarea Ministerului Afacerilor Externe*, 2017, [[https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul\\_2021/2021\\_pdf/2021.03.19\\_hg.pdf](https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul_2021/2021_pdf/2021.03.19_hg.pdf)]

public authorities in NATO, EU and partner countries, between the business environment, civil society and the academic community in Romania and the business environment, civil society and the academic community in NATO, EU and partner countries etc.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, the Centre will also develop different programmes and initiatives in the field of resilience, underpinned by the following three pillars: risk mitigation through anticipation and adaptation; development of analytical tools and best practices; and practical cooperation on education, training and joint exercises.



***It should be noted that the main focus in Romanian strategic documents is on information threats, which is not entirely consistent with NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness***

In the following period, a series of working groups will start functioning within the Centre, focusing on: societal resilience; resilience in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies; resilience of communication systems and of novel technological ecosystems; resilience to crises and complex emergencies; resilience for ensuring continuity of government and of critical services; resilience of transport infrastructure; resilience of states in NATO's and the EU's neighbourhood to anti-Western influence of state and non-state actors.<sup>16</sup>

The establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience in Romania was welcomed in a communique of the Brussels summit of NATO on 14 June 2021.

Summing up, it is worth noting that Romania has recently taken steps to strengthen its resilience. This was reflected in strategic documents and practical actions, in particular, in the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience. It would be useful for Ukraine to get acquainted with the activities of this Centre and establish cooperation with it.

It should be noted that the main focus in Romanian strategic documents is on information threats, which is not entirely consistent with NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness. The concept of ensuring a national resilience system, which was approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine in September 2021, is generally closer to NATO principles. At the same time, Romania is more resilient to information threats, among others, due to public consensus towards the EU and NATO. Still, many challenges that these two countries face in the Danube and the Black Sea region, make them natural partners in developing a bilateral dialogue on the issues of resilience building and sharing experience in this field.

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15 Op. cit

16 Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience. [<https://ue.mae.ro/en/node/1551>]

# THE EFFECTS OF MYTHMAKING ON RESILIENCE AND FOREIGN, SECURITY POLICY IN POLAND

Alicja Prochniak

*Does identity politics together with the associated system of symbols in the form of political myths allow true resilience, threat assessment and adequate response to the events occurring in international affairs? This narrative analysis would aim at investigating how discourses and narratives loaded with emotional messages set paradigms and frameworks, which can hinder the perception and resilience in international affairs. The appeal to emotions and identity politics with the frequent use of political myths in the public political debate can simplify political reality. They popularise a narrow view that does not allow for the appearance and formulation of alternative definitions.*

## Introduction

In recent years the use of the term 'resilience' has increased in the context of foreign and security policy. The term gained great popularity as many policymakers prefer its neutral character over the traditional term 'stability' that does not fully portray the ever-changing nature of political and economic relations in the post-Cold War world.<sup>1</sup> Rather, in the current circumstances, states and governments have to be prepared to constantly adapt and reform to the changing conditions. The term 'resilience' originates from the fields of ecology and biology and describes the ability of systems to return to equilibrium, a dynamic capability to adapt and adjust to the occurring changes.<sup>2</sup>

Resilience in international relations and especially security policymaking will thus

mean the form of governance which is characterised by flexibility, a bottom-up approach and the rapid ability to reform and adjust policies. To achieve resilience, governments need to incorporate a multi-stakeholder vision and perspectives so a wide variety of actors influence the policymaking process. In this sense, resilience in foreign and security policy implies the internal ability of the state to cope with the appearance of multiple and a variety of types of crises.<sup>3</sup> This level of elasticity and the ability to reform could only be achieved in a particular institutional set-up where political parties, parliament, civil services, the media, and society are actively engaging in the policymaking process. Thus, the power structure and the relationships between the actors should be characterised by truly democratic inclusivity, transparency and accountability. Furthermore, the separation

1 The European Partnership for Democracy, *Resilience: What is Resilience*, 2019, [<https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Factsheet-Resilience-Final.pdf>]

2 EPD 2019

3 EPD 2019

of powers between the government, a free media, an independent judiciary and the non-politicisation of military forces are equally important in establishing truly resilient forms of governance,<sup>4</sup> contributing to a more deliberative model of public sphere, where ideas can be freely shared and discussed, where minority voices have an opportunity to share opinions with their perspectives and voices.<sup>5</sup>



**To achieve resilience, governments need to incorporate a multi-stakeholder vision and perspectives so a wide variety of actors influence the policymaking process**

In Poland, in 2001-2005, together with the governance of a new political party, a shift in the direction of foreign policy and a new vision of national identity were introduced. In 2005, both the presidential and the parliamentary elections were won by the representativeness of the same political party, the Law and Justice.

