SECURITY ALERT ON THE EU'S DOORSTEP

Strategies for Strengthening Security in the Eastern Partnership Countries

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by Ghia Nodia, Jan Piekło, and Jeff Lovitt

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*As the EU finalises its new Global Strategy, and NATO members prepare to address the challenges on the Alliance's Eastern flank at the Warsaw Summit, **Security Alert on the EU's Doorstep** (and six accompanying papers on each Eastern Partnership country) assesses the security challenges facing NATO, the European Union, and the Eastern Partnership countries themselves, and the need to balance deterrence with engagement vis-à-vis Russia and, more importantly, for NATO to work closely with Georgia, Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries – to strengthen security for all through defence and deterrence.*

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments of the Eastern Partnership countries need to acknowledge that they must overhaul their governance systems, which pose an existential threat, primarily in the fields of fighting corruption and implementing security sector reform. They should bring their security policies and command and control structures in line with NATO standards and norms. They will receive more assistance from external actors if they place even greater emphasis on strengthening their democratic credentials through zero tolerance for corruption. They should also reach out wherever possible to embrace contacts between representatives of communities in conflict zones to de-escalate tensions, and foster trust and constructive dialogue.

Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership countries should build expertise in the security field, and should participate as an "added value" expert partner in the new Eastern Partnership Platform on Common Security and Defence Policy.

The **European Union** can become an even more valued partner to NATO by issuing a declaration to the Warsaw Summit, committing EU members to support the strengthening of NATO's Eastern flank (without duplicating NATO's military capability and command structure), and to co-operate with NATO in the areas of maritime security, supporting partners in training and capacity building, security sector reform, joint exercises and the establishment of "a Centre of Excellence for countering hybrid threats". The EU and NATO will mutually benefit if they pool funds and expertise together in a dramatic investment in security sector reform – including military and intelligence reform in the Eastern Partnership countries.

NATO will have a much greater understanding of imminent threats, and earlier warning, if it focuses strongly on its Eastern flank and drafts plans for closer co-operation with the Eastern Partnership countries. This engagement and intelligence-gathering are crucial at a time when misunderstandings and misinformation can trigger a dangerous escalation of conflict with Russia. NATO and the Eastern Partnership countries are deeply interdependent in security terms. While the Alliance is not obliged to defend non-members, the reality is that any future crisis in NATO's immediate vicinity will have an immediate impact on relations among Alliance members, as well as on how Russia sees the Alliance.

Thus, resilient and well-prepared neighbours are a key NATO objective. In this context, the Alliance can bring the EaP countries into the strategic dialogue around deterrence strategy, include them in operational planning platforms, assist them in military training, intelligence support, joint military exercises, and standardisation of defensive weapons systems to improve co-ordination and training, and launch a special focus on security in the Black Sea basin. It is in NATO's own interests to elaborate and present to three Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova) a road map for further co-operation with a membership perspective at the end.

Time to Rebuild Security in the Neighbourhood

The EU's Eastern neighbourhood has become the principal focus of security debates within NATO in the run-up to the NATO Warsaw Summit (8-9 July 2016). NATO Defence Ministers, meeting in Brussels on 14-15 June, confirmed that four battle groups (of up to 800 troops each) will be based in Poland and the Baltic states, there will be "tailored measures to enhance defence and deterrence in the Black Sea region", and NATO's support for Ukraine will be boosted with a Comprehensive Package of Assistance to the building of stronger security structures.[1]

These steps, combined with measures implemented since NATO's 2014 Wales Summit – the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and greater resources for the NATO Response Force – follow strong calls from NATO members bordering on Russia for NATO to provide effective deterrence against any military threat from the East.

While the Kremlin portrays such measures, and also the NATO land-based anti-missile shield stationed in Romania, as a threat that will require a response, they are defensive steps. NATO is strengthening deterrence and its defences, not building attack capabilities.

However, NATO needs to have a sustained, long-term strategy – not only to contain Russian aggression through effective deterrence, readiness, and defence capabilities, but also to set the agenda, rather than engage reactively to "unexpected" actions launched by the regime of Vladimir Putin. A better prepared NATO with a strong, convincing deterrent capability will make President Putin understand that the costs of an arms race are too high on all counts, and that NATO remains the most powerful military alliance on the planet, and one that represents stability and security to the common neighbourhood of the Caucasus and Black Sea region.

As Michael McFaul, former US Ambassador to Russia (2012-2014), put it when addressing the US House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing, "US Policy Towards Putin's Russia", on 14 June 2016, "Putin will take advantage of opportunities, including splits within the alliance or ambiguities about NATO's commitment to defend all members. We must deny him new opportunities, and reduce to zero his doubt about our commitment to defending all NATO allies against military threats."[2]

This means going beyond building the capacity to enforce Article 5 and the collective defence of NATO members, and to build security throughout the EU's neighbourhood, East and South. In the case of the EU's Eastern neighbours, that means to ensure that Russia faces high costs for any further aggressions such as the Russia-Georgia war of 2008, or the annexation of Crimea and invasion of Eastern Ukraine in 2014.

Security is Scarce, Destabilisation Aplenty

In recent years the European security order, based on the legacy of the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the United Nations Charter, has been neither respected nor consistently enforced. For a long while, this framework provided a wide range of diplomatic instruments for solving potential crises and managed to keep the security balance in Europe. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN guaranteed the inviolability of frontiers and the territorial integrity of states.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation was declared the legal successor state of the USSR on the grounds that it contained 51% of the population of the USSR and 77% of its territory. As a consequence, Russia inherited the USSR's permanent seat on the UN Security Council with its right of veto. This was accepted by the other successor republics of the Soviet Union.

Ukraine, as a new independent state, agreed to give up its nuclear stockpile – which was the world's third largest. The Budapest Memorandum, signed in December 1994, offered security guarantees against the threat to the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, as well as of Belarus and Kazakhstan. The Memorandum was signed by three nuclear powers: the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom.

