

AFTER THE EU GLOBAL STRATEGY

Building resilience

Foreword by Antonio Missiroli

Edited by Florence Gaub and Nicu Popescu





After the EU global strategy - Building resilience

European Union
Institute for Security Studies

100, avenue de Suffren

75015 Paris

www.iss.europa.eu

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Foreword

As the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) approaches its first anniversary, the follow-up work is already yielding its first results. First and foremost, a number of decisions and actions have already been taken in the field of security and defence, including the establishment inside the External Action Service (EEAS) of a dedicated military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) for non-executive military operations, the Commission's own funding schemes for defence research and capabilities, and the ongoing discussion on the possibility for the member states to trigger Article 46 of the Lisbon Treaty on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PeSCo). Much more needs to be done, of course, for the EU to face up to the challenges it is confronted with in this domain – but, if the debates of the past 10 or 20 years are looked back on, these initial achievements appear to have broken old taboos, and to be turning what have long been persistent stumbling blocks on the way to a more effective Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) into promising building blocks.

The second domain where substantial implementation work has been carried out at the EU institutional level concerns the imperative to build resilience in the EU neighbouring countries and surrounding regions. In fact, the terms 'resilience' or 'resilient' appear more than 30 times throughout the EUGS – so much so that an additional effort to clarify not only their meaning but also their policy implications in the wider security context was set in motion shortly after the release of the new strategy in late June 2016. This has led to the preparation of a Joint Communication by the EEAS and the Commission which is to be released, in turn, on the eve of the first report on the implementation of the EUGS that HR/VP Federica Mogherini is set to deliver to the Council in late June 2017.

On both security/defence and resilience-building, the EUISS has organised a set of workshops and seminars involving academics, think tankers, diplomats and EU officials, somewhat replicating – albeit on a smaller scale and with a narrower focus – the consultation and outreach process carried out in 2015/2016 in support of the preparation of the EUGS. And, just like then, the 2016/2017 process has translated into several *ad hoc* publications aimed at collecting expert views from different angles to feed the collective discussion and reflection. This short volume, the second in the post-EUGS series, intends to shed more light on the different definitions that the concept of 'resilience' may have in specific functional and geographic areas.

The underlying assumption (and conviction) is that 'resilience' needs to be understood in all its versatility as a dynamic process involving a number of EU policies, external partners and local players. It is not and it should not be, in other words, a goal in itself: there is no such thing as a

‘certified’ state of resilience that can be achieved once and for all, and there are no clearly identifiable and uncontested indicators and benchmarks to ‘measure’ this concept. By the same token, various degrees of resilience already exist in most of the areas examined here – so much so that efforts need to be rather geared towards building up, or maybe strengthening and fostering, resilience in order to mitigate fragility where it exists.

Finally, a dynamic notion (and practice) of resilience for the EU needs to be context-specific, conflict-sensitive and, above all, flexible: that is, it needs to be based on a thorough understanding of situations and risks and to generate a far-sighted and adaptive mobilisation of resources and responses, starting with financial instruments and diplomatic démarches. As such, it should not amount to a new policy in its own right but rather help the EU and its member states design better policies and forms of action that can support and sustain their common values and interests.

*Antonio Missiroli.
Director, EUISS,
Paris, May 2017*

Introduction

Resilience is more than just a buzzword: it is an important objective of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), and is therefore vital to the Union's security. In the EU's neighbouring countries, it is understood to be the capacity of states – but also polities, societies and communities – to withstand and absorb shocks, as well as recover from them. Although the strengthening of state capacity has been a constant feature of European engagement with its southern neighbours, it is now, at a time of turmoil and state erosion, more crucial than ever. States in the EU's neighbouring and surrounding regions face severe crises in terms of security, economy and politics. Therefore, their core ability to handle and bounce back from challenges stands at the centre of the EU's foreign and security policy. Wherever states and societies in EU's neighbouring areas fail to recover, Europe itself is at risk.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES

Resilience refers to the capacity to absorb and recover from any type of stress or shock. Originally a biological term, it has come to include the recovery from shocks also in other areas, whether in psychological, material or sociological terms. Applied to states, in particular, resilience implies the institutional capacity to adjust to challenges and recover from them. Resilient states are not immune to challenges, but have the provisions in place to react flexibly and rapidly in order to maintain an acceptable level of state functioning.

As a concept, state resilience is therefore not so much a matter of financial or economic solvency, but rather about the capabilities, procedures, mechanisms, measures and provisions in place which allow the state's institutions to act in an agile manner when necessary. Where states lack this flexibility, they will be – by default – less resilient. Building and maintaining resilience is therefore very much an institutional, technocratic and bureaucratic endeavour – although, ultimately, it also has serious political implications.

Depending on the context, certain aspects can increase and decrease a state's resilience potential. Strong resilience is the case in states where potential crises are anticipated and planned for, be it in the shape of crisis management scenarios, war games or any other exercise which places the institutions under artificial stress in order to test their reactivity. Information-sharing and flat hierarchies can speed up responsiveness as well. Weakened resilience can be found in states which lack any type of creative analysis about potential crises and vulnerabilities. Consequently, merely thinking about crises is the first step towards resilience.

Resources – whether scarce or abundant – can play a role in a state’s resilient capacity, but they are only one ingredient. Short-term financial payoffs can certainly lead to a degree of stability, but this will rarely have long-lasting effects. In return, states which face resource constraints can indeed be more creative when it comes to the development of solutions simply because they have to.

POTENTIAL VULNERABILITIES

Both east and south share certain vulnerabilities, although their extent and context differs. In the east, poor governance and corruption are widespread and feed secessionist tensions and political instability. The same phenomenon exacerbates economic risks, as states that are already fragile have significant parts of their budgets wasted and misused, key state institutions are underfunded and dysfunctional, potential investors are deterred, and financial stability threatened. Still, however problematic, these internal failures would not in and by themselves generate civil conflicts or failed states without external interference.

The internal fragilities of the EU’s eastern neighbours are aggravated by the foreign policy context. The region is a top priority for Russia’s policy of reasserting its great power status –not just through diplomatic or economic means, but also through military and security pressures. Whereas Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have been the target of Russian diplomatic and economic pressure for over a decade, and have learned to withstand those challenges, they are much less able to tackle direct security and military threats.

The combination of domestic vulnerabilities and external pressures has created a particularly dangerous security environment in which many of the EU’s neighbours are exposed and often unable to respond to cyber and disinformation attacks, infiltration and destabilisation. Thus, 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.

In the south, four areas of vulnerabilities are particularly prevalent: climate change, economics, politics, and security.

Climate change will hit the region harder than any other: already dry areas will see temperatures increase by 2 degrees over the next decade, leading to drops in agricultural production and the likely displacement of people. Rising water levels will affect densely populated areas, whereas storms and floods will hit the region’s infrastructure particularly hard. Nevertheless, there are no provisions in place to manage these impacts.

Economic vulnerabilities especially lie in the state’s limited capacity to absorb price shocks: as most states in the Middle East and North Africa import the vast majority of their food staples, rapidly rising food prices (as occurred in 2010) can lead to large-scale social dislocation. Measures

to absorb these price shocks have been introduced only to a limited extent in Jordan and Tunisia – and not at all elsewhere. Similarly, southern job markets are unable to absorb the huge numbers of job seekers which arrive each year. By 2025, Arab states will have to create 80 million jobs to maintain youth unemployment at today's levels – but no steps have been taken to manage the fallouts of a potential failure to achieve this goal.

Political shocks in the region are linked to climate change and economics: where citizens are no longer provided for in terms of jobs and adequate living standards, large-scale unrest is a natural consequence. However, states in the south have no means to peacefully de-conflict the manifestation of societal tensions.

Security vulnerabilities in the region are again linked to the aforementioned challenges: security agents in the region have very little training in riot control and the management of demonstrations, and often worsen the situation. Similarly, the sudden onset of new challenges – e.g. terrorism in Tunisia – has been met with slow, bureaucratic and inefficient institutional responses.

REPORT STRUCTURE

With this in mind, the EUISS invited a group of experienced thinkers and policy practitioners to contribute to a more detailed understanding of what exactly the resilience needs of the EU's neighbouring countries are. This report is a contribution to turning the broad objective of resilience building into more or less actionable policy priorities for the EU.

In the report's first part, experts look at the horizontal challenges in a structured manner, ranging from climate change, energy, and cyber to resilience in the security sector.

The second part of the report looks at the south and beyond, analysing environmental and demographic, economic and food, conflict and security resilience not only in North Africa and the Middle East, but also in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

Finally, in the third section the experts take a closer look at the east: issues of political resilience when it comes to strategic communications, but also structural challenges in terms of economics and security. From the Western Balkans to Central Asia, each sub-region faces a very specific set of resilience issues.



I. HORIZONTAL ISSUES



1. Marc-Antoine Eyl-Mazzega

Russia & Sub-Saharan Africa Programme Manager . International Energy Agency

There are two key requirements for creating resilient energy systems – security and sustainability. Access to supplies that are predictable, transparent, affordable, competitive and available in the short and long term is crucial, alongside the ability to cope with supply or demand side shocks. In order to make these supplies sustainable, it is important to select the right energy mix, particularly in the transition to decarbonised energy systems in the post-COP21 era.

Overall, progress towards resilient energy systems will benefit from a number of decisive, fundamental trends: the continued and rapidly falling costs of developing renewable energy sources and the increasing efficiency of renewable energy, as well as progress on how to best design and operate electricity markets with intermittent renewables. For example, the average cost of on-shore wind has come down by one-third in recent years while the average cost of solar photovoltaic (PV) is 80% lower than in 2008. The development of renewable energy systems should go hand-in-hand with energy efficiency. Wider deployment of energy efficiency measures would ensure the sustainability of energy systems and enable development of practices that should be one of the key ingredients of a resilient energy system.

THE SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Europe's southern neighbours include countries that rely entirely on fossil fuel imports (Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon), the net exporters (Algeria, Libya) and Egypt, a significant oil and gas producer that recently turned net importer. These countries face similar challenges: growth in power demand and pressure to deliver affordable and sustainable energy to a growing population while reducing the burden on the budget from subsidies, as well as providing competitive supplies to the energy-intensive industrial sectors.

Egypt and Algeria do not produce enough gas to meet domestic and external demands. This has forced Egypt to import large volumes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and to halt gas exports, which, in turn, has put strong pressure on the country's budget and reduced competitiveness. Algeria had to reduce gas exports and increase gas-fired power generation, an element which is already predominant in its power generation mix. Algeria's challenge is twofold: increasing gas production to meet growing domestic demand and maintaining exports while increasing power generation capacity. This will require large investments, an attractive regulatory framework and a focus on realising the country's renewable energy potential, especially solar and wind.

While Morocco's oil and gas exploration efforts have so far been disappointing, Egypt is on the verge of reaping the benefits of large offshore gas finds. Coupled with domestic gas pricing reforms that cut subsidies, this has attracted new investors to its upstream gas sector. Beyond a programme to develop nuclear power generation, Egypt is also preparing a robust support scheme for renewable power generation investments. This will create jobs, enhance the security of power generation and free up gas resources, helping Egypt become a gas exporter again in the medium term.

Morocco will benefit from development of solar PV and increased use of gas for power generation through planned LNG imports. Morocco has become one of Africa's leaders in renewable power generation development, which currently accounts for 15.5% of power generation. In Egypt, renewables made up 8.9% of total power generation in 2015, mainly hydropower. Development of wind and solar PV is expected to increase this share by 43% by 2022. The combination of new nuclear and more renewable energy sources will also decrease the carbon footprint of the country's power generation sector. Tunisia has also embarked on a renewable energy support scheme.

Overall, these developments highlight the need for massive and timely private investments, be it in the upstream gas sector or in power generation, which require stable, predictable and attractive regulatory and price incentives alongside the presence of a supportive banking sector. Last but not least, not enough emphasis is usually put on the demand-side aspects, even though energy efficiency can substantially shave peak demand. Raising standards of appliances, such as air conditioners, is one of the policy options that can make a substantial difference.

THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

The EU's eastern neighbours share several characteristics which pose fundamental challenges to the resiliency of their energy systems: sharp seasonal variations in energy demand and a socially vital role of centralised heat supplies; a strong energy intensity per GDP; a strong fossil fuel import dependency, often from a single supplier; an ageing and usually polluting power generation and centralised heat supply infrastructure; a low level of competition; continued subsidies; insufficient metering of gas and heat consumption; a low share of renewable energy sources despite largely untapped potential; governance challenges; and overall, supply-side driven energy policies.

Ukraine is Europe's most energy-intensive economy per GDP. The country's power generation is dominated by nuclear and coal, but its nuclear units are ageing and any major maintenance, especially in winter, poses critical risks to the security of power supplies. All coal-fired power plants are already beyond their lifetime and many run on anthracite that must be stored ahead of the winter and imported from Russia or the war-torn territories in the Donbas. These plants will need to be modernised to meet EU directives on large combustion plants emissions. Ukraine's

largely gas-powered centralised district heating systems, which supply heat to around 40% of households, can experience losses of up to 50-60%.

Nevertheless, impressive progress has been made over the past few years to address these challenges. Ukraine has seen gas demand fall dramatically by almost half in five years, and has managed to reduce its import dependency by a third of demand in just four years. While the country used to rely solely on gas imports from Russia, 2016 marked a turning point: imports have been decreased by 80% over the past ten years and Ukraine imported no gas from Russia in 2016 as its total imports of 11 billion cubic metres (bcm) were sourced from the EU via reverse flows. An unprecedented market liberalisation has been advanced under the Energy Community Treaty, alongside a rapid and sharp removal of gas price subsidies for the residential sector. Over 1 gigawatt of solar and wind capacity are installed and more are planned, yet renewables only represent 1% of its total primary energy supply (TPES).

There is still ample scope to increase the resiliency of the Ukrainian energy system. Domestic gas production is significant at 20 bcm per year, but it would have even greater potential if the investment conditions were improved. Large investments will need to be mobilised to replace or prolong the ageing infrastructure. Emergency procedures need to be further developed in the fields of gas, power, coal and oil. There is a need to take further steps in order to develop a liquid gas market and to complete the unbundling and restructuring of Naftogaz.

Energy sector resilience challenges in the eastern and southern European neighbourhoods are manifold, yet there are a number of common denominators: the large untapped opportunities from energy efficiency, and the significant potential to rapidly and fully reap the benefits of decisive technology improvements and innovations that are taking place in the renewable sector. Addressing these challenges requires strong political will, good sectoral governance, the full removal of subsidies accompanied by supportive social programmes and measures enabling reduced consumption. Moreover, this requires predictable and attractive investment frameworks. In this respect, the EBRD's financial instruments, the Energy Community Secretariat's legal expertise alongside the IEA's Technology collaboration programmes, energy roadmaps and EU4Energy framework, can offer powerful tools to foster the resilience of energy systems in these regions.



2. Patryk Pawlak

Brussels Executive Officer . EUISS

Building resilience against digital threats is not only a technological challenge but also a political one as the EU's interests and values are increasingly contested in cyberspace. The very nature of the cyber domain facilitates this process: cyber armies do not need to be moved across borders; cyber weapons can be purchased on darknets relatively cheaply; and the norms of state behaviour in the digital domain are still work in progress. Consequently, as cyberspace becomes a theatre for political confrontation, we need a shift in perspective: from one that sees the cyber domain as a mere tool and enabler to one that treats it as a distinct sphere of political discourse and activity where different political, economic, and ideological views clash.

A NEW DIMENSION OF GEOPOLITICS

Over the past decade, the EU has committed substantial resources towards strengthening its role as an international player by streamlining its foreign policy instruments to effectively respond to crises and conflicts, protect human rights, or address factors of fragility that undermine development in some countries. EU activism and the Union's focus on defending its interests and values – both online and offline – comes at a price, as its strategic interests such as stability, prosperity and political reform in the closest neighbourhood and beyond are increasingly challenged in the cyber domain. State-sponsored operations against the EU member states and European institutions originating from countries like Russia, China or Turkey go beyond cyber-espionage and increasingly include critical infrastructure vulnerability scanning, disruptive attacks, as well as propaganda and disinformation campaigns.