Previously, the ruling parties mainly had an internationalist orientation, a direction of thought in a foreign policy called 'Piast'. This vision was constructed primarily on a liberal or centre-left vision of politics with

a paradigm promoting openness, dialogue and cooperation with neighbouring countries.<sup>6</sup> This school of thought may be linked with an onward leaning vision of foreign policy which fosters overseas investments, international exposure and strong international links.<sup>7</sup>

The new party had a mainly nationalist orientation and a vision of foreign policy inspired by the politics conducted by the Jagiellonian dynasty of kings who established the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th century. The essence of Jagiellonian politics is a conviction that Poland should cooperate closely with other Eastern European countries and become the regional leader, to counterbalance the strong position of Russia and Germany.<sup>8</sup> 'Jagiellonian' vision in international politics mostly concentrates on a bid for regional hegemony to counter influences of other strong powers in the region. The significant influences of Józef Piłsudski, and the Giedroyc Doctrine<sup>9</sup> can also be noted.

The Law and Justice foreign policy vision at that time was mostly orientated towards the maximisation of national gains. It supported non-internationally competitive sectors and domestically oriented actors, groups that possess few foreign assets or ties, and companies which compete with imports. Its strongest supporters include inefficient industries (the coal industry in Poland for

4 EPD 2019

5 Habermas J.; Lennox S.; & Lennox F., *The Public Sphere*, New German Critique, no. 3, p.49-55, 1964.

6 Maciążek P., *Rządowa Wizja Polskiej Polityki Wschodniej*, Geopolityka.org, 2011

7 Lobell S. E., *Threat Assessment, The State, And Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model*, CUP, 2014, p.59.

8 Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland, *Warto Być Polakiem*, 2010.

9 In the Cold War era, the "Giedroyc Doctrine" largely influenced by Piłsudski's Prometheism created the foundation of Poland's eastern policy which became crucial for the country independence after 1991. The doctrine was originally formulated and published in the writings of Juliusz Mieroszewski and Jerzy Giedroyc in the Polish émigré magazine *Kultura*. The most important element of this policy was to recognise the post-Yalta eastern borders and the right to independence of the newly emerged nations. Another important objective was to progress with cooperation towards independent Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus. Such an alliance would have the capability to weaken Russian imperial ambitions. *Kultura* has seen Ukraine as a pivotal component of Eastern European security.

example), agriculture, import-substituting manufacturing firms, and labour-intensive industry.<sup>10</sup>

In order to mobilise society and extract resources for the ambitious goals of their foreign policy such as the establishment of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), The Three Seas Initiative (TSI) and the development of the LNG gas infrastructure, the government introduced the elements of identity politics and rhetoric based on political myths and historical narratives. This type of strategic political communication, while highly effective domestically, can nonetheless affect the level of resilient governance. Through the use of myths, political communication is designed to activate society through an appeal to emotions, values and historical narratives which cannot be questioned. This type of communication, while effective in some aspects, limits deliberation and does not allow inclusivity in the formation of opinion and policymaking process. The use of political myths limits the policy debate to perspectives and interpretations which are already broadly accepted, have the status of common knowledge and that operate within the framework of the dominant narrative.<sup>11</sup>

Threat inflation and securitisation occurs when political actors are able to dominate news coverage with exaggerated descriptions of the threat.<sup>12</sup> The scholars of critical security studies are already well aware of

the effects of farming on foreign and security policies. Securitisation effects as described by Ole Wæver in 1993 (Copenhagen School) are considered as one of those phenomena where the specific use of language directly affects the formation of security and foreign policy strategies. The Copenhagen School was one of the first to introduce the critical approach to security studies. Securitisation describes the event where narratives, frames and discourses which function in security, can make some actions appear more legitimate, credible and realistic than others.<sup>13</sup>

Threat inflation is another technique, which uses strategically formed narratives to influence policy outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Thrall describes threat inflation as a form of framing – “the effort to frame the world and thus persuade a mass audience to adopt a cause”.<sup>15</sup> The public accepts the inflated perception of a threat when there is a lack of deliberative debate to help selectively choose truth from falsehood. Payne highlights that because of a democratic system of checks and balances, some scholars are sceptical about the possibility of threat inflation in political debate. The three liberal institutions, domestic political opponents, the military, and the free press provide democratic checks and can introduce alternative expertise to balance the debate. All of these elements constitute a marketplace of ideas in well-functioning democracies.<sup>16</sup>

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10 Lobell 2014, p.59-60.

