



The Eastern Partnership's missing security dimension

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Eastern Partnership 2.0

is the project of the Center for Liberal Modernity (LibMod) that aims to bring innovative ideas and political recommendations for action from the region to the stakeholders in political Berlin. It was launched together with the Open Society Foundation in October 2019.

The program includes workshops, policy papers, briefings, and public discussions in the German capital. The overall focus of the project is to promote political debate and EU engagement with the Eastern Partnership countries, especially Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

The three association countries are to be provided with an opportunity to strengthen their mutual relations and establish intensive cooperation with partners and actors from politics, think tanks and civil society in Berlin.

Executive summary

The EU's relations with its Eastern Neighbours has been subject to considerable and controversial debates since the Euromaidan Revolution and Russia's military aggression in 2014. While the EU aims to create a "ring of friends" through engagement – predominately economic engagement but also limited programmes for administrative and rule of law reforms – Moscow hedged against the European Union's growing influence by fostering means to blackmail and coerce their leaders not to engage too far with Europe: from corruption, information warfare, energy and economic dependencies to subversive violence, nurtured separatism and, finally, open military threat and the use of force. As the EU had no means or concept to answer the Russian policies, its Eastern Neighbourhood Policy has to be regarded as a fair-weather instrument.

There have been numerous attempts to agree on a common rulebook or system of co-management with Russia to turn a competitive situation into a win-win situation.¹ They have all failed. Unfortunately, their failure does not prevent politicians or academics, to suggest the old failed concepts over and over again. None of these initiatives will cope with the basic dilemma: Russia wants preeminence in the post-soviet space while local leaders seek independence and local populations accountable governments.

Russian obstructive tactics fall on fertile ground because post-Soviet state-institutions, especially the security apparatus is weak: weak separation of power, vulnerability to corruption and foreign intelligence penetration, overlapping competences, opaque laws and bureaucratic procedures, outdated equipment and in the armed forces no intellectual and conceptual tradition of territorial defence. For lack of ambition and political unity, the

EU has refrained from engaging too deep in the security sector and assistance for reform and capacity building. That then makes deteriorating the security environment a preferred policy for Russia to make itself "indispensable" on its very own conditions.

The paper compares the EU's policies with local needs and problems in the field of diplomacy and crisis resolution, media and information warfare, cybersecurity, intelligence and security-sector reform, military security and defence-industrial cooperation. Unsurprisingly, the gulf between demand and supply increases the further one approaches hard security issues.

On military matters, of course any EU help would never make these countries fully "invulnerable" to a possible Russian attack, simply for the fact that Russia is a nuclear power. But with well-targeted support measures, eradicating particular vulnerabilities these countries have, the EU members could make any Russian military aggression a much, much more costly and less predictable affair for the Kremlin. This would make military escalation a far less likely scenario.

The paper develops this need irrespective of the equally contested and debated membership issue. As important as the membership perspective is for the neighbourhood countries, in pure security terms, this discussion is premature: if the Eastern Neighbours do not dramatically increase their own capacities and reform their security forces to improve the rule of law, membership perspective will remain elusive. On the other hand, if these countries – even temporarily – remain outside of EU and NATO, they will be much more vulnerable to Russian pressure and hence have to dramatically increase their own security capacities. There is no way to escape from issues of hard security, nor its consequences.

¹ See for an overview: Roland Dannreuther (Ed.), *European Union Foreign and Security Policy, Towards a Neighbourhood Strategy*, Routledge, London, 2004;

Introduction

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the European Economic Community and then the European Union tried to reach out to the states in its Eastern Neighbourhood to try to assist their political and economic transition towards competitive, liberal democracy, rule of law, and market economy. From the very outset, there had been more demand for support and engagement from the neighbourhood than the EU could supply. This support effort considerably varied in scope and scale, with some countries immediately being interested in enlargement, others, such as Russia, ruled out this option from the beginning. However, the EU tried to include all of them into some sort of common spaces that would deepen societal and economic ties, stability, democracy, and peace.

Unfortunately, those EU policies proved to be fair-weather policies: they worked if there were capable and determined local governments in partner-countries, able and willing to reform, and Russia did not have the means to prevent and foil European policies. This window of opportunity was used to enlarge NATO and the European Union. But as the wars in Georgia and Ukraine have indicated, it is over.

Today, European engagement in the Eastern Partnership is contested, first and foremost by Russia. Russia sees the EU as an intrusive force into its perceived exclusive sphere of influence. That most of the now Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries have called on EU support by themselves (and not because the EU wanted to expand), particularly because Moscow was unable to provide any meaningful help with institutional, political, economic, and societal modernisation, is somehow lost by the Putin regime.