Digital risks, if unmitigated, are not only damaging to the economy but may also destabilise the political system of a state, weaken trust within a society, undermine economic freedoms, and increase the risks of conflict. Attacks on critical infrastructure are particularly common as tactics in ongoing conflicts. Attacks against the Ukrainian energy grid conducted by pro-Russian groups like Sprut, Beregini or Sandworm gang are quite frequent. Moreover, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics are both attractive targets and safe havens for cyber criminals. Some of these groups are suspected of having ties to national law enforcement agencies, including in Russia and China. Cyberspace is also used to influence politics by means of disinformation and interference in democratic processes. Terrorist organisations have also shifted from using cyberspace for recruitment, fundraising or propaganda, to deploying it as a forum for sharing 'best practices', including through creating their own social media platforms. Finally, cyberspace is often the only environment in which human rights defenders and civil society may act against

oppressive regimes. Recognising this fact, some 25 governments on almost every continent have enacted internet shutdowns in 2016, undermining the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly online.

BUILDING A CYBER-RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

Recognising that cybersecurity constitutes ‘one of the most important present and future challenges’, cyber issues have been gradually incorporated into the EU’s relations with key partners, in particular through cyber dialogues and cooperation with regional organisations. To prevent the emergence of safe havens for criminals and to enhance the resilience of information infrastructure in partner countries, the EU also provides funding for cyber capacity-building in third countries, including through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

PROTECTING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Confronted with a growing risk of cyber attacks against the critical national (information) infrastructure – including as a part of coordinated and systematic hybrid campaigns – the EU aims to strengthen the capacities of third countries to protect their strategic assets. Consequently, the specific actions aim at building the foundations of cyber resilience, including through support for development of national cybersecurity strategies and policies, establishing or reinforcing national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), and putting in place national systems for effective cyber crisis management. The EU’s most recent action, ‘Capacity Building and Cooperation to enhance Cyber Resilience’ (CB4CyberResilience) – funded by a financial envelope of €11 million implemented by Northern Ireland Co-Operation Overseas Ltd – focuses specifically on increasing the resilience of critical information infrastructure and networks supporting the vital services of selected priority countries worldwide. The activities at national and regional level (e.g. training courses, technical assistance, table-top exercises, and joint cyber operations) will focus on putting in place and implementing a comprehensive set of policies and organisational and technical measures based on public-private cooperation which are compliant with the EU’s human-rights based approach.

FIGHTING CYBERCRIME

In addition, the lion’s share of EU funding on cyber capacity-building goes towards developing policies, strategies, and strengthening law enforcement and criminal justice legal frameworks in third countries. The Global Action on Cybercrime Extended (GLACY+) – a project implemented

jointly with the Council of Europe with a budget of €10 million until 2020 – will focus on supporting countries that may serve as hubs to share their experience within their respective regions. Other EU-funded projects in the EU neighbourhood include: iPROCEEDS targeting proceeds from online crime in southeastern Europe and Turkey, Cybercrime@EAP II on international cooperation, and Cybercrime@EAP III on public-private partnerships. Altogether, until March 2017, cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe resulted in support to over 24 countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, notably in the Eastern Partnership countries. The type of assistance provided under these programmes varies from training of law enforcement officers on setting up high-tech crime units, advisory missions on the harmonisation of cyber legislation, to workshops on strengthening 24/7 points of contact for cybercrime and e-evidence.

Since recently, the EU has also become involved in building capacities to tackle cybercrime in the southern Mediterranean through the Cybercrime@South programme. Acknowledging differences across the region with regard to adherence to democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights as well as the importance of the Budapest Convention for effective international cooperation against cybercrime, the project will adopt a differentiated approach. Potential cooperation with Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia may include judicial and law enforcement training, the drafting of policies, harmonisation of legislation, and awareness-raising among decision-makers – provided they have the necessary human rights and rule-of-law safeguards. Nonetheless, the approach is less ambitious compared to the EU-funded cybercrime projects in the Eastern Neighbourhood, the Balkans, and Turkey.

DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE

Building on the conclusions of the EU-NATO summit in Warsaw, the EU is working closely with NATO to develop robust and resilient cyber defence capabilities, including through regular staff-to-staff consultation, strengthening cooperation on training through the harmonisation of training requirements, and reciprocal participation in cyber exercises. It has developed strong partnerships with other regional and international organisations, including with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the ASEAN Regional Forum. In addition, the European External Action Service, European Commission and several member states are members of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise launched in 2015 to ensure the complementarity of the ongoing initiatives at the global level and avoid duplications.

Recognising that cybercrime, cyber espionage, attacks on critical infrastructure, and disinformation by cyber means threaten EU's long-term political, security and economic interests, the European External Action Service and the European Commission proposed in 2017 a catalogue of measures for a joint EU diplomatic response to cyber operations, the so-called 'cyber toolbox'.

A non-exhaustive list of the already existing instruments includes statements by the Council and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, formal Council conclusions, using diplomatic channels to formally request technical assistance, diplomatic démarches and political dialogues, and in certain cases imposition of restrictive measures such as arms embargoes, travel bans or freezing funds and economic resources.

A FORWARD-LOOKING CYBER PLAYER

Is it important for the EU to strengthen the cyber resilience of its international partners? The EU Global Strategy offers a clear answer: yes. It calls for making the EU a ‘forward-looking cyber player’ through protecting critical assets and values in the digital world, engaging in cyber diplomacy and capacity building with partners, and seeking agreements on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace based on existing international law. The EU’s potential to play a relevant role in the cyber domain will depend on its capacity to adapt its foreign and security policies and instruments to the new challenges and realities of the digital environment. Firstly, the identification of priority countries for cyber resilience-building needs to better reflect the strategic interests of the EU. Secondly, the persistence of a ‘silo mentality’ among different cyber communities – whether law enforcement actors, diplomats or technology experts – is an obstacle towards a comprehensive and integrated policy response. There is therefore a clear need for a better understanding of cyber-issues across all policy areas. Lastly, while the EU remains open towards engagement with other countries, it also needs to be clear that its support is not a ‘one way street’ and comes with strings attached, in particular with regard to the respect for human rights.

3. András Rácz

Associate Professor . Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest

Hybrid war combines the use of non-military and military methods, all aimed at weakening the enemy and breaking its ability to resist well before any large-scale traditional military action would commence. An understanding of this principle needs to guide efforts aimed at strengthening resilience against hybrid threats.

Adversaries able and willing to use hybrid methods of attack have long studied Western democracies, searching for their possible vulnerabilities. China did so when designing its ‘unrestricted warfare’, as did Russia when developing its ‘new generation warfare’. The main advantage of attackers able to use hybrid methods against a democratic country is their highly centralised structures of command and control, which encompass all sectors of the state apparatus. This enables them to coordinate the use of various non-military and military tools – including economic, diplomatic, informational, financial, cultural and military measures – much quicker and in a more flexible way than Western democracies, where separation of power is a key principle, and elaborate systems of checks and balances are in place.

Information warfare, conducted mainly by misusing Western concepts of freedom of speech and media freedom, is an integral and crucially important element of the hybrid toolbox. It aims mostly at destroying trust in democratic norms, values and institutions, calling alliances into question and hampering decision-making by spreading disinformation. There has already been a case in which a hybrid adversary was able to organise nationwide protests in Germany by almost exclusively using informational tools.

Another important advantage of hybrid war is that it blurs the lines between peace and war. Preparations, as well as the early stages of a hybrid attack take place during peacetime and may well initially go unnoticed by the target country. Hybrid attackers are also able to make use of plausible deniability. As war is not declared, it is hard for a target country to take counter-measures that require the introduction of extraordinary legal status (i.e. a state of emergency).

DOMESTIC POTENTIAL TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES

Due to the very nature of hybrid warfare, the best defence against such attacks is good governance. A well-governed society that has a firm belief in its values, trusts its democratic norms and institutions, and where the level of corruption is low and social tensions are mitigated is a lot less vulnerable to hybrid attacks than a corrupt, disorganised, atomised country plagued by ethnic and religious tensions.

Hence, significant efforts should be made to decrease those social tensions and inequalities in society on which a potential hybrid attacker may try to capitalise. In particular, this applies to the rights of ethnic, national and religious minorities. The fight against corruption is similarly important, because the phenomenon is one of the main channels through which a hybrid attacker can try to undermine the functioning of government.

Another essential task is adapting national legal environments to potential hybrid threats. Based on Ukrainian and also Baltic experiences, this needs to include the updating of legislation on the functioning of the police (particularly issues of crowd management and riot control), intelligence services and anti-corruption authorities, as well as the laws governing the freedom of the press. National security forces need to be properly trained and equipped to tackle any attempts – whether conducted by ‘little green men’ or by violent crowds – to take over governmental buildings or elements of critical infrastructure.

A key challenge is, however, to design efficient defences without forsaking fundamental democratic norms and values, as well as the respect for human rights. Hence, simply copying the structures and methods of potential hybrid attackers is not an option.

From this perspective, governments need to realise that civil society is a key ally in strengthening social resilience. An active, conscious, flourishing, diverse civil society is able to react to hybrid challenges – particularly informational threats – much quicker and more flexibly than any national administration. In addition, due to its diversity and grassroots nature, civil society as a whole is much less vulnerable to outside efforts aimed at eroding public trust than national governments.

PRIORITIES FOR BUILDING STATE AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Perhaps the most important role for the EU is to promote, facilitate and support research and discussion on hybrid threats, thus increasing both governmental and general public awareness. A more aware public is not only more likely to support their national governments in taking the necessary counter-measures, but is also more resilient itself to possible hybrid attacks. Keeping up and strengthening EU-level efforts to tackle information warfare needs to be an integral part of this strategy.

Second, the EU is a strong and well-equipped actor to lower the economic vulnerabilities *vis-à-vis* possible hybrid attackers. This includes energy-related aspects in particular, such as supporting the further integration of European energy networks, as well its further diversification and increased interconnectivity.

Third, the EU’s crisis management capabilities are also important, especially if called upon to manage the consequences of a major hybrid attack. Even an ultimately unsuccessful hybrid of-

fensive may be able to cause major damage to critical infrastructure, and disrupt essential public services in one or more regions of an EU country. Partial collapse of governmental control, as well as widespread public disorder cannot be ruled out, either. Hence, a swift and efficient crisis response from the EU – including the possible deployment of police forces, as well as humanitarian aid to the attacked member state – may be of decisive importance.

Regarding other international actors, NATO is crucial in strengthening resilience against hybrid threats. The reason is that military superiority is still a prerequisite for a full-scale hybrid attack, i.e. one that also involves the use of open violence, as well as the capture of territory. The events of 2014 clearly demonstrated this: during the attack on the Crimea, as well as against eastern Ukraine, Russia used the threat of an immediate conventional military attack as a deterrent, thus severely restricting Ukrainian decision-makers. Consequently, if the adversary's military superiority can be neutralised, most realistically by credible collective defence capabilities, a full-scale hybrid attack cannot be successfully launched.

Based on the recent experience of the US, the most important and urgent priority for EU member states is to guard the safety and security of electoral systems against outside interference. This needs to include not only the processes of voting and ballot counting, but also the effective defence of political parties against cyberattacks and espionage.

Equally pressing is the need to develop proper counter-measures against information warfare aimed at destroying public trust in fundamental norms and key democratic institutions. A number of EU countries have already accumulated remarkable knowledge and experience in tackling information warfare challenges, as has Ukraine. Sharing and adopting best practices is much faster and more resource-efficient than trying to develop new, individual solutions.

Finally, defenders need to realise that potential hybrid attackers are constantly improving and adjusting their methods as a result of their experiences and changing international circumstances. Therefore, it is necessary to dedicate a lot more resources – including diplomatic, intelligence and consistent, long-term research efforts – to study and assess the methods and real capabilities of the potential adversaries. Such steps are necessary both for designing the necessary counter-measures and for avoiding unpleasant surprises. The events of spring 2014 in Ukraine caught the West off guard. This should not happen again.



4. Mark Rhinard

Professor of International Relations . Stockholm University and Swedish Institute of International Affairs

Few concepts in foreign policy analysis have become as popular as ‘resilience’ in recent years. For a long time a feature of ecological and biological research, then carrying over into public policy analysis, the fascination with resilience now extends into foreign policy. The term features prominently in the EU’s European Global Strategy, for instance, and a Joint Communication on Resilience by the European Commission and the European External Action Service in the spring of 2017 sought to flesh it out. As a reflection on that process, this short chapter asks what the resilience concept is, what it is not, and what it might mean for European officials using the concept. The argument developed here is that resilience may bring up more questions than it answers. To avoid confusion and unrealistic expectations at home and abroad, the concept should be applied carefully and specifically as it moves from the conceptual to the implementation stage, in line with four guidelines set out in the conclusion below.

Using the term resilience is hardly straightforward. Listening to anyone speak on the concept reveals differing opinions on five central questions.¹ First, what is resilience? Definitions range from the broad and expansive (the ability of any system – individual, household, community, organisation, state – to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks) to the narrow and specific (a community’s ability to cope with a major disaster). A broad definition has its advantages, in that provides a big conceptual ‘tent’ under which many governmental efforts can be gathered. This might mean it serves better as a cohering device for bureaucracies than a goal to be achieved in practice; it is too vague to be operationalisable. The narrow definition may not suit large, complex and bureaucratic entities like the EU trying to improve their own coherence, but it is more relevant in, say, helping a coastal community in West Africa.

Second, who (or what) should be resilient? Different perspectives, usually based on different academic disciplines, prioritise different things. Sociologists generally look at the resilience of individuals, and their ability to withstand trauma. This approach makes sense: individuals’ adaptive capacity determines whether a community or a state is resilient at the aggregate level. On the other hand, individual resilience is rooted in experience and culture, two factors not easily changed through policy. Organisational scholars, not surprisingly, examine the resilience of schools, hospitals, transport systems, governments and other organisations that keep things running in a major breakdown. But is an organisational focus enough? Some observers place a strong emphasis on building resilience in societies generally, since this offers a more generic tar-

1. See Arjen Boin, Louise K. Comfort and Chris C. Demchak (eds.), *Designing resilience: preparing for extreme events* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

get for the building of resilience. Yet the approach may be too general, lacking a clear definition of ends and means for the building of resilience.

Third, when can we expect resilience to happen? Traditionally, resilience is understood to be ‘bounce-back’ capacity, taking place after an extreme event has hit. Researchers ask why one community (such as in a flooded area of Central Europe) can improvise solutions to some problems while others (such as local communities in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina) seemed less capable of doing so. A newer research agenda, however, situates resilience as taking place before a disturbance actually occurs. This kind of resilience involves recognising and adapting to changes in an environment that may signal bigger problems to come. Resilience in this sense prevents something disastrous from happening at all. This debate matters because it directs our attention to where resilience can be found and what defines ‘success’. Examining everyday, anticipatory resilience means we should look for a different set of indicators than when looking at bounce-back capacity after something has gone wrong.

Fourth, what kinds of events do we hope to be resilient against? One set of arguments suggests that only ‘black swans’ are relevant to resilience discussions. These events fall outside the realm of the imaginable – the crises that destroy societies’ abilities to provide basic functions – and should constitute the scenarios upon which resilience policies are made. Other approaches to resilience are either silent on this issue or assume that the focus should be on ‘normal emergencies’. The rationale here is that resilient systems should absorb and adapt to these problems, and prevent them from becoming even worse.

Fifth, and perhaps most significant, can resilience be engineered? The answer to this question should determine whether it is worth directing our public policy energies into creating resilience. The sceptical answer to this question is that resilience is something inherent to a society, developed over time and through experience. The most resilient organisations and communities are those that have experienced major disturbances and learned through trial-and-error. Those accustomed to hardship and those skilled in improvisation and creativity survive the toughest challenges (think of shanty towns surviving a hurricane, while high-rise urban apartment blocks struggle to restore basic services). Optimists have little data on their side, but nevertheless argue that thoughtfully designed public policy, combined with effective local leadership, can play an important role in building resilience – even if only indirectly.

On the basis of an overview of these five debates, how to move forward with the resilience concept? Solid research findings on resilience are limited, but those that exist suggest several ways to use resilience as a way forward for European foreign policy.