11 Krebs R., *How Dominant Narratives Rise and Fall: Military Conflict, Politics, and the Cold War Consensus*, International Organizations, p.809-845, 2015. Payne R., *Thinking the Unthinkable About National Security Narratives*, *Thinking About Security*, 2014; Thrall, A. T., *A bear in the woods? Threat framing and the marketplace of values*, *Security Studies* 16(3): 452-488, 2007; Snyder J., *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, CUP, Ithaca and London, 1991.

12 Thrall 2007, p.468.

13 Hagström L. & Gustafsson K., *Narrative Power: How Storytelling shapes East Asian International Politics*, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, No 32, vol.4, p.387-406, 2019.

14 Thrall 2007 p.452.

15 Thrall 2007 p.466.

16 Snyder, Jack and Karen Ballentine, *Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas*, *International Security* 21(2): 5-40, 1996.

When the public debate presents a variety of voices and alternatives, the debate will move towards consensus, and people will develop a more accurate perception of the threat.

Jack Snyder and Karen Ballantine note that in states which are in the early stages of democratisation, the marketplace of ideas may not function properly. The more established the market, the greater the deliberation and the better the quality of information.<sup>17</sup> While a poorly developed marketplace of ideas may result in biased information, it is commonly believed that well-constituted Western democracies in principle enjoy wide deliberation in foreign and security policy creation.<sup>18</sup> Many scholars and journalists, however, have used the example of the Bush administration's rhetoric regarding the Iraq War to demonstrate the failure of the marketplace of ideas even in developed Western democracies. It is therefore important to emphasise that the marketplace of ideas can malfunction in both well-established and in developing democracies.<sup>19</sup> Thrall concludes that the marketplace of ideas will not perform the usual check and balance process and detect threat inflation, securitisation or other forms of deception if elites do not compete with one another. In a situation when one frame or narrative is dominating the ability to provide a meaningful counter-narrative,

this may be significantly disabled due to the structure of the dominant narrative and the type of framing used.<sup>20</sup> This can occur especially when the narrative is dominated by nationalist rhetoric and built on appeals to values, emotions, and political myths.<sup>21</sup>

Thrall finds that the marketplace of ideas may often function rather as a "marketplace of values". This applies equally to established democracies and where the democratic institutions are still evolving. The political elites seek support not through appeal to argument but by implementing strategical political communication, which appeals to identity and values instead. The debate does not lead to the emergence of the most accurate and rational statements. The centrality of values means that any political or security issues are discussed through the lens of personal values.<sup>22</sup>

According to Thrall's theory, the threat perceptions will then mostly mirror the distribution of values in society.<sup>23</sup> The perception of threat requires first a system of understanding and evaluating the world. Interpretations matter when validating threats results from the competing values and perspectives held by the public and its leaders.<sup>24</sup> The very definition of national security, and thus of a security threat, can widely depend on the worldview, identity and interests of the political group presenting and assessing the issue.<sup>25</sup>

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17 Thrall 2007 p. 455.

18 Thrall 2007 p. 456.

19 Thrall 2007 p.452.

20 Payne 2014, p.8.

21 Payne 2014 p.11.

22 Thrall 2007, p.469.

23 Thrall 2007, p.469.

24 Thrall, 2007, p.466

25 Thrall, 2007, p.464-5

## Theoretical Framework

Political myths have been recognized as elements that enhance the power of messages and narratives, making them more effective.<sup>26</sup> Myths create the common, “mythical” ground that does not need to be backed by political debate or arguments.<sup>27</sup> Political myth is “an ideologically marked narrative, which purports to give a true account of a set of pasts, present, or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group.”<sup>28</sup>



***Identity politics and an appeal to historical and mythical symbols, as a result, can however obscure security assessment and formation of foreign policy***

National political myths appear in historically simplified or selective stories about the founding of the state.<sup>29</sup> They are the legends, told around specific historical figures and events that were crucial in the nation-building processes, and they are part of the state ceremonies, celebrations,

and rituals.<sup>30</sup> Through the use of political myths, governing elites can more effectively extract resources and mobilise domestic support, to undertake ambitious foreign policy goals.<sup>31</sup> Political myths embedded in historical narratives can be seen as a tool, communicated tactically to dominate the agenda.<sup>32</sup> Once implemented into the debate, they serve as cultural lenses through which a nation’s views about the outside world are shaped.