1 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_room.htm

2 https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing/hearing-u-s-policy-toward-putins-russia/

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In the period preceding the Soviet break-up and its aftermath, the Kremlin fuelled and manipulated local, mostly ethnically based, conflicts in its neighbourhood and thereby managed to construct so-called "frozen conflict" (more often "protracted conflict") zones, which worked as leverage for securing the Kremlin's geopolitical interests. These zones were: separatist Transnistria in Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh which, after the Azerbaijan-Armenia war, became a de facto part of Armenian territory.

The fragile security architecture was challenged, and the work of pan-European security organisations (and various ad hoc contact groups set up to solve regional problems) became less and less effective.

The full-scale crisis arrived when in March 2014 Russia responded to the Euromaidan Revolution (also known as the Revolution of Dignity) in Ukraine and the decision of the legitimate government in Kyiv to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) with the annexation of Crimea followed by the invasion of Eastern Ukraine.

With this violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the Kremlin invalidated the existing European security architecture based on the accords signed by Russia, and Europe faced the most serious challenge to its security and stability since the Balkan wars following the breakup of Yugoslavia.

> **" The European security order has been neither respected nor consistently enforced. "**

The world's democratic community reacted to these developments through the existing channels of international diplomacy (OSCE, UN, Council of Europe). New ad hoc initiatives, such as the Minsk contact group, and the Normandy and Geneva formats, were set up to negotiate the conditions for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy artillery. The existing security instruments the West had at its disposal proved to be mostly ineffective and ill suited for dealing with Russia – which unilaterally changed the rules of the global geopolitical game.

At the same time, the EU became the target of numerous terrorist attacks (Paris, then Brussels), compounding the EU's existential struggles with the Greek insolvency crisis, the flow of refugees from Syria, and the potential of Brexit (the heated debate ahead of Britain's referendum on 23 June 2016 on its future EU membership). While unity was reached on applying economic sanctions against Russia, the EU had few adequate tools to respond to the security threats in the East, and the spirit of solidarity was soon replaced by growing insecurity, uncertainty and isolationism.

Eastern Partnership at the Crossroads

Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the three Eastern Partnership countries[3] that decided to sign Association Agreements with the EU, enjoy no security guarantees. In the case of Ukraine, Kyiv was also deprived of the territorial integrity assurance included in the Budapest Memorandum. After the NATO Bucharest Summit in 2008, the prospect of closer links and a NATO membership perspective for Ukraine and Georgia were no longer on the agenda.

After the Euromaidan Revolution and the deaths of thousands of people who fought for "European values" in Ukraine, a perception continued that the EU and transatlantic community left their partners in the cold without any constructive support. Kyiv's pleas for Western weaponry to fight the Russian orchestrated rebellion also fell on deaf ears.

In the face of the aggressive policies of Putin, the West's credibility was at stake. Russia's destabilisation efforts could undermine the Eastern Partnership initiative and bring the post-Soviet countries back under the Kremlin's control, resulting in a Yalta-like new division of the world.

3 A joint declaration, signed in Prague in May 2009, established the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative between the EU and six post-Soviet countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine), designed to strengthen integration between the EU and the region.

The return of Ukraine to Russia's sphere of influence is clearly not going to happen, given the sharp turn away from Russia in public opinion in Ukraine and the thousands of lives lost in the war in the East. The EU's engagement is essential to support the recovery of the economy in Ukraine, and to ensure that anti-corruption reforms and essential restructuring takes hold. If the EU abandoned its support for Ukraine, that would leave a dangerously volatile and unstable conflict situation on the EU's doorstep.

Given the EU's rather limited capacity to respond properly to this challenge, it needs to work more closely with NATO to prepare a strategic plan to pre-empt and avert potential conflicts and deepening chaos spreading through the region. The renaissance of transatlantic relations and rapprochement between the Old Continent and the US is the only long-term option for reversing this negative trend. It will take time, will require political will on all sides, and a sustained consensus among the EU member states.

Security Vacuum between Russia and the EU

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) region is characterised by its location in a shared, but also contested neighbourhood of both the EU and Russia. While the six countries at issue are extremely diverse in their foreign policy strategies, internal political systems, and security profiles, they share important common features, including similar security threats and risks, unstable and sometimes autocratic political systems based on underdeveloped economies, and insufficient capacities of their security-providing agencies.

With regards to the general security environment, the situation in the EaP region is shaky, unstable, and troublesome. The region finds itself in a security limbo, squeezed between two major actors or sets of actors with competing objectives and security cultures. There is Russia on the one hand and Western actors, represented by NATO, the EU, as well as individual nation-states within this realm, on the other. The 2008 Russia-Georgia war, and then the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the subsequent "hybrid war" between Russia-supported separatists and the Ukrainian state in the East of the country showed the scale of the rift.

These developments led to a qualitatively new reality, unseen at least since the early 1990s, whereby the use of military force aiming at changing the borders of a sovereign state had become an effectively permissible behaviour, with no international power capable of stopping this trend. An upsurge of violence in Nagorno Karabakh in April 2016 that surpassed any such incidents in this conflict since the 1994 ceasefire, while not obviously linked to competition between Russia and the West, fits into the general perception that the region is in a security vacuum and where use of force has become a viable option.

This, however, is not a traditional geopolitical competition, but primarily a clash of contending values, norms, and security cultures. The small and vulnerable states that constitute the EaP region[4] have a direct stake in the outcome of this fight between norms and security philosophies. NATO and the EU represent a culture of co-operative security, principally relying on soft power, wherein small states can make their own choices; this security culture is intertwined with a preference for democratic pluralism that ensures democratic peace and allows the public to define the security choices of their states.

It is only natural that small states that are keen to preserve their effective sovereignty and have a greater commitment to democratic norms, gravitate towards the European space, wherein small states may feel more secure and exercise a much greater degree of effective sovereignty. Russia, on the other hand, openly stands for a traditional, 19th century concept of power, whereby a limited number of dominant players enforces the security regime without consulting small states whose predicament is defined as satellites of larger powers.

As a result, Russia sees the region as an arena of fierce geopolitical competition, where the West is trying to squeeze Russia out of its legitimate sphere of influence. Following Russia's actions towards Georgia and Ukraine, the EaP region has become an area of fundamental uncertainty, where the balance of power that the actors are prepared to apply, as well as the norms within which they may apply it, is undefined.