- Define the term carefully if it is to have any weight. Defined too broadly, resilience only serves the purpose of being a ‘binding concept’ for adding coherence to EU action. Not a bad outcome, but not specific enough to build actual resilience in the field. More specific mean-

ings of resilience include the ability of societies to mobilise a response through effective decision-making (difficult when relevant and legitimate decision-makers are in short supply during a complex and unfamiliar disaster) and to implement that response through creativity and improvisation (necessary when required resources and normal implementation procedures are absent). If necessary, but risking conceptual over-stretch, anticipation can be added in terms of identifying deviations from the norm and signalling a potential problem.

- Resilience must be seen in context. Efforts to build resilience must consider local histories and cultures as the starting point, since one-size-fits-all solutions are not likely to work. Poor and seemingly weak countries may have more resilience capacity than rich ones – owing to their experience and cultural features. New policies must first ask about the ways people do things in a society that allow them to adapt and to manage problems, and ask what this looks like in practice. A ‘resiliency audit’ of individual countries might be a starting point, and a suitable task for EU delegations, in the interest of building on – rather than undermining – existing resilience features.
- Focus on key organisations and institutions. The second debate mentioned above considered the different ‘objects’ of resilience. Most research argues that the most practical and feasible way to build resilience is to focus on organisations that uphold society’s key institutions. These differ for every society, but could include religious centres, water systems, transport agencies, or even air transport infrastructures (if, for example, relief deliveries or tourism are essential for getting a society back on its feet).
- Remember that resilience is, at best, a second-order effect of other policies. The jury is out on whether resilience is engineerable. Directing policies towards building resilience may be more wishful thinking than a concrete possibility. But this should not stop governments or international organisations like the EU from considering the effects of existing and new policies on resilience, as a second-order outcome. Thus, in a similar vein to conducting a ‘resilience audit’ of partner countries, the EU would be wise to audit its own policies for their effects on resilience – good or ill. This might involve tasking a unit within the EEAS with checking, verifying, and offering advice on resilience to colleagues, including audits and internal seminars.

As should be clear, resilience is a vague concept with multiple interpretations and implementation difficulties. One might even question its value-added to policy debates, considering that existing concepts (prevention, reconstruction) may already serve the purpose for which resilience is currently being trumpeted. That said, if used specifically and carefully, resilience may provide an important motivating concept to both improve the coherence of EU policies and generate important changes in actual conditions around the world.



5. Sabrina Schulz

Head of Berlin Office . E3G - Third Generation Environmentalism

There is now an understanding among European foreign and security policy decision-makers that the impacts of climate change, and their sometimes irreversible consequences, constitute a high-priority security risk for the EU and its neighbours to the east and south. Climate impacts can destroy crops and thereby increase food prices and contribute to migration from rural regions to cities; they can threaten critical infrastructure and undermine entire economic sectors such as tourism; and they can have severe implications for health due to extreme heat or because diseases spread more easily. The failure of governments to address these challenges could lead to political instability, especially if large parts of the population lose their jobs or property.

The EU has the necessary diplomatic, security, technical and financial resources to shape the climate resilience agenda at home and abroad. However, so far there is no agreement on how best to tackle these issues. Development, diplomacy, security and climate institutions in the EU still rely on their own – rather than joint – climate risk assessments and operational responses. At the same time, reliable climate risk assessments are typically non-existent in the EU's southern and eastern neighbourhoods.

DRIVERS OF VULNERABILITY

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) advocates a strong mandate for the EU and its institutions to actively promote climate resilience at home and internationally. Tackling climate vulnerability is acknowledged as part of building resilience, but while this analysis has become widely accepted there is no common understanding of climate vulnerability and resilience in the EU.

To better understand – and also address – climate risks in the EU's neighbourhood, the EU's Conflict Early Warning System (EWS) is a crucial tool which needs to be strengthened. The EWS allows for the identification of long-term risks for violent conflict in a given country or region and promotes early preventive actions and coherent responses for addressing those risks. The conflict index produced by the EWS includes indicators such as water stress and food insecurity that are important drivers of climate risk.

An early warning system could have been useful, for example, in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region prior to the Arab Spring. A sharp increase in the price of bread was among the events that sparked the uprising, following climate change-related crop failures around the world and speculation in food stock markets. A similar sequence of events could repeat itself given predictions of increased water scarcity along the Mediterranean coast – where most of the

region's agriculture is based. It is clear that climate change will remain a driver for instability but the consequences are largely determined by the degree of resilience of a government and a society.

Efforts to build climate resilience could be based on a three-tier risk management framework, as developed by E3G – Third Generation Environmentalism. They need to be based first and foremost on a credible climate policy at home. Every degree of global warming that is avoided reduces the severity of climate impacts and the amount of resilience-building required. Thus, the EU needs to both implement its commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement and develop more ambitious domestic decarbonisation efforts for the future. The Paris Agreement lowered the politically agreed threshold of global warming from 2°C to 1.5°C, which should prompt the EU to increase its own climate ambition. The most important lever to make use of is the 2014 domestic commitment to lower GHG emissions by 'at least 40%' (compared to 1990) by 2030. A mere 40% is not enough to decarbonise the European economy by the middle of the century and undermines the EU's international efforts in both climate diplomacy and in building resilience.

The second element for a domestic climate resilience strategy involves preparing, building and budgeting for a scenario with a 3-4°C increase in average global temperatures. This is essential because the inherent uncertainty in climate predictions means that the world might cross the 1.5°C or 2°C thresholds even if ambitious measures are taken to reduce emissions. If a country does not aim to limit climate change as much as possible while also planning for more extreme scenarios, it might be caught off guard by increasingly severe extreme weather events and climate-related security challenges.

Furthermore, a climate resilience framework needs to include contingency plans for a 5-7°C scenario. In such a scenario, the physical adaptation and climate-proofing of critical infrastructure will be insufficient. In a 5-7°C world, entire cities will be flooded and whole stretches of land will become uninhabitable. The EU thus needs to develop a robust set of contingency plans, including disaster response mechanisms such as resettlement programmes and readily available emergency funds.

The required work to develop a system to manage climate risk and build climate resilience has to include decision-makers from different sectors and a range of government departments at all levels of governance. Although this is a daunting challenge for the EU with its complex multi-level governance structure, the task will be insurmountable in many other countries to the south and the east if the Union does not take a more active role in building resilience there.

POSSIBLE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

When it comes to the EU's international role in building climate resilience, the most important task will be to make use of its credibility and weight in international climate diplomacy. The outcomes of the US elections and the UK's Brexit referendum have made climate diplomacy much more challenging. The US will no longer broker international coalitions for climate ambition and Brexit will likely weaken the EU's domestic climate policy, as well as its international engagement. Yet, for economic and security reasons, it is in the EU's interest to stay in the game and strengthen the implementation and further development of the Paris Agreement.

The EU also needs to integrate climate resilience into existing regional stabilisation strategies and investments by European institutions. An important instrument will be the EU's European External Investment Plan (EEIP) to encourage investment in Africa and the EU's neighbourhood. It aims to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and thereby also tackle the root causes of migration. By focusing on resilience in addition to jobs and growth, the EEIP can systematically address other potential instability drivers such as exposure to energy and water shocks.

A further priority should be to support the integration of climate resilience at the UN level. For instance, the EU and its member states could join forces to promote food security on the international agenda. The current famines in South Sudan and Somalia demonstrate how devastating conflict coupled with climate-related droughts can be. And such events will only become more frequent. The current too-little-too-late approach to international disasters must become more proactive and effective to deal with these challenges. Given the 'America First' approach of the new US administration, which will result in weaker US leadership and reduced funding for UN bodies and foreign aid, the EU needs to step up its game.

The main fields where the EU can be supportive in building state and societal resilience in the context of climate impacts are aid programming and partnerships for building resilience. Importantly, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) with its €15.4 billion budget can contribute to supporting countries outside the EU in their efforts. Another valuable model for cooperation could be the Rockefeller Foundation's Global Resilience Partnership.

In order to promote climate resilience the EU needs to deploy the full range of its diplomatic, technical and financial resources, both to build a climate risk management framework at home and to support its neighbours in the south and the east to do the same. As the EUGS suggests, '[m]irroring security sector reform efforts, energy and environmental sector reform policies can assist partner countries along a path of energy transition and climate action.'



6. Gerald Stang

Senior Associate Analyst . EUISS

As the planet warms over the coming decades, not all regions will be affected equally. While temperatures will continue rising globally, some regions will see larger changes than others, and impacts on weather and rainfall will vary significantly. Unfortunately for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), this entire region is predicted to be hit badly, becoming significantly hotter and drier. Because the MENA region is already the most water-stressed region on earth, there is real potential for major social, economic and political consequences. It will thus be important to understand the nature and likelihood of the potential climate risks for the region so that appropriate responses can be developed, including efforts to improve resilience.

CLIMATE FRAGILITY RISKS

The report 'A New Climate for Peace', commissioned by the G7 group of countries in 2015, outlined a typology of seven global climate fragility risks – potential mechanisms by which climate impacts could translate into increased fragility: (1) local resource competition; (2) livelihood insecurity and migration; (3) weather events and disasters; (4) volatile food prices and provision; (5) trans boundary water management; (6) sea level rise and coastal degradation; (7) unintended effects of climate policies.

Two examples highlight how these risks can play out. In 2008, a spike in global food prices led to riots in many countries, including in Egypt, forcing the government to react quickly with emergency measures as it sought to import more wheat and manage unrest at home. A second and far more serious example is of the ongoing war in Syria. A years-long drought beginning in 2006 pushed large numbers of rural workers from dry fields into dry cities, becoming one contributing factor in the wider social unrest that led to the 2011 protests against the regime, and eventually to war. The drought was, of course, only one additional stress factor in a country burdened by political cleavages, economic stagnation, a demographic explosion, the repression of peaceful dissent, and the rise of violent jihadism.

Climate fragility risks are likely to be especially problematic for MENA countries due to three factors. First, water plays a central role in most of these risks, and the region already struggles to manage water scarcity. Second, on current demographic and economic trends, much of the region will have many more years of difficulty ahead to provide meaningful employment for their burgeoning populations. Third, the largely autocratic governments of the region have not earned

good reputations for effective long-term planning or for nimble responsiveness to economic, political, or environmental challenges.

These last two factors (demographics/economics and governance) are important for understanding the low climate resilience of the region. In terms of demographics, birth rates have dropped significantly, but as this plunge occurred relatively recently, the consequences of higher birth rates in the previous generations will be felt for a couple more decades. In terms of economics, only some of the Gulf states have been able to take significant (oil-funded) steps toward creating diverse and flexible economies. For the other countries in the region, improving the economic prospects for their countries and their citizens will be a tough challenge, but essential for improving social and state resilience.

The first factor listed above (water scarcity) is a particular challenge due to its connection with a related issue: food security. Most water use across the MENA region, as in the rest of the world, is dedicated to agriculture. As the majority of food consumed in the region is imported, however, efforts to increase domestic food production have taken priority. Yet these efforts have increasingly involved overpumping of limited groundwater and bringing marginal lands into production, with similar results: long-term environmental damage without sufficient increases in production to stay ahead of rapidly growing demand. With population growth rates continuing to soar, groundwater levels dropping precipitously, and no more arable land to expand to, increased food imports will be unavoidable as the region heats up. One widely publicised response involves buying or renting agricultural land abroad – but while some projects continue along these lines, the economic and political costs (including in the countries leasing/selling the land) has limited the growth of this practice.

IMPROVING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In seeking to improve the resilience of states and societies to climate impacts, not all areas that deserve attention are directly related to climate change. Building diverse, sustainable economies and responsive governance systems will be essential. Improvements to climate resilience will thus involve some actions specifically related to the likely climate impacts, but may be most effective when embedded in a wider risk and resilience framework that addresses more than just climate risks.

Responding to those risks that are climate-specific will require a particular focus on three areas: food, water and livelihoods. Improved food security can be facilitated through better management of reserve food stocks, improving local access to markets, and reducing trade barriers related to foodstuffs. To help improve water security, MENA countries will need to develop integrated water management systems that can take into account changing resource availability, climate impacts and population needs. This will be an important technical and political challenge for countries that must juggle different domestic interests. And special efforts will be needed to manage

the transition away from water-intensive livelihoods (notably in the agriculture sector) for millions of people, especially in those countries with the largest portion of the population working with agricultural methods that rely on rainfall or groundwater withdrawals (notably Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, and Syria).

In terms of the role played by the international community, the New Climate for Peace report outlines three main fields of action: climate change adaptation programmes to help countries prevent, minimise, and respond to climate impacts; development aid to help states and societies improve economic, governance and social capacities; and peace building and conflict prevention programmes to help address other drivers of fragility and conflict.

As the MENA region becomes drier in the years ahead, work across these three fields will need to become increasingly interconnected, such as by embedding support for climate resilience throughout development aid programmes, and ensuring that conflict sensitivity is integrated into climate change adaptation programmes. The EU has begun to prioritise climate issues, and resilience in particular, in its development and humanitarian aid programmes. The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) highlights the challenge of improving resilience in the countries in its neighbourhood, and states that ‘Climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate potential conflict, in light of their impact on desertification, land degradation, and water and food scarcity.’ The EU has developed an Action Plan for Resilience in Conflict Prone Countries, supports efforts to improve resilience in the least developed countries via the Global Climate Change Alliance plus (GCCA+) and runs two regional resilience programmes in Africa. Expanding on these efforts with MENA countries will require difficult choices about working through regional, sub-regional or bilateral programmes.

In terms of funding, most climate finance goes to mitigation (reducing carbon emissions) rather than climate adaptation. While mitigation finance is generally directed toward energy investments, and can more easily attract private capital, improving climate resilience generally involves investment in fields that have historically been the domain of governments. It will thus be important to encourage innovative investment vehicles that can harness both public and private money for adaptation and resilience. Worth noting is the European Investment Bank’s Crisis Response and Resilience Initiative that seeks to build resilience and create job opportunities in the southern neighbourhood by funding infrastructure and the private sector.

Unfortunately, a significant amount of climate change is already ‘locked in’ so that even should global greenhouse gas emissions drop rapidly (a fantastical scenario), severe climate impacts may still be expected. Just as important as improving climate resilience, therefore, will be efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions to help reduce the severity of the potential risks.



7. Erwin van Veen

Senior Research Fellow . Clingendael

The European Union's Global Strategy (EUGS) identifies 'state and societal resilience to our East and South' as one of its five objectives. At the same time refreshing and mundane, intriguing and wearying, the notion of 'resilience' merits further inquiry as to what its application means in a foreign policy context. This link is not immediately obvious as the concept originates from the study of social-ecology and the world of disaster risk reduction.

HAECKEL MEETS MONNET

Even a cursory reading of the relevant bits of the EUGS offers two insights on what it means by the notion of resilience. The first insight is that resilience tends to be juxtaposed with 'fragility' as two sides of the same coin. For example: 'The EU will support different paths to resilience..., focusing on the most acute dimensions of fragility'. This is somewhat surprising if fragility is understood as a state of affairs and resilience as the quality of response to adverse events. After all, adverse events occur more easily in a state of fragility as it is typically characterised by fundamental disagreements about the exercise of public authority and the distribution of public resources in a context of institutional immaturity. Resilience would merely denote the ability of states or societies to restore the *status quo ante*.

The second insight is that a range of pre-existing policy problems and responses are simply re-labelled under the label of 'resilience'. This includes building institutional trust, stimulating democratisation, leveraging the EU's power of attraction (e.g. greater trade and connectivity), promoting a plural civil society, and creating opportunities for education and exchange. Cloaking such potentially transformative processes in the passive-neutral language of resilience is unlikely to fool the EU's more adversarial neighbours. Nevertheless, it does help framing this plank of the global strategy as a benign effort to extend the EU's soft power into its neighbourhood. It provides a pleasant balance to the more hard-power-oriented security language under other objectives.

In sum, it would appear that the notion of resilience in the EUGS points to an old political problem: what to do with the countries in the EU's neighbourhood that are generally less developed and more insecure? But it is also an innovative addition which is compatible with the EU's organisational culture, institutional logic and, it should be added, lack of hard-power capabilities.