This type of messages sets the primary definition of international affairs and marginalises competing points of view.<sup>33</sup> Identity politics and an appeal to historical and mythical symbols, as a result, can however obscure security assessment and formation of foreign policy. The term “identity politics” refers to movements that mobilise around ethnic, racial or religious identity to claim state power.<sup>34</sup> The theorists whose work concentrates on investigating political myths and narratives, argue that through the use of specific signs and linguistic structures political actors and institutions form strong, influential discourses, which function in the public sphere.<sup>35</sup> This language contains specific construction mechanisms based on political myths that ensure the sustainability of institutional practices and can provide legitimacy.<sup>36</sup>

26 De Guevara B., *Myth in International Politics: Ideological Delusion and Necessary Fiction*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2016.

27 Munch S., *Beyond National Policymaking: Conceptions of Myth in Interpretive Policy Analysis and Their Value for IR*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2016.

28 Flood C., *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction*. Routledge, New York, 2002.

29 Munch, 2016

30 De Guevara, 2016, p.4

31 Schweller R., *Neoclassical Realism and State Mobilization: Expansionist Ideology in The Age of Mass Politics*, CUP, 2014

32 Yanow D., in “Myths and Narrative in International Politics”, Palgrave Macmillan., 2016

33 Hall S., *Policing the Crisis, Mugging, The State and Law and Order*, The MacMillan Press, Ltd, 1982.

34 Kaldor M, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, SUP, Stanford, 2007.

35 De Guevara B. B., *Myth and Narrative in International Politics: Interpretative Approaches to the Study of IR*, ResearchGate, 2016. De Guevara B. B., *Myth in International Politics: Ideological Delusions and Necessary Fiction*, Chapter 2 in “Myth and Narrative in International Politics”, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Flood C., *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2002.

36 Harcourt B. E., *An Answer to the question: What is Poststructuralism*, Public Law and Legal Theory working paper delivered at the Seminar on Law and Political Theory, Tel Aviv University, 2006.

According to Barthes, myths have a political function because they facilitate the spread or approval of particular worldviews. Barthes' work can be considered as pioneering on political myths because he was the first to emphasise the active manipulation of semiosis. Narratives, when structured in a specific way, have a strong ability to shape and form perception and point of view.<sup>37</sup> Different elements have been used to enhance the strength of the narrative and to construct meaning. Hence, an analysis of narratives has to be performed to examine how the political myths, appeal to values and emotions have been used in the debate to reinforce the specific interpretation of the political affairs.



***At least three different events, which took place in Poland in the last few years, could signal that the policymaking process does not fulfil or meet the conditions needed for a truly resilient policymaking environment***

The analysis will demonstrate which interpretations and opinions have been marginalised, and how the structure of narrative and the elements used can obscure the assessment. Political myths narrow down the debate within a framework of broadly accepted facts and mythical interpretations. This type of strategic political communication marginalises alternative and innovative points of view, instead focusing on familiar and generally recognised explanations.

## Analysis

### The Current Institutional Set-Up

At least three different events, which took place in Poland in the last few years, could signal that the policymaking process does not fulfil or meet the conditions needed for a truly resilient policymaking environment.

- Media

Reporters without Borders rated Poland two places lower and the country dropped to 64th position in the World Press Freedom Index in 2021, due to reports concerning increasing government control over the state broadcast media. The main objections relate to state-owned broadcasters' participation in a government hate campaign during the Presidential election and involvement in the government 'repolonisation' campaign.<sup>38</sup>

- Military Forces

In 2016, the key Polish generals submitted their resignation from the military service. Gen. Mirosław Rozanski along with two other major commanders Gen. Mieczysław Gocuł and Gen. Adam Duda left the military. All three resigned as they could not affirm with their authority the peculiar and controversial decisions of the Ministry of Defence. According to commentators, unacceptable decisions of the ministry's leadership put the military staff under pressure. Having their good name and authority in mind, the generals did not want to affirm the government's decisions in their own names.<sup>39</sup> The book published after these events presents more details about the processes of politicisation that took place in