4 Ukraine, strictly speaking, may not fit into the classic description of a "small state", but its endemic weaknesses and excessive vulnerability are evident.

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All countries within the EaP region, except for Belarus, are involved in territorial conflicts. While these conflicts are complex ones that are linked to historical ethnic cleavages within the countries (or, in Armenia's case, to its ethnic kinship to people residing in Nagorno Karabakh), under the current circumstances they have become Russia's chief tool in manipulating regional states in order to impede their people's choice to co-operate with the EU and NATO.

If Armenia's last-minute refusal to initial the EU Association Agreement in 2013 resulted from Russian pressure – using Armenia's vulnerability vis-à-vis the Karabakh conflict – Ukraine's eventual choice in favour of European integration led to Russian military interventions and annexation of Ukrainian territory.

> " The return of Ukraine to Russia's sphere of influence is clearly not going to happen. "

For a long time, Western actors were reluctant to admit that such competition takes place at all, preferring to interpret problems with Russia as cases of disagreements between partners. The advancement of the norms and institutions of liberal democracy in the 1990s, and the NATO and EU enlargement of the early 2000s, led to an overestimation of Western soft power that, with only occasional application of hard power (as in rump Yugoslavia in 1999-2000), was deemed sufficient to ensure general stability and security in Europe and its neighbourhood.

The fact that Russia perceived this prevalence of soft power as a pronounced threat to its interests, and was prepared to apply hard power and aggressive hybrid war tactics to counter it, caught Western strategists unawares. While an agreement on sanctions against Russia, as well as the more active stance of NATO on its Eastern frontiers, suggests that Western powers are gaining a better understanding of the tasks at hand, and have achieved partial success in containing Russian

behaviour, this is still vastly insufficient to ensure even basic security within the EaP region.

Moreover, the three EaP countries that made a clear choice in favour of close co-operation with the EU by signing Association Agreements, namely Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia (in addition, Georgia is also striving to become a NATO member), are especially vulnerable: it is not an accident that Georgia and Ukraine were picked as specific targets of Russian aggression.

There is a strong impression in these countries that Russia punished them for their orientation towards the EU and NATO, but the latter did not stand up for them in a sufficient way. Thus, these countries are presented with a choice whereby one option (European integration) might leave them unprotected and facing reprisals from Russia, while another (joining the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union) runs against society's preferences and may undermine the prospects for successful political and economic development.

The security component of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy is largely declarative, and is represented by the principle of good neighbourliness in the context of the need for the settlement of conflicts between the Eastern Partnership countries. It does not foresee engagement by the EU in the event of conflicts between one or more EaP countries and Russia.

The Association Agreements between the EU and respectively Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova provide that "the parties shall intensify their joint efforts to promote stability, security and democratic development in their common neighbourhood, and in particular to work together for the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts".[5] The Association Agreements "are nowhere near to providing any firm commitments from the EU to provide any sort of military, financial or technical assistance in case of escalating security threats to the parties to the agreements."[6]

There is no security for other countries of the

5   http://eeas.europa.eu/georgia/assoagreement/assoagreement-2013_en.htm, and http://eeas.europa.eu/moldova/assoagreement/assoagreement-2013_en.htm.

6   "The EU Neighbourhood Policies and the Security Crises within the Eastern Neighbourhood" by Roman Petrov, in *Security and Human Rights 25 (2014)* 298-311, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2779902

region, either. While it is commonly understood that Armenia renounced its bid to sign an Association Agreement with the EU due to Russian manipulation of its security concerns with regards to Nagorno Karabakh, the April 2016 escalation of hostilities demonstrated that its choice far from ensured its security. The linkage of Azerbaijan's military success to Russian arms supplies to Azerbaijan, coming after the murder of an Armenian family by a Russian soldier stationed at a military base on Armenia's territory, dented the traditional pro-Russia stance of the Armenian public and spurred more skeptical attitudes towards the policies of partnership with Russia that had been a bulwark of Armenian security policy.

Azerbaijan has its own grounds for insecurity: it is scared by the newly aggressive Russian policy in its "near abroad", and suffers from what it sees as neglect by the West (both the US and the EU), as well as from the effect of the low oil price on an oil-dependent economy. Following the crisis in Ukraine, even Belarus – the country that is considered especially close to Russia and has no territorial conflicts to worry about – has started to work on improving the readiness of its military forces in order to adapt to the changing security environment, and is seeking more co-operative relations with the EU.

Apart from the hard security area, many countries are concerned about the increasing activism of Russia within the EaP countries with the aim of creating a network of allies within these countries and of influencing public opinion. The specific objectives of Russian propaganda efforts that are often described as the application of its own "soft power" may differ from one country to another, but a common thread is the discrediting of European norms and institutions by spreading deliberately false information about Western democracies as well as pro-democracy forces in their own countries.

These actions are especially dangerous in Association Agreement countries, where Russian propaganda is deployed in strength to tilt the internal political and public opinion balance in favour of anti-EU sentiment.

While this set of general concerns is dominant for the whole region, in the case of the South Caucasus there are additional ones. This sub-region is close to the Middle East and feels spillover effects from the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq. New tensions between Russia

and Turkey may influence developments in the South Caucasus as well.

The Muslim populations of Georgia and Azerbaijan have become a target of recruiters for the Islamic State, or ISIS, while Armenia has had to deal with refugees from the war zone in Syria, and Azerbaijan's close military co-operation with Israel spoils its relations with Iran. Still, the influence of countries like Turkey and Iran is of secondary importance as compared with that of Russia.

Insecurity and Shallow Roots of Democracy

The lack of a reliable and predictable security regime in the EaP area is often matched by a low level of political consolidation in the countries and insufficient capacity of the national governments to face emerging security challenges. This pertains both to the governments' general capacity and legitimacy, as well as to the effectiveness of security-providing agencies.

There is considerable variety among EaP countries with regards to their political regimes, but in each of them there are concerns related to both their effectiveness and stability. It is no coincidence that Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the three countries most advanced in their co-operation with the EU, are also pluralist political systems. None of these countries can be considered a consolidated democracy, hence in none of them can the stability of the political system be taken for granted.