Be that as it may, of greater interest is the fact that introducing the notion of resilience into EU parlance makes it possible to borrow insights from social-ecology that can enrich EU foreign

policy thinking and practice. It also enables an honest review of evidence accumulated under predecessor policy concepts, such as statebuilding and stabilisation.

Originating from the study of social-ecology, the notions ‘maintaining diversity and redundancy’, ‘encouraging learning’ and ‘managing slow variables’ are surprisingly applicable to foreign policy. Resilience in ecological systems refers to their ‘ability to persist and maintain stability in the face of change’. Paradoxically, in dynamic environments, stability requires constant adaptation. This makes ‘maintaining diversity and redundancy’ essential because it multiplies the number of available pathways. In the context of EU foreign policy, this notion points to the need of maintaining a diverse portfolio of engagement with the state, civil society, educational institutes and faith-based organisations, as well as to the need of resisting any temptation of ‘picking winners’. Instead, initiatives ought to focus on enabling conditions for growing the quality of governance and the economy. Such thinking also features strongly in the literature on transitions from autocracy to democracy, which says that specific events, junctures and behaviours of given agents are close to impossible to predict, but that enabling conditions can be identified.

Ecological thinking on resilience also puts a premium on ‘continuous learning’ as this facilitates adaptation to environmental changes. After all, the nature and speed of change must be understood in order to adapt successfully. In foreign policy terms, this suggests that the EU must create much better analytical capabilities for political economy analysis, and thoroughly revise its approach to much of its programming as this tends to be cumbersome and slow. Greater emphasis on adaptive programming is warranted, i.e. programming that is based on a broad objective, develops experimentally and mobilises resources flexibly. Its case has been solidly made by the OECD, World Bank and USAID alike, but implementation is hard. Yet, it would help spending the billions in the European Development Fund and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument to better effect.

Finally, ‘managing slow variables’ denotes how gradual change in key factors can reach tipping points with transformational impact on entire ecological systems. Consider the long-term effect of a steady accumulation of heavy metals on maritime populations. In foreign policy terms, this amounts to patient engagement with a society to understand it and to build relations across groups of stakeholders. Such an approach to resilience is far apart from the hectic world of crisis management. It is also suited to the EU’s longevity and technical capabilities. In practice, it would equate to putting in place solid and unsexy initiatives that span a decade-plus to bring about external versions of achievements like Erasmus or the single European payments area.

In short, if notions from the study of ecology are used in the operationalisation of resilience in the context of the EU’s global strategy, real gains could be made. These include balancing the EU’s engagement with fragile societies in its neighbourhood beyond the state-society dichotomy, increasing the effectiveness of EU programming, and endowing EU foreign policy initiatives with greater staying power. Such improvements are worthwhile.

Equally, there are a number of pitfalls to avoid when operationalising resilience. These have been learned the hard way during decades of statebuilding and stabilisation. The essential one is that societal development is a largely endogenous process in which outsiders, such as the EU in its neighbourhood, usually play a marginal role. Hence, explicit external efforts at social engineering typically do not end well. The examples of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya or Somalia spring to mind.

In addition, in truly fragile societies, neither a Western-style democracy nor the rule of law are achievable ingredients of resilience in the short to medium term. This is relevant to places like Syria and Libya. It has become clear that the social conditions and political texture required for the successful implementation of these concepts cannot be leapfrogged in the same way as fixed telephone networks. To paraphrase Huntington, it is not the nature of government that matters, but the degree of governance it provides.

Finally, the hybridity and informality of economy and governance in many fragile societies needs positive re-evaluation from the perspective of the diversity and learning that can increase resilience. This is because promoting resilience necessitates difficult trade-offs. For example, addressing terrorism in a given neighbouring country may require working with the same state which undertakes the repression that stimulates terrorism. Looking beyond the state can help and hybridity of governance is likely to be part of the solution instead of the problem. In contrast, the prevailing focus on (market-)efficiency offers a much less helpful paradigm for building societal resilience since it assumes an optimal state can be identified to serve as yardstick.

On balance, using the notion of resilience as a foreign policy priority offers no escape from normative dilemmas – resilience for whom and to achieve what? – but it does offer fresh language and the possibility to avoid mistakes of the past. As with any policy, the key is whether its implementation enables operational change beyond the paper of the EUGS.



II. SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURS



8. Florence Gaub

Senior Analyst . EUISS

While conflict itself is a traumatic and painful experience, successfully emerging from it is no less difficult. In fact, conflict is most likely to break out where it had just occurred: nearly half of all countries which survive internal strife will resume fighting within five years. The reason for this is that conflict creates the perfect conditions for more conflict: experienced, armed fighters, weakened state structures, dire economic conditions and numerous grievances all contribute to conflict relapse. When speaking about conflict resilience, therefore, recovery is just as important as prevention. While all states in the Middle East and North Africa worry about potential conflicts emerging, four particular counties are facing the even more daunting task of conflict recovery: Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION

There are essentially four elements to resilient recovery from conflict: mechanisms to de-conflict before antagonisms reach breaking point; mechanisms for reconciliation; security sector reform; and economic recovery.

Mechanisms to curb conflict before it becomes a full-blown war exist in nearly all societies, but are particularly important in the highly volatile immediate environment of post-conflict states. Not only are the stakes here higher, the prevalence of weapons and armed groups mean that the resumption of hostilities can be triggered even by small incidents – in part, because the aforementioned mechanisms have broken down before or during the conflict. De-conflicting mechanisms can take many different shapes, but they all have an information-sharing element in common. Simply put, they act as an early warning system in which representatives of conflict stakeholders voice their concerns over a matter before it escalates. Whether local councils, parliaments, hotlines (such as the Washington-Moscow ‘red telephone’ during the Cold War) or regular meetings, they all contribute to potential early de-conflicting. Currently, Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen do not have institutionalised provisions for such a structured exchange. There are, of course, negotiations ongoing in Yemen, Syria and Libya, but while they act as an incubator, they are of a temporary nature. Instead, provisions need to be made for a structured, regular exchange among conflict parties even after the conflict’s end. Parliament, once elected, can become a de-conflicting mechanism – but not if significant time elapses between a conflict’s end and elections, nor if it is boycotted or access to it is difficult for security reasons, such as happened in Iraq. In this case, other mechanisms will have to fill this gap, perhaps hosted by a neutral arbiter such as the United Nations.

Reconciliation, albeit a buzzword in post-conflict terms, is *de facto* a process nearly never practised in the Middle East and North Africa. Whether in Libya, Iraq, Lebanon or Algeria, violent episodes have been usually met with either lustration or amnesty laws. Elements of reconciliation – whether by means of justice, healing programmes, truth commissions or reparations – have been entirely sidelined. The problem with omitting reconciliation is that it undermines the prospects for sustainable peace: just because a deal has been negotiated between leaders, local grievances among communities involved in the conflict do not necessarily disappear. Interaction between these communities will therefore be one of cold peace and their cooperation in the new political set-up will be limited. Although reconciliation mechanisms can clearly contribute to reducing conflict relapse probability, none of the current ongoing negotiations in Libya, Syria or Yemen include reconciliation aspects. In Iraq, several parties – ranging from the United Nations to the National Alliance – have relaunched initiatives aimed at a national settlement resulting in Iraqi reconciliation, but these were all structural rather than political or communal in nature. Ultimately, a comprehensive reconciliation process does not merely (re)distribute power but includes mechanisms.

SECURITY AND THE ECONOMY

Security is perhaps the trickiest dimension of post-conflict environments; after all, as war is fundamentally a security phenomenon, the area that emerges most fractured by it is the security sector. Features common to post-conflict security sectors, *inter alia*, include the proliferation of weapons among civil society, the prevalence of improvised explosive devices and mines in civilian areas, weak military forces, the erosion of civil security (e.g. prosecution of crimes), and non-state actors acting outside of the law and with impunity. Reforming post-conflict security is consequently notoriously difficult and ranges from the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of fighters (DDR) to mine clearance, to the securing of weapons' stocks, and the reform of state institutions such as the ministries of defence and interior, oversight bodies and internal and external security actors.

Crucially, distrust permeates the post-conflict environment and hence impedes disarmament. The presence of a foreign security force can facilitate the disarmament process – in the absence of such a force, societal consensus needs to be particularly strong, such as in Lebanon in 1990, or conflict resumption is likely. In Libya, failed security sector reform – particularly DDR – stands at the centre of its post-Gaddafi troubles. In Syria and Yemen, provisions for post-war security are tainted by the sorry state of security agents before the conflicts even broke out. In Iraq, the responsibility for the fight against Daesh likewise fell onto an institution which was already struggling, leading to the implosion of the Iraqi military in Mosul. In all of these cases, security sector reform will require a long-term commitment by all national and international actors, and be undertaken comprehensively rather than piecemeal. Prospects for this are dim, however: the region

has never experienced successful and integrated reform in this sector. Instead, past attempts at improving security were generally limited to the acquisition of new weaponry, the legalisation of non-state actors, and the absorption of militiamen into military ranks.

Lastly, difficult economic conditions are not just a regular side-effect of war and conflict, but contribute to renewed violence. The reason for this is that hostilities generally disrupt regular civilian economic activities such as agriculture and trade; at the same time, the implosion of state bodies create the perfect conditions for parallel structures, whether in the shape of war-lords or corrupt officials who develop monopolies, inflate prices and restrict civilian economic activities. The physical destruction of infrastructure, be it roads, railways or telecommunications networks, further inhibits regular economic life. In addition, rentier-states like Yemen, Libya and Iraq (and to a lesser extent Syria) generally have little civilian economic engagement as the state relies nearly entirely on oil for its income. But if such a state cannot produce or sell oil because of ongoing hostilities, the environment is even more conducive to conflict. In Libya, access to oil revenue has been a central element to the conflict – in fact, large numbers of militia fighters are paid by the state. Liberalising these economies to diversify state income sources has been a World Bank agenda for decades; but for these measures to take hold, not only is a stable government necessary but one which is committed to (at times) unpopular reform.

Given the current circumstances, the prospects for lasting peace for any of the four states experiencing conflict in the Middle East and North Africa are, sadly, bleak: while they will eventually emerge from conflict, their resilience to relapsing into violence will be very weak indeed.



9. Jane Harrigan

Professor of Economics . SOAS, University of London

The MENA region does not suffer from high levels of food insecurity at the micro level, i.e. in terms of individual food insecurity. But at the macro level, i.e. the ability of states to secure enough food to meet national needs, it is the most food-insecure region in the world. Most MENA countries import 20-50% of the calories they consume and the region is the biggest importer of cereal by world region. This makes the MENA highly vulnerable to events in global food markets as illustrated by the 2007-2008 and 2011 global food crises when international food prices skyrocketed.

Drivers of fragile macro food insecurity include, on the demand side, a rapid growth of population, high income growth, and changing consumption patterns towards dairy and meat products. On the supply side, domestic food production has not kept pace with the growth in demand. Decades of policy neglect of agriculture, growing water stress, the impact of climate change, along with urbanisation, and the encroachment of agricultural land, have all contributed to stagnant agricultural productivity in many countries. The growing food gap caused by demand increasingly outpacing supply meant that over recent decades the region has become more reliant on food imports.

The above-described fragility has led to economic, social and political problems, particularly since the global food crises. A long tradition of universal food subsidies in many countries means that rising costs of food imports not only strain the balance of payments but also lead to unsustainable fiscal pressures in the resource-poor countries. Socially, although less than 5% of the MENA population live below the \$1.25 poverty line, many live just above it and in most countries the poor spend between 35-65% of their income on food. It has been estimated that the 2007-2008 global food crisis added an extra 4 million malnourished people to the region. Along with the second global food crisis of 2010-2011 this played a role in triggering the Arab uprisings – one of the slogans chanted by demonstrators was ‘bread, freedom and justice’.

DOMESTIC STRATEGIES

In dealing with the above challenges, MENA countries have three main options: to increase domestic food production, i.e. aiming for greater self-sufficiency; to continue to rely on international food markets for imports but to make this trade-based food security strategy more efficient; or to acquire land in water- and labour-abundant third countries to directly secure their food needs. Following the 2007-2008 food crisis, many countries have revised their food security strategies to place greater emphasis on domestic food production, including cereal production.

However, in water-scarce countries this is often a sub-optimal use of scarce resources and the potential to increase agricultural output is limited. Land acquisition has largely been confined as a response to the richer Gulf states and has attracted controversy in terms of its impact on host countries. Although the trade-based response is the one most favoured by the international community and many scholars, it has become less attractive to many governments in the region who have become acutely aware of their vulnerabilities to events in global food markets since 2007-2008. Within the region there is an emerging focus on 'food sovereignty' at the macro level which places emphasis on power and control over national food supplies via domestic production and land acquisition despite the economic and resource cost.

At the micro level of household and individual food security domestic potential exists to reform social safety net policy, for example replacing untargeted food subsidies with targeted subsidies which are less fiscally costly and better reach the poor and improved poverty mapping to identify the food-insecure in need of safety net assistance.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

The EU and the international community can assist in all of the above strategies. Enhancing domestic agricultural production should focus not just on food production but the sector more generally. This requires the normal panoply of agricultural development projects, but with a particular focus on marginal and vulnerable farmers such as women-headed households, those in rain-fed areas, pastoralists and landless farm labourers. Such assistance will enhance food security in three ways: it will boost food production for local consumption; it will enhance the incomes of the rural poor to enable improved food purchases; and it will promote agricultural exports to generate foreign exchange to purchase food imports. In the latter respect the EU has a crucial role. It is one of the principal markets for agricultural exports from the MENA, especially for fruits, vegetables and tree crops that comparative advantage suggests the MENA should specialise in (as opposed to the more water-intensive production of cereals). But MENA countries face barriers penetrating the EU markets, especially non-tariff barriers relating to phytosanitary and other standards. EU market liberalisation and technical assistance to help MENA exporters comply is much needed to create a level playing field.

The international community can assist with the trade-based approach to food security not only by opening up markets to MENA exports, but also via assistance to facilitate a more efficient process of food importation. This can range from: capacity building to help governments and private contractors take forward and hedge positions in global food markets; assistance for better monitoring of domestic food market conditions to improve food import planning (the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) is well placed to assist in this respect); and improving the logistics of food importation which is particularly weak in the MENA via

infrastructure development i.e. the facilitation of port clearing, reduction in bureaucracy and transportation improvements.

At the micro level of food security, the international community can provide assistance with the reform of social safety nets and poverty mapping. Social safety nets in the region are excessively orientated towards inefficient universal fuel and food subsidies with high leakage away from the poor. Non-subsidy safety nets such as cash transfers, public works schemes and school feeding programmes are both under-resourced and fragmented. This is despite global evidence that cash transfer programmes are one of the most effective safety nets in terms of poverty reduction and enhancing food security.

At the state level the priority should be to devise a comprehensive food and nutrition strategy which encompasses the above policy elements plus more. Since 2007-2008 many MENA countries have embarked on this (e.g. Jordan with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Yemen with assistance from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and currently Palestine with assistance from World Food Programme). Building resilience against the increasing deleterious impact of climate change on local agriculture, tackling the demographic challenges which have contributed to the ever-widening food import gap and addressing the socio-economic stresses associated with growing water scarcity are also priorities.

Building social resilience will be harder. It requires tackling food insecurity, poverty and marginalisation by moving beyond reforming food security strategies and social safety nets. This necessitates a holistic approach to pro-poor inclusive growth, with a focus on addressing the region's acute unemployment problem especially amongst youth. The old model of economic liberalisation, promoted by the international community, which contributed to crony capitalism and increased inequality of opportunity will need to be replaced by a more nuanced approach with social resilience as its core objective.



10. Farzaneh Roudi

Former Program Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) . Population Reference Bureau

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is the most arid region in the world and home to the world's largest refugee population; yet its population is growing faster than the world average, exacerbating its fragility. In fact, five out of seven indicators used in calculating the Human Resilience Index (HRI) are based on population growth and age structure: population growth rate, population density, median age, per capita renewable freshwater, and per capita arable land. The other two indicators included in HRI are caloric intake per capita and population health, including infant and child mortality and life expectancy. Researchers at Sandia National Laboratories, operated for the United States Department of Energy, developed HRI as a measure to project countries' risk of instability, conflict, or some other type of state failure because of their poor human ecology.

DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

MENA's rate of natural population increase (births minus deaths) is higher than the world average, because MENA's population is younger, its fertility is higher, and its mortality lower (especially among infants) than in most other regions. In 2016, the world population grew by 1.2% – a rate half of that of Egypt's, the most populous country in the region. The highest rates of natural increase are seen in Iraq and Palestine (2.8%), Yemen (2.6%), and Egypt (2.5%). In absolute numbers, however, because of its large population (93.5 million in 2016), Egypt is adding more people to its population than any other country in the region: its population is expected to reach nearly 122 million by 2030.

Ironically, these countries experiencing the fastest rates of population growth in the region are the least equipped to meet the basic needs of their citizens. Moreover, the ongoing conflicts and civil wars in parts of the region further drain resources that otherwise could be spent on development and public health.

The highest rates of fertility are seen in Iraq and Yemen, where maternal and infant mortality rates are also the highest. Palestine's and Jordan's population are among the youngest in the region, with 40% and 37% of their population under age 15, respectively. On the other hand, in Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey, where fertility has dropped to below or close to the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman, 25% of the population is below age 15 – this figure is 16% for Europe mainly because of its longer history of having below-replacement fertility rates.

According to the UN population projections, the percentage of the elderly population (65+) in Iran is expected to increase from 5% in 2015 to 10% by 2030 and to 22% by 2050; and in Lebanon, from 8% in 2015 to 14% by 2030 and to 23% by 2050. If a country's fertility remains below replacement level, it will eventually experience population decline (in the absence of immigration). Iran's population, however, is set to continue to grow for some decades in the future, because of its high fertility in the near past and because those born during the baby-boom era of the 1980s are now having families of their own. In contrast, the population of Lebanon is going to start declining in the next decade or so in the absence of net immigration. Both Lebanon and Iran have a history of losing some of their young and educated population who migrate abroad while at the same time hosting large numbers of refugees – mainly from Palestine and Syria in the case of Lebanon and from Afghanistan and Iraq in the case of Iran – who can help boost their future population growth, if the countries choose to integrate the refugees into their societies and grant them citizenship. Turkey is home to the largest Syrian refugee population.

INTERPLAY BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

The MENA region stands out from other world regions not only because of its large refugee population but also because it is the driest. The demand for water resources rises as population pressures in the region increase, making it increasingly challenging for countries to secure the amount of freshwater that they need to sustain people's health, food production, and economic development. In all MENA countries, except for Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, the available renewable freshwater falls below 1,000 cubic metres per person per year – a threshold usually used to define a country as 'water-scarce'. In Kuwait, the most water-scarce country in the world, the available renewable freshwater is down to a single digit of cubic metres per person per year, and it is below 100 cubic metres per person per year in countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen. Saudi Arabia and UAE, oil-rich countries with high per capita income, can afford desalination plants or importing freshwater more easily than Yemen. More than half of the desalination plants in the world are located in the Arabian Peninsula. Desalination plants can however become an easy target in times of war. Moreover, competition to gain access to scarce freshwater sources can lead to conflicts between countries and between communities within countries.

In Iran, the impact of water scarcity would have been more severe if the country had not made the effort to rein in its rapid population growth in the 1990s. During the 1980s, Iran's rate of natural increase was among the highest in the world at more than 3% a year. In fact, in 1990, Egypt and Iran had a similar population size – 56 million, according to the UN Population Division. Because of its higher fertility level, Iran had a younger population; the median age in Iran was 17, and 20 in Egypt. Then, Iran's fertility rate declined rapidly, but not so in Egypt. The median age

in Iran is 30 and it is expected to rise to 38 by 2030, while Egypt's median age is expected to rise by only 1 year, rising to 26. Today, Egypt's population is the size of Iran plus Lebanon and Libya, and its young population gives further momentum to demographic growth. Population pressures on Egypt's fragile environment and economy are evident.

Because of its geopolitical importance, Egypt has generally been seen over the years as 'too big to fail' and governments and international organisations, both inside and outside the region, including Europe and especially the US, have been pouring in money to help sustain its economy and create jobs for its young and fast-growing labour force. But, given the speed at which its population is currently growing, Egypt is clearly facing acute socio-economic challenges ahead.

In contrast, slower population growth helped Iran to face its environmental and economic challenges on its own while under international economic sanctions, thus strengthening its resilience.

With the opening up of its relationship with Iran, the EU can seize the opportunity to document the Iranian experience with its medical education and healthcare systems (Iran's primary healthcare system is recognised as a model by the World Health Organisation) and its successful family planning programme undertaken in the 1990s – an effort that is long overdue. The EU can also sponsor field trips to Iran for health expert and planners, with the idea of better equipping them for building a strong, universal primary healthcare system in their own countries. Countries such as Egypt, Iraq, and Yemen, as well as other countries both inside and outside the region, could benefit from learning about innovative aspects of Iran's primary healthcare system. In short, a well-functioning primary healthcare system is essential for communities and nations to improve citizens' health (especially that of mothers and children), slow population growth and build resilience.



11. Dimitrios Triantaphyllou

Head of International Relations Department . Kadir Has University, Istanbul

The term ‘resilience’ or the very act of resilience itself is not necessarily new in Turkey. The reason for this is that Turkey has had a heightened sense of threat perception for many decades which permeates both its domestic and external agendas – though principally tied to the former. This in itself explains the resilience both of the country and of its public to a variety of issues, and, as a consequence, the difficulty in finding common ground with much of the international community.

THE SECURITISATION OF DEMOCRACY

The current setting is telling. The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) describes ‘resilience’ as a concept ‘encompassing all individuals and the whole of society. A resilient society featuring democracy, trust in institutions and sustainable development lies at the heart of a resilient state.’ There is much talk in today’s Turkey (especially from the pro-government camp) that the country has defended democracy in the aftermath of the attempted coup of 15 July 2016; that it is in the process of cleansing its institutions of members of ‘FETO’, an organisation linked to the reclusive Muslim preacher and until 2013 Erdogan ally, Fetullah Gülen; and that the country as a middle-income developing country has not only met many of its sustainable development benchmarks during a period of sustained economic growth but has also made efforts to address the challenges of inequality and education.

Nevertheless, in the Turkish context, the notion of resilience primarily caters to the defence of democracy against all, real or imagined, enemies and threats. It also focuses on the linkage between democracy and peace through the idea that no true democracy can come about in the country without the latter. In other words, the staple guiding adage first uttered in 1931 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the republic’s founder, of ‘Peace at Home, Peace in the World’ still resonates today, as if the nation-building exercise the country embarked upon in the early 1920s has yet to find its place in today’s world.

The new discourse that is being expounded on the back of the post-15 July coup attempt environment suggests that democracy is at risk and needs to be protected and fortified. The question is: how compatible is the Turkish democracy that is being propounded with the form that the EU and its member states, as per Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, endorse. Thus, for the pro-Erdogan side, the resilience of democracy and its consolidation is a victory against the establishment which had allowed for repeated interventions by the military since the country had become a multi-party democracy in 1950.

The problem for others is twofold. First, the ‘protection’ of Turkey’s democracy has come about with successive declarations of a state of emergency in an attempt to cleanse the state and its institutions from Gülenist infiltration. In juxtaposition to the discourse of consolidation, though, other actors seem to have been targeted as well, including a number of academics that signed a petition in January 2016 calling for the government’s return to the negotiating table with Kurdish militants after full-scale fighting erupted again in July 2015 in the country’s southeast when a two-year old truce failed to hold. In fact, many of these are either leftists or liberals that had traditionally struggled against the excesses of the establishment and were natural allies of the AKP in its ascent to power and its early years in government.

Second, the normative elements of Turkish democracy under the AKP, with its emphasis on Islam and Islamist values and making these mainstream, have compounded the West’s understanding as to whether Turkey and the EU are on the same page regarding the definition of democracy. While many scholars have attempted in recent years to explore the compatibility between Islam and democracy in the Turkish context, the secularist principles that have defined the country since its founding in 1923, and which had the support of its secular establishment and institutions for decades, seem inadequate to handle the evolution of Turkey’s perennial process of democratisation and its mutations to include Islam.

THE NATIONALISM EFFECT

The aforementioned debates regarding the country’s democratisation (or lack thereof) exist within a constant context of securitisation or a heightened sense of threat that the nation faces and has faced historically. This in itself allows for a ‘rally round the flag’ effect or, in other words, the persistence of high levels of nationalism which form the backbone of a national consensus even in today’s polarised political setting. The recognition of FETO, the PKK (the Kurdistan’s Workers Party), and Daesh as national security threats overshadows or takes precedence over whether the country’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with his plans to establish a presidential system, is in fact consolidating the ‘democratic’ state or his power base or both. Thus, the (in)compatibility between Turkish nationalism and democracy is difficult for Western elites to discern perhaps due to fundamental differences in mindsets.

Similarly, in the foreign policy realm, this nationalism can explain the vacillations between a Turkey firmly entrenched in the West (via its membership in NATO and its commitment to the pursuit of EU membership) and the ‘civilizational’ discourse of former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu of the country as a regional power guided by its Islamic and Ottoman past. In other words, even in the post-Davutoglu era, the national interest demands a level of pragmatism that implies that the fight against the aforementioned terrorist entities is just as much foreign a policy concern as it is a domestic priority. This perpetuates the notion of Turkish exceptionalism or

the discourse of the 'Sèvres Syndrome' maintained by the carving up of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War or the country's perceived loneliness as a key southern flank state during the Cold War. In short, nationalism is centre stage in the country's foreign policy as well.

A new issue that is also shaping Turkish resilience is the influx of refugees as a direct result of the war in Syria. At last count, Turkey hosts close to 3 million Syrian refugees and the debate has now shifted to their integration into Turkish society. The current levels of political polarisation do not augur well in this regard.

The constant redefinition of the nation-building exercise both at home and abroad implies that the Turkish national interest is closely linked with Turkish nationalism – be it by strategic design or expediency. This, in turn, leads to a deep-seated resilience of Turkish society, one in which national security concerns trump concerns about the quality of Turkish democracy or alliance prerogatives.

This stands in sharp contrast to the type of resilience the EUGS puts forth and which EU member states invariably practice. As a consequence, there is a deep divide between Turkey's inevitable historical emphasis on the securitisation of its 'democratic' resilience and the EU coming to terms with the concept primarily since 11 September 2001. The question herein is whether the perceptions gap between the two can be bridged before the differences in mindsets become unsurmountable. A common front on resilience could be designed, albeit piecemeal between the EU and Turkey. This is, undoubtedly, predicated upon honest debate and dialogue on the narratives of each side towards each other, as well as prioritising the achievable aspects of the agenda such as, for example, tackling the refugee influx to Turkey and European countries together, and focusing on democracy building after the dust from the 16 April constitutional referendum settles.



12. Alex Vines

Head, Africa Programme . Chatham House

In Europe's media Africa often swings from being depicted as either a continent of crisis, famine and migration, or the final frontier of globalisation, new markets and opportunities for business and foreign direct investment (FDI). But reality lies in between as the continent offers both opportunities and risks for Europe. The next EU-Africa summit in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in late November 2017 will focus on both: 'peace and security, development, creating a better future for Africa's youth, migration and the fight against terrorism'.

Africa remains comparatively poor and still sits on the margins of the world economy. 34 of the 48 least-developed countries are in sub-Saharan Africa and although the trade figures between 2002 and 2015 looked impressive (trade with China grew by an average of 24.4% a year, compared to 8.8% with the EU and 6.6% with the US), they grew from a low base. These figures camouflage tremendous variability. What the key exporters have in common is resource extraction and the downturn in commodity prices seriously impacted South Africa's, Nigeria's and Angola's budgets.

Largely as a result of weak commodity prices, Africa's GDP grew by only 1.1% in 2016: the weakest growth in 20 years (the average had been 8% over the past 15 years). According to Moody's, a credit rating agency, the total overall growth of Africa's GDP in 2016 will rise in 2017 to 3.5% – but this is still tepid. The continent desperately needs inclusive, job-creating growth and only sustained annual GDP increases of 8-10% would provide that type of platform. This will require scaled up and diversified businesses, a better skilled labour pool, access to capital and an enabling, globally competitive business environment.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDENDS?

In theory, Africa's demographic outlook is positive: currently at around 1.2 billion, the continent's population will rise to 1.7 billion in 2030 and around 2.5 billion in 2050. But in order to reap the benefits of the 'youth bulge' the labour pool needs to have access to jobs. If the jobs do not materialise, the results could be highly destabilising. Africa's economic performance, expressed in terms of growth in GDP per capita, is less than half that of the South Asian economies, while Africa has over double the number of unemployed.

To capitalise on its youth, Africa needs investment. But while Africa comprises 15% of the world's population, it only receives around 4.4% of total FDI, some \$50-55 billion. Expatriate Africans also send home around \$40 billion a year. But both are still eclipsed by capital flight – especially

in resource-rich economies. Data shows that ordinary Africans invest in Africa, while the very richest Africans, rather too frequently, do not.

In addition, business, especially good business, will not flourish under poor governance. Likewise, state-building is tied to business, via the key linkage of tax – which is central to the social contract between people and their government, and a driver of accountability. But in much of Africa, governments only raise low volumes of tax. Much of the tax demands are perceived as predatory.

Clearly many African governments are handicapped because they have a small tax revenue base. In many cases, those revenues are dominated by resource rents that are also impacted by commodity price volatility. Any attempt to finance or stimulate business growth must be shaped by a deep understanding of the specific national and regional context. But there are a number of common constraints to business, particularly limited access to mid-scale finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), poor infrastructure (especially electricity and roads), a constrained pool of skilled workers, and corruption.

Growth on its own is not enough – diversity in an economy and higher rates of formal employment are key for developing better governance. So how will African states create the economies of scale and achieve that urgently needed inclusive growth? There is no single answer to this. Africa's immense cultural and political variability ensures that the solutions need to be simultaneously regional, local and global. The current economic woes of South Africa, Nigeria and Mozambique are not just about lower commodity prices but also about policy mismanagement. Weather shocks have also played a role as much of Africa is dependent on subsistence and rain-fed agriculture: although with the passing of El Niño there is less drought in southern Africa, more rain, conflict and climate fluctuations have brought drought and famine to parts of Somalia and South Sudan.

COUPS AND ELECTIONS

Governance clearly plays a key role in promoting resilience, too. In 2016 different regional trends were apparent. West Africa stood out with a peaceful transfer of power from the incumbent in Ghana and the first post-independence peaceful transition in Gambia (after a standoff). A regional norm of standing only for two terms is now emerging in West Africa, which differs significantly from central Africa and its Great Lakes region where leaders change constitutions and many seem determined to remain in office in perpetuity. Elections remain moments of tension, and marginal results for incumbents open possible windows for fraud as the opposition claimed in Gabon and Zambia in 2016. Nevertheless, with the exception of Eritrea (which has never held an election), every African country now holds regular elections. But change is slow: in 15 countries the same ruling party has been in power since independence.

An emerging continental norm is that coups are strongly discouraged across the continent. This is a sign of greater stability in large parts of Africa but does not mean the end of social unrest. Military mutinies over poor pay and conditions in 2017 in Côte d'Ivoire are a reminder of this fragility, but further social unrest – especially from urban populations that expect more from their elites – if jobs and services are not improved is likely.

Radical Islamist groups (and others) are feeding off grievances over inequality. These are not homogenous and the root causes of Boko Haram in Nigeria are different from al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its offshoots in the Sahel. Countering radicalisation will be a growing preoccupation in the Horn of Africa, West Africa and along the East African coast. Beyond these areas, the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to require attention – most immediately worrying are Burundi and South Sudan.