37 Onega S. & Landa J., *Narratology*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996.

38 RWB 202, [<https://rsf.org/en/poland>]

39 Żemła E., *Tsunami w Polskiej Armii. Z Wojska Odchodzą Kluczowi Generałowie*. Onet News, 16 December 2016. [<https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/tsunami-w-polskiej-armii-z-wojska-odchodza-kluczowi-generalowie/dx7zqg5>].

the army at that time and what led to more dismissals or resignations among army personnel.<sup>40</sup>

- Judicial System

The ongoing dispute between Poland and the European Union over judiciary reform and fears about the state of the rule of law in Poland posed an additional obstacle. The top EU court had already ruled that Poland's disciplinary procedure for judges violates European law. A Polish court however questioned the supremacy of EU law. The dispute may not only lead to Warsaw's 'legal Poxxit' but more concerning is the fact that the Court of Justice expressed the opinion that the Polish chamber lacks guarantees of independence and impartiality. This means that court decisions in Poland may be politicised and harm true deliberation in public sphere debate.<sup>41</sup>



***The analysis of narratives in 2008 – 2021 found that Polish foreign policy and the publications issued by the institutions and political actors have been structured in terms of binary oppositions***

The institutional setup in Poland is thus presently characterised by political pressures over the judiciary and military and attempts to control or censor the media's voice. In these circumstances, the creation of resilient policies may be constrained. More importantly, however,

this type of environment allows the spread and primacy of government interpretations and policy aligned with government interest and values.

### **Mythmaking and Its Effects on Policy-Making Process**

The conducted narrative analysis has identified the presence of several myths and biased discourses in the political debate. The myths, which had influenced the formation of the strategic aims of foreign policy are also clearly referenced in the texts produced by the leading politicians, ministries and think tanks. In this section, I will present how the existence and reference to myths has steered the formation of policy but excluded other alternative points of view and arguments.

- ***The Discourse of the 'West and the Rest'***

The term "West", when used in political texts and messages, relates to an idea, concept, or type of society. Stuart Hall notes that the construction of western discourse is often based on binary oppositions, which emphasise European uniqueness and non-western inferiority.<sup>42</sup> In political discourses and narratives, the term provides a model of comparison to the non-western actors by putting them in opposition.<sup>43</sup> Through the use of binary oppositions, representatives construct the meaning which can determine policy outcomes in advance. Meaning is defined in terms of binary oppositions to simplify reality or to validate the government line of policy to their audience, but at the same time may lead to strong emotional reactions, prejudice or discrimination.<sup>44</sup>

40 Ćwieluch J., *Generałowie*, Wielka Litera, 2017.

41 Bayer L & Burchard H., *Polish Legal Showdown Escalates as Top EU Court Issues New Reprimand*, Politico, 15 July 2021. [<https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-legal-eu-court-reprimand-disciplinary-procedure-for-judges>].

42 Hall, 1992

43 Hall, 1992

44 Shah N. *The Concept of Binary Oppositions*, 2015.

This gives the narrator control over the formation of opinion.<sup>45</sup>

The analysis of narratives in 2008 – 2021 found that Polish foreign policy and the publications issued by the institutions and political actors have been structured in terms of binary oppositions. The analysis revealed that the dominant narration of that time perceives the country as belonging to Western civilisation; while other countries such as for example Russia do not share the same, western values, traditions, or heritage. The leaders of Eastern European countries place themselves as belonging to different civilisational blocks. The US and NATO here are presented as the main allies and friendly, secure powers, guarantors of security, stability, and peace in the world. Poland is a faithful ally and provides its support and loyalty to America and NATO. America is a trusted partner, which has always supported Poland, its closest, most solid and stable supporter which wants to protect Polish independence.