This is the case both for the recent past and expectations about the foreseeable future. In about ten years, Ukraine went through two popular democratic rebellions that in the last case (2014) led to violence and the flight from power of a democratically elected President. In 2012, Georgia, with its own record of political turmoil, successfully managed the change of power by electoral means for the first time in its history, which was rightly hailed as an important democratic achievement. But there is no widely shared conviction that this mode of change of power will become the rule.

Moldova has no experience of "coloured revolutions", but since 2005 the country has been living in constant fear of large-scale

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post-election destabilisations that may be triggered by the incumbent government or the opposition.

There is no confidence that this record of instability and turmoil is fully in the past. In all the countries, there is fundamental mistrust towards political elites and a structurally weak system of political parties. Continuous application of selective justice and physical violence against the opposition,[7] attempts to deprive society of its most popular and critical TV outlet, Rustavi-2,[8] and pressure against the Constitutional Court, raise deep concerns about the fairness and legitimacy of the pivotal parliamentary elections scheduled for 8 October 2016 in Georgia.

Setbacks in the transformation of the deeply corrupt system of governance in Ukraine do not bode well for the stability of the democratic system in Ukraine.

> " Russian propaganda is deployed to tilt public opinion in favour of anti-EU sentiment. "

In Moldova, the high level of political fragmentation and lack of consensus on the basic direction of the country, matched by concerns about endemic corruption within the political elite, are having a destabilising effect on the political system.

In all these countries, the fundamental commitment to the democratic path of development is challenged not only externally, but also internally, though to different degrees.

In Georgia, public support for EU and NATO integration is the most solid (over 70 per cent in various public opinion polls[9]), but the rise of openly anti-Western parties, as well as media and NGOs, raises concerns about the sustainability of this consensus in the future. The fact that support for EU and Euro-Atlantic integration is somewhat weaker among Georgia's largest minority, Azeris, and, especially, Armenian minorities, is also a cause for concern.[10]

In Moldova, support for EU integration is the shakiest among the three countries that signed Association Agreements.[11] Real or perceived lack of support from Western players, expressed in the refusal to recognise the European vocation of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, continuous procrastination in granting a visa-liberalisation regime to Georgia and Ukraine (Moldova was more fortunate, securing visa-free travel to the EU's Schengen area in 2014), and the de facto blocking of Georgia's NATO perspective by a number of NATO countries, are believed to have strengthened the hand of pro-Russian forces.

Despite all these challenges, these three countries have achieved considerable progress in developing free and relatively stable democratic institutions in very difficult circumstances, and this progress has to be appreciated. In each case, this progress should be attributed not only to the choices and actions of specific political leaders, but to the commitment and devotion of their citizens, who have often sacrificed their own safety to advance the democratic and European future of their countries.

Clearly, the autocratic regimes in Belarus and Azerbaijan raise considerable concerns in the area of human rights; moreover, it would be wrong to accept the assumption emanating

7 *Retribution and the Rule of Law: The Politics of Justice in Georgia* by Johanna Popjanevski, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Washington, DC, 2015

8 *U.S. 'Expresses Concerns to Georgian Govt' Over Rustavi 2 TV Case*, http://securityassistance.org/content/us-%E2%80%98expresses-concerns-georgian-govt%E2%80%99-over-rustavi-2-tv-case; Konrad Zasztowt, *The Case of Rustavi-2 TV: Escalation of the Conflict between Government and Opposition in Georgia,* The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) Bulletin No. 113 (845), 9 December 2015, https://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=21053; *The Curious Case of Rustavi-2: Protecting Media Freedom and the Rule of Law in Georgia* by Cory Welt, PONARS Eurasia, Policy Memo 400, November 2015, http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/curious-case-rustavi-2-georgia.

9 See, for instance, National Democratic Institute (NDI), *Public attitudes in Georgia. Results of a March 2016* survey carried out for NDI by CRRC Georgia, http://www.civil.ge/files/files/2016/NDI-Georgia-March-2016-PoliticalRatings-eng.pdf.

10 Ibid.
11 *Moldovans' Public Perceptions of Politics and Government: Results of NDI's November 2015 Public Opinion Research,* https://www.ndi.org/moldova-November-2015-survey-results.

from supporters of these regimes that autocracy is the necessary price for stability. While they do provide for an appearance of short-term stability, we know from the experience of numerous such regimes that unexpected implosion is also possible.

They also oscillate between trends of greater and lesser repression, which is generally to be explained by the influence of external factors. In particular, within the last two to three years, Belarusian authorities became more interested in improving relations with the West, released all political prisoners, and significantly lowered the level of repression against political opponents.

The government of Azerbaijan, on the other hand, being somewhat frustrated about the level of Western, especially US support, increased the level of repression against its critics in the opposition, civil society and independent media, although in 2016 some prominent jailed activists were released. In addition, repression against independent secular organisations has strengthened the hand of the Islamic opposition, as well as radicalisation of Islamic groups, that create long-term challenges for Azerbaijan.

Armenia's political system is much freer than those in Belarus and Azerbaijan, but autocratic trends and practices still prevail, with very weak opposition and independent media. Since its independence, Armenia has been ruled by the same political elite that emerged from a nationalist mobilisation around the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and still gains its legitimacy from leading the country to military victory at that time.

Moreover, Armenia's most recent two presidents, Robert Kocharian and Serzh Sargsian, are natives of Nagorno Karabakh. This source of legitimacy has lost much of its sway, however, and society has developed considerable fatigue towards the rule of the incumbent political elite; but the system does not provide opportunities for alternative players, which undermines its general legitimacy.

Security Agencies in the Spotlight

The countries also widely differ when it comes to the capacities of their security agencies, though there are some common features. They usually have official strategy documents, such as National Security Concepts or Military Doctrines, and these documents are useful sources for mapping the security concerns, priorities and strategies of each country. However, in a rapidly changing security environment, these quickly become obsolete and do not necessarily provide actual guidance on the decision-making process.