Africa's longer-term global competitiveness and resilience will require partnerships with the EU and others in addition to home grown investments. There is a need to think big, which is why Germany's Development Minister has called for a new 'Marshall Plan for Africa' and Germany made Africa a priority of its G20 presidency in 2017. A Marshall Plan is, however, unlikely to succeed given Africa's scale and diversity, and without additional resources, but key priorities should be to improve education, support better infrastructure, good governance and more robust and independent institutions. The EU is a leader on climate change mitigation and can help African governments respond to less predictable and more violent weather patterns and rising sea levels.

The focus on 'youth' at the EU-Africa summit in Abidjan in November 2017 is an important recognition that Africa is ill prepared for its youth bulge, and underemployed and frustrated youth remain an increasing threat to stability. They are also increasingly globally connected and vulnerable to radicalisation at home or tempted to migrate abroad, within Africa but also further afield to Europe and beyond. They also represent Africa's economic future and if invested in, could help make many African economies more competitive and innovative. Over the next 20 years, the African story is likely to be about greater diversity, reducing poverty and some spectacular success stories but equally some failure. An engaged productive youth can help the continent succeed; ignoring them comes with a guarantee of instability.



13. Karen E. Young

Senior Resident Scholar . Arab Gulf States Institute, Washington D.C.

The six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Oman – are in a period of profound change, both economic and social. The economic changes are a long overdue reaction to natural resource revenue dependency in their fiscal policies, while the social changes are a reaction to compounded migration and demographic shifts. The resilience of Gulf political economies will be defined by the ability to change both fiscal governance and policies of inclusion.

THE REFORM (R)EVOLUTION

The resilience of the economic reform agenda, which includes the reduction or termination of subsidies of public goods like water, electricity, and fuel, along with public sector hiring freezes, salary and benefit reductions, depends on societal acceptance of a renegotiation of Gulf citizenship, but also of labour. State-led capitalism in the GCC has left little room for private enterprise, except as service providers like contractors to state infrastructure projects and in the retail and hospitality sectors. Real estate markets and financial sectors are often linked to state interests, as is most industrial production of petrochemicals or metallurgy. Labour markets are dominated by low-wage foreign workers, often men, making women less visible across the spectrum of service sector and professional services employment.

The reform agenda is both a natural evolution away from carbon resource dependency, but also an ideological revolution in rejecting the patriarchal tenet that the state should be the primary source of employment and of social welfare. The shifts in domestic politics are, however, not a revolution in political institutions or to the structure of leadership in the Gulf states. Youthful citizen populations and large migrant labour communities now compete for limited private sector employment and stressed state provisions of services. To reform the economies of the GCC, there will have to be a careful rebalancing of the workforce, and the creation of new workplaces – companies and entities which do not depend on the state. This reform will displace some migrants and discomfort some citizens, who will have to come to terms with a lifestyle with fewer guarantees of state financial support and social safety nets.

Economic resilience is threatened by institutional weaknesses of the GCC political economies. Formal institutional weaknesses include bank sectors that are prone to cyclical risk, connected lending and state pressure for favourable lending to government initiatives. For example, in peri-

ods of high oil and gas prices, domestic banks are flooded with government deposits, which then fund construction and real estate booms. When oil and gas prices decline, lending decreases and banks deposits are low, as non-performing loans mount on their balance sheets. Adding to these cyclical pressures are bank ownership structures that are often closely connected to ruling families, further exposing banks to the non-performing loans of owners and their related business interests. In leaner times, governments have encouraged banks to extend loan repayment options for construction and infrastructure firms (many that are in arrears because they have not been paid for government contract work).

In informal institutions, there are weaknesses in civil society and associational life, or what scholars define as social capital. Because labour cannot organise or form unions in most of the GCC states, and business associations or policy advocacy groups are largely repressed, there are limited entry points to policymaking for the concerns of private sector workers and investors. Furthermore, there is an absence of a policy feedback loop, in which advocacy groups might petition the state for changes to regulatory regimes on a host of issues, from environmental protection to identity-based discrimination.

Economic resilience, in terms of fiscal policy of the Gulf states, will entail difficult choices about prioritising social spending over military expenditure. For the moment, even in the most fiscally constrained states like Oman and Bahrain, military expenditure continues to represent a significant chunk in 2016 and 2017 budgets. Saudi Arabia, however, has recently increased its budget allocation to education above its official military expenditure. The authoritarian state's ability to coerce and repress is directly linked to its fiscal health. Prolonged fiscal crises that hollow out military capacity and the security state often lead to the failure of these regimes, hence governments tend to protect the 'coercive apparatus' even in times of austerity.

Sovereign debt is increasingly a source of weakness, for some Gulf states more than others. While the GCC states have amassed debt issues in the last two years since the decline of oil prices in late 2014, repayment will depend on the ability to generate government revenue apart from oil and gas expected revenues. For a state like Saudi Arabia, non-oil government revenue accounts for less than 20% of expenditure, meaning that most of the money the state spends comes from the export of oil.

STRENGTHS AND POTENTIAL

Sources of strength for the Gulf states are many, including a young and well-educated citizen population, especially among young women. Citizen populations also tend to have a strong sense of nationalism, which Gulf states strive to increase especially through new conscription

programmes for military service. Gulf states, with some variation, have good infrastructure with recent investments in airports, ports and roads over the last decade. The linking of the Gulf through its competing financial centres and free zones has increased the availability of financial services and access to international capital. Internet service and social media are widely used by Gulf populations. In effect, Gulf states have created a strong architecture for growth, investing in higher education, general welfare provisions, and infrastructure for their citizens. Creating the space to let citizens and residents set the pace of economic growth will be the challenge.

Despite the spike in debt issuance, Gulf governments are still in fairly liquid financial positions, in comparison to the recent debt crisis in southern Europe, most are (with the exception of Bahrain) investment grade debt issuers. Access to international capital is plentiful and recent loan and bond issues have found eager investors. For governments like Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, sovereign wealth funds also provide an important reserve asset.

The European Union is faced with a changing Middle East, in which the Gulf states play an increasingly important part, as they are more interventionist in their foreign policies and military engagements in the region. Since 2011 the Gulf states have played an important role in providing in-kind aid in oil and gas, as well as cash injections to struggling central banks (e.g., Egypt) and favourable investment and loan commitments. With their own financial crises, these aid and loan commitments may be less forthcoming. The role of post-conflict reconstruction in Yemen and Syria will depend on Gulf state involvement and finance. Directing policy choices and the implementation of reconstruction efforts will require multilateral coordination. Furthermore, the impact of low-growth Gulf economies will have important implications for migrant communities and remittances in the wider Middle East and South Asia regions. Aid policies from the EU to communities as far as Pakistan, Egypt, Bangladesh and Afghanistan will need to adjust to changed labour markets and growth trajectories in the Gulf.

The European Union policy coordination and collaboration to support economic resilience in the Gulf could include sharing knowledge and practices on financial governance, particularly on how best to implement austerity measures while maintaining systems in place for society's most vulnerable communities. It could also impart lessons learned on maintaining customs unions and systems of economic integration when domestic pressures for fiscal reform compete with trade agreements. Finally, the Union could offer support to civil society organisations and business associations, particularly on issue areas related to renewable energy, small and medium-sized businesses, and efforts to increase women's inclusion in the workplace.



III. EASTERN NEIGHBOURS



14. Dimitar Bechev

Director . European Policy Institute

Although the Western Balkans has come a long way since the turbulence of the 1990s, there is no shortage of challenges facing the region. Despite the recurrent alarmism in the Western media, war among and within states is not an immediate threat. This has been the case for some time, and, following their successive interventions, NATO and the EU should take some credit for this. But perhaps even more importantly, Balkan elites no longer have the means to wage war, nor do they find it as profitable as they did in the period following Yugoslavia's disintegration.

At the same time, political entrepreneurs are ready to exploit lingering grudges as the wounds of Yugoslav disintegration continue to fester. Even if no one is likely to deploy tanks anytime soon in order to redraw existing borders, hate speech, the scapegoating of neighbours and other ethnic groups, and disputes over the past continue to pay political dividends. And opportunistic outsiders such as Russia's President Putin are more than happy to step into the fray in order to score political points against the West.

A FAUSTIAN BARGAIN

The list of Western Balkan problems seems to be getting longer and longer. Although Serbia and Kosovo are committed to the ongoing 'normalisation process' steered by HR/VP Federica Mogherini, progress has stalled since the breakthrough 2013 Brussels Agreement. Recently, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić accused Pristina of seeking to provoke war amid a row over a train painted with the slogan 'Kosovo is Serbia' connecting Belgrade and the divided town of Mitrovica. Now the government in Pristina is pushing to transform the Kosovo Security Force into a full-blown military force, a move which violates the constitution and is opposed by NATO.

Elsewhere, Republika Srpska's (RS) leader Milorad Dodik has been practising brinkmanship for years, threatening to break apart the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). He framed the September 2016 referendum on the entity's 'state holiday' as a prequel to a plebiscite on secession. By rallying Bosnian Serbs to the flag, Dodik has skilfully managed to divert attention away from a series of corruption scandals in which he is implicated.

After a brief honeymoon period under Serbian President Boris Tadić and Croatian President Ivo Josipović, the two main successor states of former Yugoslavia are again trading blows. Zagreb has threatened to block Belgrade's accession talks with the EU, and the two neighbours also appear

to be locked in a small-scale arms race, as Serbian pundits and officials mull how to counter the Croatian military's modernisation after joining NATO. The refugee crisis in 2015-2016 then strained ties even further.

Despite unrest in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, inter-communal relations have remained reasonably stable, though in spring 2015 the country witnessed clashes between ethnic Albanian militants (whose motives and affiliation remain disputed) and the government. Political tensions among the main parties have been mounting since a closely contested election in December 2016, and the crisis is threatening to rekindle inter-communal frictions. Last but not least, Russia is once again accused of meddling in the region's affairs: Moscow's actions range from alleged support of a coup plot in Montenegro to planning the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić.

Although large-scale conflict remains unlikely, the EU has plenty of reasons to worry about the Western Balkans. It is, however, not the spectre of destabilisation but rather the perils of the *status quo* which should be causing concern. The region's politics are presently shaped by 'stabilitocrats', leaders who appear to follow the EU's guidance on foreign policy but would rather avoid addressing tough questions about the quality of democracy at home. Cooperating with the West on select external issues – for example, Serbia's Vučić on Kosovo, Montenegro's Djukanović regarding the sanctions against Russia, or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Gruevski on controlling migration into the EU – stabilitocrats have upped their game of late.

At a time when Europe is buffeted by multiple crises, including the tug-of-war with Russia and the fear of a renewed stream of refugees and asylum-seekers coming from Turkey, there are many across the EU who are willing to accept the offer and trade democratisation for ill-conceived 'stability'. Yet this Faustian bargain, while tempting, only reinforces pre-existing trends related to democratic backsliding. Illiberal regimes are a common feature in the Balkans, with some meeting the minimum criteria to qualify as electoral democracies, while others fall squarely into the competitive authoritarian category.

In such cases, the absence of the rule of law, as well as the lack of government transparency and accountability, is striking. Informal rules – such the domination of the civil service and the wider public sector by whichever party happens to be in charge – trump constitutional norms and laws. The state is beholden to special interests, while the media is beholden to the incumbent government. Like in the times of Milošević and Tudjman, populist strongmen rule almost supreme while the opposition is weak, divided and often co-opted. In countries like BiH or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EU-sanctioned power-sharing arrangements act as a partial check on ambitious leaders. On the flipside, however, they narrow the political space and sectarianise politics by sidelining all other demands which bridge communal divides. In short, the apparent stability merely masks underlying tensions and, over time, catalyses the slow erosion of Western policies in the region.

WHICH PATH TO TAKE?

Is there the domestic potential to address this predicament? Yes, to some degree. It is, however, not party politics but a new generation of civic movements which hold the most promise. From ‘Do Not Let Belgrade D(r)own’, an anti-corruption protest focusing on urban development, to the so-called ‘Colourful Revolution’ in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and to striking workers in BiH, frustration with the political *status quo* is generating a new wave of discontent across the region. Vocal minorities are challenging state capture and putting pressure on governing elites. Similarly to the rest of the world, the success rate of these social movements varies: some have seen established parties harness their energy but dilute their message, but elsewhere, such as in Serbia, protesters have forced established parties to push for clean(er) government. While such pressure from inside the region is a necessary condition for positive change, it is not enough in itself; it has to operate in sync with external anchors. The Romanian example of civic protests to safeguard the rule of law reforms, originally promoted by Brussels, is a case in point.

The EU can therefore proceed in two radically different ways. The first way is to go along with illiberal trends and co-opt power holders, subcontracting them as guardians of a territorial buffer that separates ‘core Europe’ from conflict-ridden areas further afield, notably Syria and Iraq. This is precisely what happened during the refugee crisis of 2015-2016. The more ambitious strategy to build real resilience, however, is not to let stabilitocrats off the hook and to empower the anti-corruption movements across the region. This strategy promises longer-term stabilisation by gradually expanding the rule of law and accountability, and it also complements already existing EU priorities such as the reform of the judiciary. Europe should therefore echo grass-root civil society’s demands. This is, after all, Europe’s natural constituency. If the Union chooses stabilitocrats over reformers, there is a risk that the latter group will, over time, become alienated. A further caveat is that the new wave of civic activists needs symbolic recognition by the EU more than its money. Funding pressure groups only adds credence to incumbents’ allegations that protests serve ulterior motives and are not the authentic voice of ‘the people’.

When reining in stabilitocrats, the EU should not fall for the bluff that it is at risk of losing ground to Russia – or indeed other powers like Turkey and even China. The truth is that flirtation with Moscow is often about maximising leverage *vis-à-vis* Brussels, as opposed to a genuine desire to drop the EU and seek a closer alliance with Russia. Put differently, European decision-makers should not soften democratic conditionality out of fear that a country could dramatically pivot away. Ultimately, there is no better way to enhance resilience in the Western Balkans than strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law.



15. Flemming Splidsboel Hansen

Research Coordinator and Senior Researcher on International Security. Danish Institute for International Studies

A relatively recent addition to our shared public vocabulary, the term 'resilience' has yet to become a household analytical concept in the post-Soviet Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, in contrast to the EU member states where it is now well-established. While these five states are all too familiar with the protection of traditional technical infrastructure – such as roads, railroads, electrical grids and natural gas pipelines – the more contemporary understanding of the need for greater functional and even transnational resilience as an unintended consequence of the increasing digitalisation of the critical functions and services of society is largely absent from the public debate.

FUNCTIONAL/TRANSNATIONAL RESILIENCE

This type of resilience, whether seen as the capacity to uphold the critical functions of society even under pressure or to swiftly recover from an actual breakdown of these, is usually considered within the context of malicious intent: internal or external actors deliberately target the vulnerabilities of the state in and through the cyber domain, taking advantage not only of the interconnectedness of the operating systems underpinning most of the critical functions of society but also of the existence of remote access points. The lower the degree of interconnectedness and the fewer the remote access points, the less vulnerable the state will be in the case of attacks on its critical infrastructure. For developing states such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan the agenda is still dominated by the protection of traditional technical infrastructure and the resilience debate as just outlined hardly registers on their radar. This can be attributed to these societies' relatively low level of digitalisation and, as a somewhat paradoxical consequence of this, their comparatively low vulnerability to internal or external manipulation.

COGNITIVE RESILIENCE

An entirely different type of resilience relates to the cognitive domain. This concept is currently even less well-developed than that relating to the protection of the critical functions of society. The essence is well-known, however, and it has to do with world views and associated political preferences. Within the context of the EU the challenge is to maintain public support for the fundamental norms – or the collective identity – of the Union as these are being targeted for ideological or instrumental reasons by internal or external actors. These may include fringe political

movements within the EU or, in the external realm, non-state actors such as the Islamic State (IS) or even states such as Russia.

The picture is much more complex in the five post-Soviet Central Asian states as the fundamental norms feeding into state identities are less well-defined. The referent object, to employ security theory parlance, may often be reduced to regime survival, defined in even more narrow terms as the continued and unrivalled rule of the current executive. Any challenge to this political order – the preservation of the *status quo* as expressed locally – may be construed as a threat to the state itself and thus legitimise extraordinary responses. Such a challenge may of course have a physical (or kinetic) manifestation, a prominent recent example of which could be the September 2015 attack on government buildings in Dushanbe by a terrorist group led by a then Tajik deputy defence minister, but it may also consist of ideas and thus lie within the cognitive (non-kinetic) domain.