On the other hand, the Russian Federation is portrayed as a suspicious, dangerous, and unpredictable neighbour, a country that is no longer interested in cooperation and building mutual trust with the West.<sup>46</sup> The political elites, authoritarian governments and clerks in Russia are corrupted, the economy is inefficient and unable to reform. Russia uses all sorts of illegal practices such as trade wars, cyber-attacks, threats to use nuclear weapons, propaganda, political agitation and bribes to achieve its aims. Russia has imperial ambitions and seeks to transform Eastern Europe into its own sphere of influence. The country

will not restrain from the use of military force to reach its foreign policy objectives, as evidenced by the wars in Georgia and Ukraine. Through its activities, Russia exposes Poland's neighbourhood to political, economic and social danger.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Russia engages in anti-Polish rhetoric and turns historical disputes between Poland and Israel or Ukraine to its advantage for propaganda purposes.<sup>48</sup>

- ***The Discourse of the Clash of Civilizations***

Another biased discourse identified during the analysis is the discourse of 'the Clash of Civilizations'. The clash of civilizations is a thesis which claims that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world.<sup>49</sup> The central theme of the book "The Clash of Civilizations" is a statement that identity will define conflicts in the post-Cold War world. The departure point in the discourse is the view that Polish and Russian cultures, perception and mentality are different and historically incompatible. Thus, highlighting the strict and sharp differences between Poland and Russia, and underlining that both belong to different civilisations, can be considered as supporting the discourse. The Clash of Civilization shapes the security debate and choice of foreign policy, the choice of allies and enemies.

The presence of discourse in narrative structures the perception of current political affairs and describes conflict with Russia along civilisational lines. The justification and foundation of the conflict (The Annexation of Crimea 2014) are seen in civilisational differences and the choice

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45 Robinson A. *Jean Baudrillard: A new System of Meaning*, Ceasefire, 2012.

46 Koziej S. *New Cold War on NATO's Eastern Flank – Security Scenarios for Central and Eastern Europe*, Casimir Pulaski Foundation, 2019.

47 *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017-2021*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland.

48 Benedyczak J. *The Influence of the Domestic Situation on Russia's Foreign Policy*, PISM, April 2019.

49 Huntington S. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Penguin Books, 1997.

of values. This structure poses a serious consequence for future conflict analysis or resolution. When the conflict is defined along civilisational or identity lines it becomes nearly impossible to propose an effective solution to growing tensions.

The presence of both discourses defines aims and goals in foreign policy and bases of political strategy. The discourse structures the political assessment and calculation along geopolitical lines between 'Western' and 'non-Western' civilisations, where 'Western' is seen as familiar, friendly, aspirational, and 'Eastern' as foreign, suspicious, far off. The representation, characteristics and description of actors are constructed along simplistic lines. Moreover, they function as an overreaching paradigm that guides the formation of opinion among broader circles and communities. Within time, the discourse rises into the narrative of unquestioned authority, which narrows down political choices. The debate and narratives influenced by the discourses tell us not only that 'Western' is friendly but also that it is 'good'. The 'Clash of Civilizations' elevates the values of one civilisation over others.

- ***Myth of Intermarium and the Myth of Piłsudski***

The myth of 'Intermarium' entered the Polish political debate around 2012. It is largely associated with the publications issued by institutions which advocate for the primacy of transatlantic relations in Polish foreign policy.<sup>50</sup> Intermarium refers to a mythical creation, the land between three seas, the Adriatic, Baltic, and the Black Sea. It refers to

The Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth, The Crown of The Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania., one of the biggest and most powerful European countries in the 16th and 17th centuries. By the creation of the Union, Poland was powerful enough to counterbalance the strong position of Russia, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire. The geopolitical project of Intermarium was developed by Józef Piłsudski, a Polish Chief of State (1918 -1920) and envisioned a federation of Eastern European states which together may create a strong union similar to The Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Józef Piłsudski, in cooperation with Sir Harold Mackinder, was trying to implement the idea of counterbalancing Russian influences in the 1920s.<sup>51</sup> While today the main foreign policy projects such as the EaP and TSI focus on economic issues, the main approach is largely anchored in both Intermarium and the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth. The key assumptions and core strategy are closely interconnected. The influence of this myth of Piłsudski is probably the most significant. In this mythical narrative, Piłsudski is seen as a founding father of the Second Polish Republic, which regained independence in 1918 after 123 years of partition carried out in 1795 by Austria, Prussia and Russia.

Piłsudski believed in the ideals, traditions and culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and hoped to establish the same union with Ukraine and Lithuania.<sup>52</sup> His strong leadership skills earned him the status of Polish strongman. This type of governance brought him a specific

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50 Atlantic Council, *Remarks by General James L. Jones, Jr. at the Dubrovnik Three Seas Initiative Presidential Roundtable*, Atlantic Council, 2016. [<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/completing-europe-from-the-north-south-corridor-to-energy-transportation-and-telecommunications-union>]. Chodakiewicz M. J. *Intermarium: The Land Between the Black and Baltic Seas*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2012.