> " The lack of transparent and orderly procedures, and weak civilian oversight, are generic problems. "

The lack of a tradition of transparent and orderly procedures in decision-making processes and promotion of personnel, unclear division between military and civilian components or relevant agencies, weak civilian oversight, and high levels of corruption are generic problems the countries face (with important exceptions of certain countries in certain areas). On the positive side, in all the countries the military are under the firm control of the civilian state (with the possible exception of volunteer forces in Ukraine), and there is no threat of the military trying to impose their will on the political leadership.

For obvious reasons, in recent years, concern about the quality of security providers was highest in Ukraine, where the performance of the army in Eastern Ukraine was generally evaluated as rather poor. The high level of corruption, obsolete command and control structures, and low professionalism constituted the greatest challenges. This, among other things, led to the proliferation of voluntary militias that are often considered more effective in combat than the regular army.

While the urgent need to counter the aggressive behaviour of Russia and the separatist fighters it supports may justify the use of such forces, the existence of relatively well-organised militias that are not included into the regular system of command and control may create problems for the country's long-term security. Hence, drastic reforms in

the military sphere (as in many other areas of governance) are the order of the day in Ukraine. On the positive side, there is notable progress in the area of democratic oversight of the security agencies, due to a more active parliament and civil society.

Georgia, thanks to close and successful co-operation with NATO for many years, as well as a result of reforms carried out since 2004, has considerably improved the quality of its army, police and security services, increasing its effectiveness and cleaning the security services of corruption. However, it has no capacity to counter threats coming from the Russia-occupied territories, not least because it is afraid to "provoke" the other side. A 10 May 2016 incident, when a Georgian citizen was killed by a representative of the self-proclaimed Abkhazian government on the Georgian side of the dividing line, caused public outrage primarily because in this episode the government was seen as totally incapable of protecting its citizens even on the territory it apparently controls.

Azerbaijan and Armenia are two countries that have traditionally given priority to the development of their military due to their involvement in a conflict with each other, and a compulsion to be ready for resumed fighting at any moment. While, also based on the outcome of the war in the early 1990s, the combat-readiness of Armenian troops was usually judged higher, in recent years the balance may have shifted.

Azerbaijan had an opportunity to invest part of its considerable revenues from oil and gas exports into upgrading its army, and there have been efforts to fight corruption in this area. The appointment of a new Minister of Defence in Azerbaijan in 2013 led to some structural reforms in the Ministry, especially among command structure staff, which apparently was conducive to improvements in the quality of the military. However, the extremely low level of democratic oversight over the military and security agencies continues to be typical for both countries, as well as for Belarus.

While concerns stemming from the more aggressive information war and propaganda efforts from the Russian side are increasing, the governments are slow in defining policies that are supposed to counter the ensuing threats. In January 2015, in Ukraine, the Ministry of Information Policy was formed to fill the gap in countering Russian propaganda.

Last but not least, the countries of the region suffer from economic hardships and imbalances that stem partly from lower oil prices and the economic downturn in Russia, since many economies of the region are still linked to Russian markets. All countries went through painful currency depreciations and falls in export incomes, which contributed to the worsening situation of the poor. The crisis was especially notable in Azerbaijan, whose economy depends overwhelmingly on oil and gas revenues.

For obvious reasons, though, the hardships are the most acute in Ukraine. As a result of the war in its East, Ukraine has seen a fall of about 20 per cent in its economic capacity due to the loss of industrial infrastructure in Donbass. At least 3 per cent of the Ukrainian population is now internally displaced, and in March 2016 President Petro Poroshenko reported the number of 1.75 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine.[12]

In a more tense security situation, countries that are exceedingly dependent on energy supplies from Russia look for ways to diversify their supplies. For instance, in 2015 Belarus, the closest partner of Russia in the region, adopted a new Energy Security Concept which prescribed a set of measures whose implementation are expected to somewhat reduce the country's overwhelming dependence on Russian energy supplies.

Fostering Stability with NATO and the EU

The EU's Eastern neighbourhood region is extremely diverse with regards to the countries' orientations towards different military and political alliances and organisations. Georgia has been the most firm and consistent in its orientation towards NATO membership. At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, it received a general promise that it will be admitted to the organisation, even though there is no consensus within the Alliance as to when and how (or whether) to act on this promise. Respectively, its co-operation with NATO aimed at reform of the security sector in the direction of acquiring NATO standards, gaining interoperability of its armed forces

12 See *Security Alert on the EU's Doorstep – Ukraine country report* by Hanna Shelest and Hennadiy Maksak report.

with those of NATO countries, and increasing democratic control of the security sector, are the most advanced.

Despite Georgia's frustration with NATO's continuous indecision to grant it a Membership Action Plan, which would be a decisive preliminary step to membership, the opening of the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC) in Tbilisi in 2015 is considered an important step, demonstrating progress in Georgia-NATO relations. However, more is expected.

Ukraine and Moldova have not made a formal application to join NATO but, especially in Ukraine, there is a stronger political consensus in favour of deepening co-operation with the Alliance. Ukraine's recently updated Military Doctrine "is focused on adaptation of Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) to the NATO standards, and the final goal – the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country. It is expected that by 2018, 90 per cent of the Ukrainian units will be operating according to NATO standards."[13] Moldova is somewhat more cautious about linkage with NATO, but still displays a willingness to co-operate with the Alliance by participating in NATO-led military missions authorised by the UN, such as SFOR (in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Iraq, and KFOR (Kosovo).

On the other pole, Belarus and Armenia are members of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation, and strategic partnership with Russia traditionally constitutes the centrepiece of these countries' geopolitical orientation. However, in both countries this partnership is increasingly seen as problematic because it does not bring sufficient benefits to them. Therefore, both Belarus and Armenia try to complement (or balance) this partnership by co-operating with other powers, most notably NATO. In the Armenian case, this is part of the complementarity policy the country has been pursuing since the 1990s. Belarus participates in nearly 100 events per year with NATO within the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Planning and Review Process (PARP) frameworks.

Azerbaijan pursues a cautious policy of non-alliance in the military sphere, although Russia's aggressive policy in its neighbourhood has inclined Azerbaijan towards somewhat closer co-operation with NATO.