All states may legitimately ban certain utterances. A current example is communication from the IS, about which the European Parliament in a November 2016 resolution noted that ‘incitement of hatred, violence or war cannot “hide” behind freedom of expression’. The post-Soviet Central Asian states adopt a line similar to that of the EU, attempting through bans to prevent IS communication from reaching its (apparently receptive) target audience. The bans are generally more wide-reaching, however, a fact which may reflect a sincere belief that they are justified and have an overall positive effect or, alternatively, a crude instrumentalisation of an ‘Islamist threat’ to be used for political purposes.

States will differ, however, in their interpretation of what constitute threats to the state and in their capacity to withstand the pressure from various ideas. This latter capacity may be termed ‘cognitive resilience’. The five post-Soviet Central Asian states all suffer from a relatively low degree of socio-political cohesion, that is, a shared understanding of why the particular state exists. Although rarely stated expressly, the purpose of the state, as suggested earlier, may be reduced to serve simply as a vehicle for the continuation of the regime and the ideas on which it legitimises (or attempts to legitimise) its rule. The reign of former Turkmen president Saparmurat Niyazov, who in 1999 was declared ruler for life, is undoubtedly the clearest recent manifestation from the region of the view that ‘l'état c'est moi’. But the presidencies of Nursultan Nazarbayev (Kazakhstan), Emomali Rakhmon (Tajikistan) and Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov (Turkmenistan) also provide strong examples of highly personalised rule, as will very likely also that of Shavkat Mirziyoyev (Uzbekistan), who took up the Uzbek presidency in December 2016 only.

In the absence of trustworthy opinion polls from the region, it is very difficult to assess the receptiveness of the various populations of post-Soviet Central Asia to illiberal or non-democratic ideas. Having noted this, it should be added that the challenge of these latter may hardly register in several of the regional capitals, where the concern about liberal or democratic currents may in fact be greater. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that a receptive audience of a worrying

size may be found below the surface even in unexpected quarters. The 2015 decision by Gulmoro Halimov, then colonel and head of the Tajik Interior Ministry special operations forces OMON, to leave Tajikistan in order to join the IS in Syria was an eye-opener for many in the region. In a short video posted online, Halimov accused the Tajik authorities of being repressive of Islam and they responded by blocking access to the relevant websites. This, again, could be an easy and welcome excuse for denying people access to outside information, but there is little doubt that Halimov's defection to the IS caused genuine concern in Dushanbe and in other capitals in the region.

Little change is to be expected, however. The problem stemming from continued repression is twofold. Firstly, it is likely to lead a growing number of the population of the region to search for political alternatives, including even illiberal and non-democratic ones, if they appear to offer hope for a different future. Secondly, it is likely to retard the development of cognitive resilience in the region, as the potential for critical thinking remains unfulfilled, paving the way for the ascendancy of some of the illiberal and non-democratic ideas just mentioned. This relatively weak cognitive resilience serves the various regimes well, but it also threatens them and the stability of the region. And it should probably be of greater concern to the EU than functional and transnational resilience in the technical sphere.



16. Jana Kobzova

Associate Policy Fellow . ECFR

The three eastern European countries most advanced in their relations with the EU have also been the targets of the most intensive strategic communications efforts from their neighbours. While the EU's communication mainly focused on 'advertising' its soft power, in all three states, Moscow has deployed a full-scale strategic communications arsenal to sway these countries' foreign policy orientation. This has posed major challenges to the political, societal and media resilience of these countries and altered their attitudes towards the EU.

The use of strategic communications is not new and in Russia's case, many of its techniques date back to the times of the Soviet Union. Moscow stepped up its efforts in the region quite drastically following the democratic revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia in the early 2000s. Rather than seeing them as popular uprisings, the Kremlin viewed them as Western-inspired and funded plots to overthrow Moscow-friendly rulers and remove these countries from its sphere of influence. In response, the Kremlin started to work on enhancing its 'soft power', including through setting up a network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Russia-friendly media, as well as business and political groups.

Besides promoting Russia, Moscow also embarked on a mission to neutralise potential domestic and foreign policy alternatives in the region. Presenting the EU as a beacon of decadence and dysfunctionality, consumed by internal problems and on the leash of the US, the aim was to undermine and even eliminate the European Union as a credible governance and foreign policy alternative. The same tactics were then deployed against local politicians who were seen as unfriendly to Moscow. These activities were greatly accelerated in the wake of Ukraine's Euromaidan revolution, Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea and the outbreak of a war in the Donbas. For Moscow, the aim was no longer to just present itself as a better alternative to the West: post-2014, the objective of Kremlin-directed strategic communications in the region was to make sure everyone understands that so-called 'democratic uprisings' only fuel chaos, instability and war.

Prior to 2014, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine faced a number of challenges which made them fairly vulnerable to Moscow's strategic communications efforts (and most of these challenges persist). All three countries were far from consolidated polities with functioning institutions, making it difficult for state authorities to mount a concerted action to fight hostile propaganda or destabilisation efforts. People-to-people contacts between these states and Russia were also very intense, especially compared to their ties with the EU (with the exception of Moldovans and their ties to Romania). Post-Soviet nostalgia existed among a number of social groups, making it easier for Moscow to insert itself into local political discourse and promote its alternatives.

In many ways, the three countries remained a part of Russia's information space: their populations (with the exception of the post-1990s generations in Georgia and Moldova) understood and spoke Russian and the younger generation usually used VKontakte rather than Facebook. The main Russian TV stations could be watched across Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, while these countries' low-quality and underfunded public broadcasters were hardly a credible alternative for large sections of the public. All of this made delivering Moscow's message to millions of viewers in the region relatively easy. Moscow was able to exploit the Orthodox Church (especially in Georgia) and the Moscow Patriarchate, given that the two often portrayed the EU in the same – negative – way.

All these weaknesses – coupled with the West's late awakening to the reality of Moscow's strategic communications challenge – provided a rather fertile ground for Russia's efforts in the region. The success rate of propaganda and other communication techniques is difficult to measure. That said, Moscow's efforts in this area were successful at least to some extent, especially with the population in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. These groups, however, were more susceptible to such measures to begin with. What has worked in the east – Moscow's portrayal of the Euromaidan revolution as a 'fascist putsch' or allegations that Kiev was preparing to kill those in Crimea who supported Russia's annexation – did not work elsewhere in Ukraine: attempts to create 'people's republics' outside of the Donbas failed. Russia's ambition to delegitimise the Ukrainian authorities and discourage people from joining the army or volunteer battalions also failed. And while Ukrainians are as frustrated with their government as ever, they do not see it as illegitimate. Surveys show that the percentage of those who want to overthrow the system is minimal and support for joining the EU and NATO has risen compared to 2013. Of course, after more than 10,000 of their compatriots died in a Moscow-fuelled war, Ukrainians are not keen to return to Russia's embrace. However, after the initial shock, Kiev – largely building on the volunteer movement that spearheaded these efforts in Ukraine – also started taking active measures to increase its resistance to the Kremlin's propaganda. Among other steps, it has banned Russian media outlets in Ukraine, installed speakers and antennas to reach Moscow-controlled territories and embarked on a communication campaign to bolster respect for the country's armed forces and promote a Ukrainian, rather than Soviet, identity.

Moscow's strategic communication efforts were not limited to Ukraine. However, neither Tbilisi nor Chisinau adapted Moscow's narrative about the events on Euromaidan or in the Donbas. At the same time, support for a greater cooperation with Russia rather than the EU is on the rise in Moldova and Georgia, despite the fact that the memories of the 2008 war have not faded. However, crediting the Kremlin's strategic communications efforts with these 'achievements' would be misleading. Moscow's propaganda might have played a role in shaping public opinion in the region, but widespread disappointment with the previous 'pro-Western' but corrupt governing coalitions has perhaps more substantially affected people's preferences.

While Russia's strategic communications efforts undermine the states in question, they also damage the EU's credibility, visibility and attractiveness in the region. Moscow's efforts should be addressed by both domestic and foreign actors, such as the EU. Short-term steps include moves such as establishing a legal basis for state authorities to limit the spread of hostile propaganda (while ensuring freedom of expression and media) or setting up specialised units in different government agencies to deal with the challenge. In the case of Ukraine, this included setting up an entire new Ministry of Information Policy and specialised army units. Communication by governments to their societies about the steps they are taking – including the unpopular ones – is vital to fight frustration among voters. Ironically, it is also something all three governments seem to struggle greatly with. Media space in these countries should to be improved as well to ensure people have access to unbiased information.

The EU should support these measures through the existing programmes and funds. For example, it is already playing a constructive role by supporting the transformation of the public broadcasting system in Ukraine. The EEAS East StratCom Task Force helps debunk myths spread by Moscow-friendly media outlets. More strategically, the EU needs to make a greater effort to distinguish between supporting a country and backing its leadership. In Moldova, the EU's image arguably suffered because Brussels was seen as too uncritical towards the previous coalition. In short, assisting Georgia or Ukraine and being constructively critical of their governments when justified is not mutually exclusive.

In the longer run, reforming these countries' education systems, which are still focused on memorising data rather than encouraging critical thinking, should be one of the key priorities. As long as people uncritically accept what is served to them by mass (or alternative) media, there will be room for information abuse. However, the region's resilience to hostile strategic communications ultimately rests on these countries' overall resilience and ability to deliver on their citizens' expectations.



17. Anaïs Marin

Marie Curie Fellow. Collegium Civitas, Warsaw

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) dedicates one paragraph to countries that ‘have no wish’ to develop stronger relations with the EU. These so-called ‘reluctant partners’ illustrate the limits of the EU’s attraction and transformative power in its neighbourhood. Acknowledging ‘different paths to resilience’, the EUGS nonetheless offers them support, with a focus on ‘the most acute dimensions of fragility’, where ‘we can make a meaningful difference’. What are the main threats to the stability of reluctant eastern partners?

In Belarus, Azerbaijan and Armenia, current regimes have limited internal capacity to cope with (and recover from) possible crises. To avoid supporting their authoritarian consolidation, however, a principled pragmatic approach should focus on capacity-building initiatives that enhance societal resilience and empower local communities.

PEACE AND SOVEREIGNTY UNDER STRESS

Compared with Russia, the EU has limited leverage over reluctant partners. Two of them joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU): Belarus as a founding member and Armenia after intense Russian pressure. Yet both are trying to maintain a geopolitical balancing act between Russia and the West, and consequently welcomed the shift towards greater pragmatism as outlined in the EU’s reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the EUGS. EU-Belarus relations, freed from conditionality and sanctions, have been normalising. As for Armenia, it remains genuinely interested in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) offer.

Both countries are, however, extremely dependent on Russia for subsidies, energy deliveries, and remittances. Belarus followed Russia into recession in 2015 (with a contraction of 3.9% of GDP). Although Armenia fared better (3.1%, surpassing International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts), its overall trade turnover is likely to shrink once all EAEU tariffs are applied.

Azerbaijan, for its part, keeps equal political distance from the Eurasian and the European Union. It enjoys a business-oriented relationship with Western democracies due to its key role in their energy diversification strategies. Azerbaijan’s phenomenal economic growth (until recently) and its geopolitical autonomy are largely due to its gas export capacity. Lower world oil prices are shrinking its export resources, however, putting the national currency and banking system under stress.

In all three countries, dependence on external sources – Russia as a donor, the West as a hydrocarbon importer – is a key driver of economic vulnerability. Yet the growing risk of conflict escalation is what threatens the resilience of these eastern partners the most.

The South Caucasus is home to the oldest and potentially most dangerous protracted conflict in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh has been exacerbated over the past few years due to growing frustration, especially on the Azerbaijani side, with the OSCE-mediated negotiation process over the terms of a conflict settlement. This process has been stalled since the 1994 ceasefire due to irreconcilable claims of the conflict parties (the right to self-determination vs. territorial integrity).

Border clashes have increased since 2011 and almost sparked a new war in April 2016. Uncompromising postures, a mutual lack of trust and Azerbaijan's spectacular military build-up make the risk of triggering a 'war by accident' extremely high. Such an escalation would drag the parties' security guarantors – Russia in the case of Armenia, and Turkey and possibly Iran for Azerbaijan – into a proxy war which could destabilise the whole region from the North Caucasus to the Middle East.

At a much smaller scale, Belarus is the target of hybrid and 'low intensity' aggression by Russia, which now seems determined to obtain (geo)political concessions from the regime in Minsk in exchange for the subsidies and privileges provided over the past two decades. Should the current information war against Belarus be the prelude to an attempt at regime overthrow or Crimea-type annexation, the very sovereignty of the country would be in serious jeopardy. The question is: can these countries withstand such existential security challenges?

If the claim that 'repressive regimes are inherently fragile' is valid, then Armenia, Belarus and Azerbaijan are domestically much weaker than their authoritarian features might suggest. Their mostly apathetic populations display a low potential for political mobilisation. That said, all three regimes have faced sporadic social unrest in recent months caused by economic hardships.

Understood as 'the ability of states and societies to reform', resilience is definitely not a priority for these regimes. Yet it could become a necessity, should local populations push for breaking with the (Soviet) tradition of top-down regulation. Whereas some coercive regimes manage to build legitimacy by co-opting the elites (including from the opposition) and redistributing wealth, these authoritarian regimes are increasingly plagued by shrinking resources (Belarus), embedded corruption (Armenia, Azerbaijan) and growing autocratic trends (Azerbaijan).

Supporting state resilience means that the EU is confronted with a moral dilemma, as it could help to extend the longevity of autocrats, dynasties and oligarchs. A principled approach in dealing with these regimes is therefore required. Reluctant partners were quick to interpret the shift towards greater pragmatism in the EU's neighbourhood and foreign policies as a step towards meeting their long-term aspiration of having a 'constructive', depoliticised partnership, free of normative judgements and democratic conditionality. Staying true to its values, the EU should

refrain from cooperation projects that bolster authoritarian resilience, and facilitate instead a dialogue between state and societies, which is currently non-existent in these countries.

PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM IN PRACTICE

In compliance with the principles of joint ownership and local responsibility, the EU should support bottom-up initiatives that meet local needs. This means demanding that the civil society actors which channel these needs are gradually associated with public policy decision-making, or are at least consulted in the process. With regards to Nagorno-Karabakh, it means entrusting local communities, women's associations, for example, to offer proposals for de-escalating the conflict. Unexplored channels of communication and cross-border cooperation could eventually contribute to a durable peace settlement.

Growing distrust of corrupt and inefficient institutions provides an opportunity to call for more accountability and transparency from local administrations, while also advancing the cause of judicial reform. In the economic sphere, the diversification of energy sources and routes can be encouraged by supporting local initiatives that favour sustainable alternatives. In the societal field, the EU should build on local demands for educational and mobility opportunities for young people – but condition the opening of Erasmus exchange programmes on the respect of basic human rights. For each sector in which the EU and an eastern partner have a mutual interest in cooperating, respect for the rule of law and fundamental freedoms should remain a condition for EU support.

Empowering civil society implies investing in institutional capacity-building and providing more training and twinning opportunities to a larger number of local actors. This means breaking away from a project-oriented approach of development aid. Multilateral exchanges of best practices should be supported, notably within the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum – while keeping in mind, however, that it is increasingly made up of government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs).

Principled pragmatism starts at home. The EU should have a zero-tolerance policy towards 'surrogate villains' in EU member states, whether officials or businessmen. The highest standards of probity should be upheld when dealing with these regimes, including within fora such as EURONEST.

As argued in the reviewed ENP, in the face of external threats 'resilience' mainly refers to partner countries' 'ability to make their own strategic choices'. Adopting an integrated approach to potential crises, the EU should pre-emptively step up its involvement in the international mediation over Nagorno-Karabakh. The OSCE Minsk Group could be revamped and opened to EU participation, while expanding the mandate and means of the EU Special Representative in the region. Only then could the EU be seen as a proactive force for good and contribute to prosperity and stability in its shared neighbourhood.