51 Pelizza S. *The Geopolitics of International Reconstruction: Halford Mackinder and Eastern Europe, 1919–20*, *The International History Review* 38:1, 174-195, Routledge. 2016

52 Czubiński A. *"Józef Piłsudski i Jego Legenda (Józef Piłsudski and His Legend)"*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw, 1988. Davies N. *"Heart of Europe, The Past in Poland's Present"*, OUP, Oxford, New York, 2001.

cult of personality which has lasted until the 21st century. His main foreign policy strategies were aimed at enhancing the existing security measures and securing a newly regained independence. He wanted to strengthen national independence movements among nations that had become part of the Soviet Union. His second aim was the creation of a tight cooperation or union of the Eastern European states, the countries located in an area between the three seas.<sup>53</sup> Both goals remain the axioms of Polish foreign policy up to this day. They are also condensed in the main objectives of the TSI and the EaP.



***Identity politics and the use of strategic political communication in the form of political myths and moral framing may not only harm the creation of resilient policies but also create an unfavourable institutional setup***

The symbols present in the political debate developed into mythologised, sacred, and divine strategies and aims, which are rarely questioned. It was the nature of Ukrainian economic relations that postponed their integration with the European Union. Russia at that time was the main importer from the Ukrainian economy. The economic and infrastructure interdependencies in Eastern Europe do not always permit smooth and swift integration with European structures. The uncritical attachment to the main security paradigm prevented the formation of more adequate and resilient foreign policy and security responses to the unfolding events.

The highly respected reference to the concept of Intermarium and the personality cult of the chief of State Piłsudski justified and legitimised the government's choices. Yet, the project suffers from the same shortcomings as its predecessor. The presence, cultivation and use of myths, excluding sufficient deliberation or inclusivity, does not allow for the creation of more nuanced and resilient policies. The shortcomings of the EaP and TSI remain the same as the shortcomings of the previous Intermarium project.

- a. Over-reliance on Western allies.
- b. Insufficient economic funds to fulfil the main goals and objectives of the projects.
- c. Ideological approach.
- d. Different political and economic realities among Eastern European countries, as presented in the cases of Ukraine, Belarus, Hungary and Moldova.

## Conclusion

The analysis has demonstrated that identity politics and the use of strategic political communication in the form of political myths and moral framing may not only harm the creation of resilient policies but also create an unfavourable institutional setup.

The pressures exerted on the military, judiciary and the media in effect limit deliberation in the public debate. Alternative voices and interpretations, policy proposals, and formulations are not widely spread and heard, as they are unable to sustain the fierce criticism aligned with the government agenda. Furthermore, the public debate constrained in this way

53 Czubiński, 1988, Davies, 2001.

allows for the broader dissemination of those messages created by the government to mobilise society and legitimise its own policy choices. In these circumstances, the voices of experts and pundits and other civil society organisations are marginalised, and policy creation relies in a majority of cases on government sources and analysis. When state leaders dominate the agenda, policy recommendations oscillate around those solutions which are aligned with government values, moral judgment, and interests. But they do not necessarily constitute the most needed or most adequate policy responses.

The analysis has shown that the public debate in Poland in 2008 – 2021 has been dominated by biased discourses and policy choices based on mythical interpretations. Therefore, the proposed solutions and approaches as expressed in the most important foreign policy projects, the Eastern Partnership and the Three Seas Initiative have continuously attempted to re-apply the uniform outdated paradigms. Although the projects suffer from consistent shortcomings, a similar course of action and direction of politics is continuously chosen.

The simplification of the political reality and appeal to values and political myths present political affairs through the prism of a glorious past and historically familiar concepts. Strategies and concepts, no matter how great or popular, have to be constantly reassessed and adjusted to the changing nature of international relations, especially in the post-Cold War world. Some axioms and paradigms may be outdated due to increasing interdependencies between countries in the international political economy. Attachment to mythical, historical concepts and formulations, as well as past strategies does not allow for the implementation of a fully resilient policy based on wide-ranging and comprehensive political, economic and security assessment, which includes the perspectives of various actors and stakeholders, to achieve the most adequate and best-tailored solutions.

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