At the same time, it is concerned not to alienate Moscow by making this co-operation too close. Since 2013, the change in the leadership of the Ministry of Defence and ensuing reforms resulted in more responsibilities being given to NATO- and Turkish-trained staff, people who had previously held fairly junior positions. However, the Ukraine crisis and annexation of Crimea threw the Baku regime off course, leading it to take a low-profile stance in regard to its relations with the Alliance. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan is interested in the development of the Energy Security Centre of Excellence (ESCE) that would be linked to NATO with the direct involvement of Azerbaijan. This would gain Baku greater visibility inside NATO on energy security issues.

There is a similar division within the region about the level of co-operation with the EU. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signed Association Agreements with the EU in 2014, and in the same year Moldova achieved visa liberalisation with the EU's Schengen area.

Armenia and Belarus are members of the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union that precludes economic integration with the EU. However, both these countries strive to develop relations with the EU as well. This is true not only of Armenia that in 2013 refused to initial the Association Agreement with the EU at the very last moment under apparent Russian pressure, but also Belarus which never articulated the goal of EU integration. In particular, Minsk is interested in concluding a framework agreement on co-operation (Belarus still doesn't have a ratified Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) with the EU) in order to maintain good relations with its neighbours, develop economic co-operation with this powerful economic bloc, and counterbalance Russia's influence.

Azerbaijan, relying on its wealth from mineral resources and its strategic partnership with Turkey, steers clear of both European and Eurasian integration projects. While both Belarus and Azerbaijan have an interest in developing relations with the EU, the dismal human rights record in both countries is a major spoiler. On the Azerbaijan side, there is disappointment with the lack of EU involvement in finding a solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The release of political prisoners in both countries (most recently in Azerbaijan) has raised hopes of developing co-operation, but there is still a long way to go.

13 Ibid.

by Ghia Nodia, Jan Piekło, and Jeff Lovitt

The View from NATO Countries

We asked three experts in security and diplomacy to assess NATO's plans

JAMES NIXEY

Are NATO's plans leading up to the Warsaw Summit realistic, sufficient, and well-targeted, e.g. to increase the military presence in the Baltics and to focus on tackling hybrid warfare?

They're getting better, but they are a long way from being adequate. The Wales Summit in 2014 provided a good start – at least rhetorically – but the agreements reached have yet to be fully implemented, not least because of the lack of targeted defence spending by NATO member states. Clearly, the forces ranged on the Russian side of its border with the Baltic states are far greater than the size of the NATO forces on the other side. NATO is simply not doing enough in conventional warfare deterrence to make its position clear. This is partly because the scale of the problem is not fully understood. Hybrid warfare is just beginning to be understood, and some encouraging progress is being made in energy security and counter-bribery actions. But it is a steep learning curve. Russia's abilities to initiate hybrid warfare currently outweigh the West's abilities to repel it.

What single measure or package of measures by NATO would be most effective in deterring escalation of further Russian military intervention in Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries?

The most effective single measure would be to make the costs unacceptable to Moscow. This suggests the following clear message should be sent: "If it is evident that you have assisted in the destabilisation of Eastern Partnership countries, we will take retaliatory measures detrimental to your economy and, even more importantly, to your elites." But NATO then has to make good on that promise: if your bluff is called, you have to act.

Is NATO the only player who can lead on this?

In terms of a strict military presence, yes. The EU and the UN are not ready to build and commit a force, and the OSCE is not appropriate in this context. The US, however, has committed extra resources and is effectively playing the leading role.

Given the prospects of Montenegro's membership, and the closening of NATO's relations with Sweden and Finland, should NATO hold out the prospect of membership to Georgia and Ukraine?

No, at least not yet. The fact is, they are not yet ready. This is rather fortunate for NATO because if they were technically ready, it would be harder (but still not impossible) to refuse Georgia's and Ukraine's applications. Both countries are still far too riddled with governance problems to be seriously considered – and their militaries are still not interoperable with existing NATO forces. Ukraine is further away than Georgia in this respect, not least because it has experienced more serious destabilisation more recently. But the Georgians and Ukrainians need to improve their institutions to bring them to the standards of their counterparts in the West (or build them from scratch in many cases). The West should be clear that although the answer is no – for now – it is not out of the question and it is not impossible.

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GUSTAV C. GRESSEL

Are NATO's plans leading up to the Warsaw Summit realistic, sufficient, and well-targeted, e.g. to increase the military presence in the Baltics and to focus on tackling hybrid warfare?
I fear that the summit in Warsaw will be the end of the strengthening of NATO's Eastern flank, not the continuation. The measures implemented so far (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), an increase in the readiness of the NATO Response Force, and the rotation of a brigade through exercises in all Eastern flank states) are only a first step. It will be enough to stop a hybrid threat if the formations are on the spot in time. It is a symbol of solidarity. But in the case of Russian aggression, the "hybrid" phase will be followed by a conventional assault in a matter of days. Given the larger numbers of Russian troops in place to conduct conventional offensive warfare, a more substantial presence will almost certainly be needed.

What single measure or package of measures by NATO would be most effective in deterring escalation of further Russian military intervention in Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries?
There are two measures. The first is manoeuvres. In the military field, nothing works that you haven't practised before. Russia's plan is to launch a corps-size offensive operation within one week and expand it to a three-corps operation within one month. The manoeuvres and deployment of large offensive formations on Ukraine's borders in March/April 2014 support this scenario. So NATO needs to conduct its own large-scale manoeuvres – practising to stop a corps-sized incursion into any of the Eastern flank states and to remove the invading forces from that territory within one month. And now the tricky thing. I'm not religiously preaching for a direct, permanent presence on the Eastern flank. If the sceptics would show in practice in such a manoeuvre that they could deploy the necessary troops fast enough to the corners of the Eastern flank and be combat-ready in the short time needed, I'd be fine with the remote presence of stronger reserves. But if that isn't possible, NATO has to react accordingly. (Of course, they will never allow such manoeuvres, because the Italians and French know that they can't accomplish this, and hence this weakness should not be disclosed.