18. Valbona Zeneli

Director . Black Sea and Eurasia Programme, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, strategically straddling Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, serves as a pivotal corridor at the crossroads of geopolitics, trade and energy routes. The debate about traditional and non-traditional security challenges in the region is all the more complex due to its contested neighbourhood, dominated by ‘protracted’ conflicts, which make regional cooperation very difficult.

Three main dimensions add to the traditional complexity of Europe’s eastern flank. The first of these is geographic and relates to the major transport and trade arteries of the Black Sea; the second, from the energy security perspective, involves the changing nature of the threats and the actors that want to maintain control over the region’s natural resources; while the third is political and concerns the future perspective of the region between the West and East.

The EaP countries have gone through a multidimensional and difficult transition process: economic, political, diplomatic, and institutional. Despite the diversity between the countries, there are some internal challenges that concern the region as a whole, such as democratisation and reforms, economic development, energy security, and Euro-Atlantic integration. The economic situation is bleak, leading to a rise in populism, and exacerbating divisions between populations and governments over the future trajectory of their countries.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Economic security is among the main challenges facing the countries of the Eastern Partnership. The notion is in itself a complex one, generally referring to the ability of a country to protect and advance its economic interests in the face of events, developments, or actions that might be inimical to these interests. Enduring poverty, high unemployment rates, and deep levels of inequality threaten the everyday security of citizens in the region. The average annual income per capita is only \$3,378, equivalent to just 8% of the European Union’s average income per capita. Moldova is the poorest country in the region with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of only \$1,871 in current prices.

Despite some encouraging positive growth trends over the last two decades, economic development remains below satisfactory levels. The countries of the region were inevitably exposed to the repercussions of the global financial crisis of 2007-8 and subsequent world recession, resulting in worsened socio-economic conditions throughout the region. This has undermined the optimism that initially greeted the prospect of eventual convergence with advanced Western

European countries. While the regional economy is recovering, the pace of recovery remains slow with sluggish growth rates. The dire economic situation has led to a drop in living standards and exacerbated disparities in income levels, deepening inequality and undermining social cohesion.

The transitional economic model has been primarily an extractive one, mainly driven by imports and the expansion of domestic demand, and based on the exploitation of natural resources, and on the artificial accumulation of physical and financial capital. Agriculture still represents a significant component of the regional economy. The large-scale privatisation of state-owned enterprises has not yielded the promised results, as it has generally favoured market monopolies and fuelled widespread corruption. In the absence of an efficient industrial capacity and given the limited role of innovation in the economy, and lack of real structural reforms, all the countries of the region have large shadow economies, high levels of sovereign debt, and suffer from a serious lack of competitiveness.

Energy security is a major challenge, and diversification remains very difficult. The region is heavily dependent on Russian gas and oil, and Russia exploits this situation for political leverage and to foster dependencies. Western Europe needs more energy. But it has shown insufficient readiness to exploit the energy resources of the Black Sea region, which necessitates the development of the region's remote transportation and communication systems.

The most significant restriction on economic development, affecting an array of other factors, is the weak rule of law. Despite efforts to advance and modernise legislation on paper, enforcement remains very weak, exposing the limited capacity and will of the judiciary and governments to apply the new laws. Corruption is widespread, reflected in the very low rankings given to countries in the region in surveys carried out by international institutions. Georgia is the only country that has demonstrated success in reducing corruption in the last decade.

An unfriendly business climate characterised by barriers to market access, weak rule of law, excessive bureaucracy, pervasive corruption, and inefficient political and economic institutions limits the ability of domestic and foreign investors to do business in the region.

THE WAY AHEAD

The objective of the European Union to build up resilience in its eastern flank requires a multidimensional and regional approach, and building economic resilience is imperative.

- It is crucial to strengthen the rule of law in the Eastern Neighbourhood countries. To foster economic development it is essential to create a friendly business environment through simplification of bureaucratic procedures, judicial reforms, and a concerted fight against corruption. Effective rule of law is necessary to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which is crucial for sustainable development. Despite its strategic location, the region as a

whole has attracted less than 0.49% of the world's total stock of FDI. Clearly, there is a serious lack of absorptive capacities for attracting and reaping the full benefits of FDI, due to the absence of fair and efficient rule of law, lack of human capital, a weak financial sector, and insufficient economic openness.

- The European Union integration process is the most important driver for significant economic and political reforms in the region. Membership of the EU may seem a distant prospect, but the EU support for structural reforms, infrastructure projects and good governance is crucial. One of the most important successes for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine has been the signing of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, as key instruments of trade liberalisation and institutional harmonisation, bringing economic relations between these countries and the EU to new levels. Not only has trade increased enormously, but the competitiveness of domestic companies has also been enhanced. A better communication strategy is needed for both policymakers and the public in a region where the economic integration dilemma between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) remains a deeply divisive issue.
- The EU needs to foster regional cooperation through the promotion of free trade agreements, or regional infrastructural projects to boost the regional economy. Promoting regional cooperation is a basic challenge, as in times of economic crisis states tend to exert more national control and fail to commit their resources for initiatives that involve risks, trusting others, or pooling sovereignty. Even small bilateral or regional projects are extremely important for building relations. The EU was the driving force in fostering regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and this experience could serve as an inspirational model to be applied in the Eastern Neighbourhood.

A successful transformation in the region depends on both political and economic progress. Enacting political and structural reforms without economic transformation can weaken public trust in democracy and fuel social and ethnic tensions, which could further undermine development and stability. The EU's role is very important in building state and societal resilience in the EaP through its support for economic and social development, conflict mitigation, and tailored assistance and conditionality to foster good governance.



19. Ekaterine Zguladze & Dorin Recean

Consultant . International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Programme, former Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia & Member of the Strategic Development Board . Technical University of Moldova, former Minister of Internal Affairs of Moldova

As signatories of Association Agreements, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are EU's closest partners in the eastern neighbourhood. All three have a long list of internal problems, including ongoing conflicts and major external pressures which challenge their resilience. Moreover, to some extent, these three states are the main targets or 'laboratories' for the application of hybrid threats.

GEORGIA'S RECORD

The story of Georgian resilience building started in 2004, after the Rose Revolution. Georgia has delivered some of the most surprising success stories when it comes to resilience building. The country's liberal reforms were home grown and complex, centred on the fight against corruption.

However, Russia became concerned about successful state building and institutional reform in Georgia, as well as the country's NATO aspirations. The Russian response was intense, and included the introduction of visas, the activation of spy networks, an intensification of propaganda, the deportation of ethnic Georgians from Russia, and 'reviving' the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Importantly, all of this happened before the war of 2008. However, Georgia has also witnessed many failures. One was the failure to explain to the world that Tbilisi had been engaged in a hybrid war long before the open military conflict with Russia broke out.

Before the 2008 war, Georgia remained resilient to various Russian efforts to undermine it due to its reformed institutions and a strong government. Yet Georgia's future resilience depends on its continued progress towards democracy. A focus on Georgia's democratic performance, especially on threats to free media and the politicisation of justice, is therefore vital.

UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA'S BALANCE SHEETS

If there is one key lesson from Ukraine, it is a simple one: if war is seen as necessary by a party, there will be a war. Ukraine's story has parallels to that of Georgia, but it is a complex combination of serious state weakness and resilience. It has long been considered a weak state, but when a real crisis erupted – with Russian military actions in Crimea and the Donbas in 2014 – only a small part of the country descended into war, and even that could have been avoided were it not for external aggression.

Putting the war in the Donbas aside and focusing on reforms in the rest of Ukraine, it is clear that reforms have gotten off to a slow start: corruption and oligarchic influence in the country are still high. But there have been some truly brave reforms, such as in the energy sector.

But, whereas in Georgia resilience-building was a process driven by the government and supported by society at large, in Ukraine the government is less proactive, while the reforms and resilience-building are mostly conducted through strong societal pressure. As a result, reforms are isolated islands without bridges, and their success depends on the motivation and abilities of specific teams to lobby, fundraise, execute and defend them. Another difference is that in Ukraine political tensions in the ruling coalition have complicated the timely adoption and implementation of critical laws.

What certainly complicates Ukraine's situation is that the war is not over, and even a further escalation cannot be ruled out. Unlike during the 2014 conflict, Ukraine is better prepared to defend itself and retaliate if needed. The military is now larger, more structured, and has a proper chain of command. Russia would have to launch a full-scale traditional war (with air support) to make further significant advancements – and even then, losses will be high. Destabilising Ukraine on all other fronts is therefore a cheaper and safer warfare strategy for Russia. What is worrisome is the yet unknown scale of Russian infiltration in military and security forces. Ukraine has undertaken some steps, but lacks a comprehensive approach to tackle the issue.

In the last two years, Ukraine has managed to minimise the threats associated with the volunteer battalions which were created (with state permission) to fight during the first phase of hostilities. But many of these battalions were funded by oligarchs who used private armies to protect their critical infrastructure and business. In a difficult political move, the state managed to integrate these independent battalions within formal security structures or dismantle them. However, the question remains: what will happen to civilian volunteers and soldiers who return from the front? Ukraine's health system is struggling with physical rehabilitation, while psychological care is simply unavailable. This is another area where long-term assistance would be crucial and will have a direct impact on state security (and crime rates) in the mid-term.

Some of the intermediary lessons from Ukraine are that reforms are doable even under the hardest of conditions (political, economic, security, and military). Political will for reforms can be generated by creating public expectations, something that forces governments to respect the will of the people. In this sense, quick wins are necessary to keep officials interested and the public involved long enough to keep asking for more.

Moldova was the first among the three countries where the concept of a 'frozen conflict' was tested and implemented by Russia. Corruption in Moldova perpetuated the situation, and allowed for the regime in Transnistria to consolidate and become a Russian outpost in the region. Only in 2014, after Russia annexed Crimea and started the conflict in the east, did Ukraine re-

alise the danger that the Transnistrian conflict posed for its own security. At the same time, Moscow failed to impose a scenario of federalisation and legitimise the presence of its troops on Moldovan territory, and for more than a decade Moldova has been on the receiving end of near constant economic pressures and embargoes from Russia. The initial consequences were painful, but gradually Moldova managed to diversify its external trade: currently over a half of Moldovan external trade is with the EU, and less than 20% is with Russia. Despite being poor, Moldova has managed to build up its economic resilience in the face of Russian pressure due to continuous trade liberalisation with the EU. However, corruption has prevented the diversification of energy sources (for both gas and electricity), something which has allowed Russia to retain its influence in the country.

As of 2009, Moldova has been governed by a series of political coalitions which declared integration with the EU as their main foreign policy goal. The EU and other development partners were generous with their political and financial support, and Moldova eventually signed an Association Agreement and become part of a visa-free regime (the first among the three countries) in 2014. As part of the process of association and fulfilling the requirements of a visa-free regime, the country started to implement a number of reforms, including those related to security and law enforcement. The reform of the interior ministry was at the forefront of these efforts, inspired by the Georgian experience. Moldova seemed to advance unexpectedly quickly in its reform agenda, and was praised by development partners as a 'success story'. Yet it experienced an implosion immediately after the November 2014 elections, when the so-called 'billion-dollar theft' scandal exposed the fragility of the institutions (banking and law enforcement in particular). As a result of this failure, support for the EU and trust in institutions dropped dramatically, creating the opportunity for the pro-Russian Socialist Party to consolidate and to play an important role in Moldovan politics.

The three states in question provide a mixed record of resilience. They have faced and often successfully withstood Russian pressures, and they remain (however imperfectly) much more democratic than all of the EU's other eastern neighbours. And yet they face major obstacles ahead: limited appetite for reform, corruption and a dangerous geopolitical environment will challenge these states. Their ability to face down hybrid threats and build up their resilience will, to a large extent, determine the map of the EU's eastern neighbourhood for years, if not decades, to come.



Conclusion

The resilience of neighbouring states is vital for the EU, mainly because the Union and its neighbours are deeply interdependent. This interdependence can have both negative and positive effects: stable and prosperous neighbours can generate stability, increase trade and mutual prosperity, while unstable neighbours can generate problems for themselves, as well as for the European Union, ranging from terrorism and organised crime to refugee flows. This has become particularly apparent in recent years, with wars and instability in the EU's southern and eastern neighbourhoods having considerable, mostly negative, spillover effects for the Union.

But given the broad nature of the term, resilience needs to be defined not only in the internal EU context, but also externally. Fostering resilience consequently requires a preliminary 'resilience audit' in order to better understand existing strengths and weaknesses in each state, region and policy area. The EU can only fine-tune its objectives and instruments and develop targeted strategies if it is equipped with such important and focused knowledge. The chapters in this volume have sought to shed light on key issues and provide relevant analysis in this regard.

* *

The EU's eastern neighbours have plenty of internal challenges to resilience. Some countries are extremely weak, oligarchy-dominated democracies (Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia) while others are outright authoritarian states with weak power transition mechanisms. Nevertheless, all of the eastern partners are still more resilient than the EU's southern neighbours.

Even when facing significant challenges to resilience, the EU's eastern neighbours have mostly been able to manage without descending into civil wars or resorting to large-scale violence. As a result, if left to their own devices they most probably would be in a position to muddle through without major war-related crises – unless broader geopolitical games come into play. Resilience is at its weakest when external and internal pressures converge to push states beyond breaking point. Ukraine is one such example: after the fall of Yanukovich in early 2014, the ensuing civic political conflict morphed into a civil war (with some interstate war characteristics) once Russia stepped in.

While recognising the need to strengthen other aspects of resilience in the EU's eastern neighbours (ranging from democracy to energy and economic resilience), the single most urgent task is to strengthen resilience *vis-à-vis* external actors meddling with internal security. While the eastern neighbours have faced pressures in various sectors, they have managed to withstand them with-

out collapsing. What none of them could survive (in terms of territorial integrity at least) were assaults by separatist movements with Russian military support. The number one priority area for resilience building is thus the security sphere.

The delicate endeavour to build security resilience can only be achieved through joint efforts by NATO and EU/NATO member states. This implies establishing wide-ranging support for the building up of security sector institutions, starting with police and border guards. The harder and more sensitive end of the spectrum of security institutions – the army and intelligence services – will also eventually have to be addressed. It is these institutions which can act as shields to soften external security blows, as well as help countries recover.

Another major resilience risk connected to security is corruption: the phenomenon is widespread in the military, police, intelligence and the political class, and fosters the perfect environment for third parties to conduct hybrid operations. Any meaningful resilience-building strategy in the countries to the EU's east therefore needs to be based on two pillars: strengthening the resilience of the security apparatus and combating corruption.

* *

The EU's southern neighbourhood faces structurally similar challenges, albeit on a much larger scale than the east. The total breakdown of state structures in countries in the region – such as in Libya, Syria and Yemen – are testimony to their incapacity to absorb shocks. Their breakdown was, however, gradual, and shows how resilience could have avoided state failure in different instances. In all three cases, conflict began with demonstrations based on genuine grievances the states in question had failed to address – failures which then proved to be impossible to sufficiently address at a later stage.

Addressing grievances and preventing large-scale social disruption is clearly one of the state's core functions, but managing them once they emerge is what makes it resilient to conflict. Very few southern states have been able, so far, to tackle social discontent without causing further damage to their social fabric. More importantly, greater challenges are looming on the horizon: from climate change to economic shifts, demographic growth and post-conflict reconstruction, southern states will have to be in a position to minimise, manage, and overcome crises to come.

The task is, however, not a futile one: forecasting instability and preparing for it is the first step in building resilience. As a second step, southern states can identify the necessary resources and mechanisms to address these challenges. The real danger is therefore posed not by the challenges themselves *per se*, but by the failure to anticipate them. States like Egypt or Tunisia, currently experiencing severe security crises, might easily be distracted by the immediacy of these tasks and overlook the crises coming their way over the next years. Southern states are seriously ill-equipped to mitigate the effects of climate change, to cite just one example.

The risk in the south is therefore twofold: protracted crises as a result of insufficient resilience in the first place, and lack of preparation to anticipate coming crises. In both instances, external actors such as the European Union can assist with technical and material expertise. Building resilience may well be a long-term endeavour, but it is far from a hopeless one.



European Union Institute for Security Studies

100, avenue de Suffren | 75015 Paris | France | www.iss.europa.eu

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