Unfortunately the Russians know as well…). But deterrence is only credible when it has been practised in manoeuvres.

The second measure is renewal and reform of the nuclear policy of NATO. The policy must embrace new means of delivery, and new policies, but above all the policy must be signalled to the Russians and practised in manoeuvres.

Is NATO the only player who can lead on this?
Yes, because at least for the time being we need the Americans for this. Unfortunately, amongst the Europeans, the last year saw a large amount of de-solidarisation, led by the Visegrad Four with their fundamental opposition to help in the refugee crisis. Since then, there has been zero appetite for doing something for the Eastern flank in France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Even for Germany's Minister of Defence, Ursula von der Leyen, it gets increasingly difficult to move something in Germany. The moment of moving together has passed; solidarisation has been reversed.

Given the prospects of Montenegro's membership, and the closening of NATO's relations with Sweden and Finland, should NATO hold out the prospect of membership to Georgia and Ukraine?
I would never say no to Ukraine and Georgia – not only to show Russia that it cannot negotiate over the heads of other states, but above all to sustain the momentum of reforms and transformation. Georgia is moving away from the West, and in Ukraine the same might happen if they get too disillusioned with the West. Although Ukraine has to reform much (much, much, much, much) more to come even close to NATO or EU membership, we should not in principle exclude the membership option. On the contrary, we should explain to them every day why they are so far away and which objective criteria they must fulfil to get in…

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by Ghia Nodia, Jan Piekło, and Jeff Lovitt

IOAN MIRCEA PAŞCU

Are NATO's plans leading up to the Warsaw Summit realistic, sufficient, and well-targeted, e.g. to increase the military presence in the Baltics and to focus on tackling hybrid warfare?

NATO has to convey to Russia a message of determination to honour Article 5 of its founding treaty, the principle of collective defence in the event of an attack against any of its members. It is an open question as to how we should measure what the Russians consider "determination". Personally, I suppose that the more meaningful the plans for a NATO military presence are, the more impact they will carry with Russia. Hybrid war is a different matter, because "subversion" is not covered by Article 5. Consequently, in this field, since Russia is intent on doing everything possible to destabilise the target countries, NATO (and the EU) are equally free to do whatever it takes to prevent that.

What single measure or package of measures by NATO would be most effective in deterring escalation of further Russian military intervention in Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries?

When Stalin was lectured on the moral power of the Vatican, he interrupted the lecturer and asked: "How many divisions does the Pope have?" Similarly, the Russian leadership today is impressed by one thing alone: military might! But, again, is an open question as to the level of military measures required to impress the Russians. The entire issue is rather political and theoretical, because the Russians know perfectly well that the Eastern Partnership countries are not NATO and EU members, and the public messages of some prominent members of those organisations signal that they might never be members...

Is NATO the only player who can lead on this?

I am afraid it is, apart from the measures taken by individual members, as in the case of helping Ukraine militarily ...

Given the prospects of Montenegro's membership, and the closening of NATO's relations with Sweden and Finland, should NATO hold out the prospect of membership to Georgia and Ukraine?

It depends on whom NATO (I mean its leading members) considers its main audience: Georgia and Ukraine, or Russia, because the messages conveyed to these respective audiences completely contradict each other. To satisfy both is impossible, because Russia considers Georgia and Ukraine the object of a "zero-sum" game with the West.

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International Co-ordination Key to Strategic Security

The EU's new Global Strategy is due to be published the week before the Warsaw Summit. According to a new Franco-Finnish Declaration on Strengthening the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, published on 15 June 2016, "Following the finalisation of the EU Global Strategy and with a view to its full operationalisation, the European Council should provide guidance for a more effective and capable military dimension of the EU."[14]

According to the joint declaration, "While NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defence, the EU's role as a security and defence provider both within Europe and abroad needs to be reinforced, including through a more strategic approach to its relations with NATO. The European Council and the Warsaw Summit should create political momentum to move forward with a joint declaration. Co-operation should be developed in the areas of maritime security, supporting partners in training and capacity building, exercises and hybrid threats." The declaration argues that "a Centre of Excellence for countering hybrid threats could support both EU and its member states, and enhance EU-NATO co-operation".

This co-operation is essential, and the EU needs to issue strong support to the strengthening of NATO's Eastern flank without duplicating NATO's military capability. But it might be in the areas of visa liberalisation and investment where the EU is best placed to complement a reinvigorated NATO with soft power steps that bring the citizens of the EU's Eastern neighbours closer to the EU's member states, and offers them a perspective for closer integration with the EU and a membership perspective.

In the words of Christopher S. Chivvis, "NATO should offer further funding and training to bolster command and control, intelligence, surveillance reconnaissance, special forces, and air and missile defences, while seeking to increase overall transparency and civilian control of the militaries of the region. NATO's decision to open a training centre in Georgia is a positive step. NATO can further increase the funding it has provided to date via trust

14 http://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/334517/ FR+FI+declaration.pdf/b3f6b546-a755-48b6-8786-6a058b361f41

funds for Ukraine. The alliance can also help to reduce the influence of Russian security services within the militaries and defence establishments of all three countries."[15]

> " The Eastern Partnership governments need to overhaul their governance systems, in particular in fighting corruption and implementing security sector reform. "

Priorities for national governments and civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries

Governments of EaP countries have dissimilar national priorities and foreign-policy orientations, while the level of democracy and, respectively, the capacity of the civil society actors to influence their government decisions and actions varies a lot. However, one can formulate principal recommendations that are useful to most or all national actors within the EaP area:

Governments

• While national governments have a different level of relations with NATO, due to their different geopolitical outlooks, the research has shown that all of them appreciate opportunities for closer co-operation with NATO. The EaP governments

15 "NATO's New Challenges", Christopher S. Chivvis in *Beyond NATO's Eastern Border. Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Foreign and Security Policy Paper 2016, No. 26*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/beyond-natos-eastern-border-georgia-ukraine-moldova

need to overhaul their governance systems, in particular in the fields of fighting corruption and implementing security sector reform. They should further prioritise these relations, because this may be the best available chance for the successful security sector reform necessary in all EaP countries, albeit to different degrees. This includes increasing the level of professionalism of military personnel, more efficient and transparent command and control structures, and a lower level of corruption.

• Governments should be more inclusive and transparent in developing their security strategies as well as in the process of implementing reforms in the security sector. This will increase the efficiency of their actions, gain them access to more expert advice, as well as greater goodwill and the trust of at least part of society.

• Governments should remember that developing democracy and the rule of law is not only a means to reap benefits from Western actors, but that constitutional democracy has also proven to be the most reliable way to ensure effective and stable governance. Advancing institutions of fair political competition, accountability of public institutions, the rule of law, and protection of human rights is an important priority for all EaP countries, however different their political systems may be.

• Countries involved in territorial conflicts (all except for Belarus) should follow consistent and well thought-through strategies that combine commitment to their national interests with pragmatic pursuit of strategies aimed at exclusively peaceful resolution of conflicts and reducing the existent level of tensions around them. More contacts between representatives of conflicting communities and regions (at both the government and community levels) should be encouraged in all cases to de-escalate tensions, and foster trust and constructive dialogue.

Civil society

• Increase professionalism and knowledge on issues of security policy and security reform that would enable civil society actors to engage in a meaningful, innovative, and productive participation in the process of formulating security reform policies and monitoring their implementation.

• Civil society actors should put greater effort into co-operating across countries, both within the EaP area and the EU, in order to study and disseminate best practices, as well as gain better knowledge of the risks and challenges emerging in the process of co-operation and integration with EU and NATO structures. Such co-operation is also important for adequately informing EU partners about processes that take place in EaP countries, and gaining greater support for the EU and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of their countries within EU and NATO member-states.

• Promote the idea of strong civil society engagement in the new EaP Platform on Common Security and Defence Policy, which could become a very productive platform for discussing common problems, and formulating and advocating common strategies in this area.

• Civil society actors should prioritise civic education activities within their countries to inform their societies on the specific benefits of EU and Euro-Atlantic integration, and effectively counter hostile messages that come from Russia and other actors and are directed at changing the internal balance of opinion within these countries aimed at discrediting democratic nations and liberal democratic institutions.

European Union

• The EU can become an even more valued partner to NATO by issuing a declaration to the Warsaw Summit, committing the EU members to strongly support the strengthening of NATO's Eastern flank without duplicating NATO's military capability and command structure.

• The EU should develop co-operation with NATO in the areas of maritime security, supporting partners in training and capacity building, security sector reform, joint exercises and hybrid threats and, as proposed in the Franco-Finnish declaration, establish "a Centre of Excellence for countering hybrid threats". This should work closely with, but not duplicate, the NATO Co-operative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. The EU and NATO will mutually benefit it they pool funds and expertise together in a dramatic investment in security sector reform

– including military and intelligence reform in the Eastern Partnership countries.

• The EU should work towards visa liberalisation, and waive visa requirements as soon as the technical criteria have been met, promote more people-to-people exchanges (such as educational exchanges), and continue to deepen trade ties, and offer EaP countries a perspective for closer integration with the EU and a membership perspective. The EaP countries should be offered a major role in the new EaP Common Security and Defence Platform.

• The EU should support independent journalism in the EaP region, and support projects that raise the standards of quality of journalism in both the EaP countries and the EU to ensure that reporting on the region is thorough, factually based, and credible.

NATO

• The NATO Bucharest Summit's formula of keeping the doors open for Ukraine and Georgia to join the Alliance (in some distant future) lays the ground for much deeper co-operation in security sector reform that will strengthen NATO's intelligence capabilities, and enable confidence-building and stabilisation of the security context on the EU's doorstep. It is in NATO's own interests to elaborate and present to three Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova) a road map for further co-operation with a membership perspective at the end.

• NATO will have a much greater understanding of imminent threats, and earlier warning, if it focuses strongly on its Eastern flank and drafts plans for closer co-operation with the Eastern Partnership countries. This engagement and intelligence-gathering are crucial at a time when misunderstandings and misinformation can trigger a dangerous escalation of conflict with Russia. NATO and the Eastern Partnership countries are deeply interdependent in security terms. While the Alliance is not obliged to defend non-members, the reality is that any future crisis in NATO's immediate vicinity will have an immediate impact on relations among Alliance members, as well as on how Russia sees the Alliance. Thus, resilient and well-prepared neighbours are a key NATO objective. In this context, the Alliance should bring the EaP countries into

the strategic dialogue around deterrence strategy, and include them in operational planning platforms.

• NATO co-operation with the Eastern Partnership countries should include: assistance in military training, intelligence support, standardisation of defensive weapons systems to improve co-ordination and training, joint military drills on EaP countries' territories, assistance in projects related to medical treatment of the wounded (field hospitals), assistance in post-trauma treatment and drafting plans for dealing with IDPs.

• NATO should help to stimulate regional military co-operation between NATO members and Eastern Partnership countries with a special focus on security in the Black Sea basin.

• NATO members should form multinational military units, such as the Polish-Ukrainian- Lithuanian Brigade with its headquarters in Lublin – on Polish territory near the border with Ukraine.

• NATO, in co-operation with Eastern Partnership countries, should develop joint projects for involving civil society in work on security-related issues (recommended option would be to set up a special NATO Security Alert grant programme for civil society organisations).

• NATO Eastern Flank members should share their experience of building and training the Self-Defence Territorial Military units (experience of the Baltic states and Poland).

• The Eastern NATO partners should regularly provide their NATO partners with their (Ukrainian and Georgian) experience in dealing with Russian hybrid war technology and Russian threats.

• It is important to show to Russia that NATO and its Eastern Partners are determined to co-operate and form a common response to aggressive behaviour.

by Ghia Nodia, Jan Piekło, and Jeff Lovitt

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The donors of the Re-granting Scheme are the European Union, National Endowment for Democracy and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The overall amount for the 2016 call for proposals is 320.000 EUR. Grants are available for CSOs from the Eastern Partnership and EU countries.

Key areas of support are democracy and human rights, economic integration, environment and energy, contacts between people, social and labour policies.