Every strengthening of the neighbours' ability to withstand pressure or defend themselves is seen as decremental to Russia's "security", even if it by no means enable the neighbouring state to conduct offensive operations against Russia.

It is also worth noting that Europe time and again tried to negotiate a contractual arrangement with Moscow that would turn the competitive situation into a "win-win" situation. At first the EU tried to offer Russia similar or privileged forms of economic assistance, approximation to the common market, and reform- and modernisation-assistance, like envisioned in the CFSP Common Strategy. Later, some member states tried to negotiate the end of protracted territorial conflicts by offering Russia a co-management position in common security institutions as stipulated in the 2010 Meseberg memorandum. However, when trying to implement all these initiatives, both Russia and European visions collided again, predominantly because there are essential differences in the understanding of basic concepts of "security", "deterrence" and "influence".²

For Europe, security rests in the absence of hostile intentions and offensive capabilities by one's neighbours. For Russia "security" rests in its ability to coerce its neighbours making decisions favourable of Russia. If non-military means of coercion fail, Moscow needs to be able to resort to the use of force to prevent the countries from taking such decision (like in Berlin 1953, Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, Moldova, Georgia in the early 1990s, Georgia again in 2008, Ukraine in 2014). Every strengthening of the neighbours' ability to withstand pressure or defend themselves is seen as decremental to Russia's "security", even if it by no means enable the neighbouring state to conduct offensive operations against Russia. In a similar way, "deterrence" is not only restricted to defensive deterrence, but also as preventive coercion to compel other states into compliance with Moscow's interests.

European policymakers usually understand "influence" in terms of attractiveness, role model, or attitude one state has towards ideas, ideals, policies, or structures of another state. It is about how one state shapes decisions and policies of another state without applying direct pressure or hard power. Hence the EU tries to extent influence in terms of engagement, civil-society contacts, advice, and strengthening economic ties. Following Soviet tradition on the other hand, Russian policymakers perceive "influence" as a form of operative control: the influencer has leverage and control over the influenced decision-making process. Hence on the Kremlin's term, influence is always a zero-sum game. While for the EU "influence" is bound to European attractiveness and exemplarism, influence on Russia's terms is bound to the Kremlin's coercive power and direct leverage over other power-structures.

² See for the Russian Establishment's thinking on security, deterrence, and influence: Dmitry Adamsky, *Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy*, IFRI Security Studies Centre, Proliferation Papers 54, November 2015, available at: <https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pp54adamsky.pdf>;

Hence for Moscow, there was little room for “co-management” or “co-existence” in the states of the common neighbourhood. Regardless how hard European politicians try to reassure the Kremlin, that any EU engagement in the neighbourhood would not be directed against Russia, for the decision-makers in the Kremlin it always was a threat: it decreased dependency on Moscow, strengthened local governments’ capacities and hence decreased Moscow’s abilities to exert pressure and threaten with disruption.

As Russia’s political attractiveness dwindles and its failure to build a diversified, technically advanced economy restricts Moscow’s ability to exert economic influence, hard-power coercion, subversion, covered operations, and finally military pressure both latent and actively through invading operations, became the primary tool for Moscow to exert influence. Hence for the EaP countries, security issues, both conventional military as well as other domestic and cyber-security topics have come to the attention of local policymakers. And again, the states affected by severe security risks turn to the West for assistance.

In the EU, there is a heated debate on whether the Union should engage on security matters at all. A French non-Paper in the Eastern Partnership,³ circulated in spring 2020 would reduce the Eastern Partnership to a totally unpolitical consultation-shop on environment, equality and women-rights, and deprive it not only of any security-dimension (including cybersecurity), but also strip it of all institution-building and rule of law cooperation (judiciary reform, police-reform, intelligence sector reform, etc.). The rationale of the French government is that the EaP should not be directed against Russia, and engaging in any of these fields would be seen as provocation in Moscow.

If the French position were to be adapted by the EU, this would mean a genuine break with the current security order. It would legitimate Russian demands to have a right of interference and de-sovereignties the states of the EaP. This not only contradicts the Charters of Helsinki and Paris, it also undermines the right for individual and collective self-defence the United Nations Charta. Throwing all these norms overboard would hardly improve Europe’s security.

Instead of following this fatal course, the EU should ponder how it best can engage with the EaP states on these matters. Of course, the EU as such faces severe institutional limitations on the fields of security: it is not a unitary state actor, and it will hardly become one. However, it can set regulatory frames and set up certain programmes that are helpful, especially if well-coordinated with the means and policies of individual member states.

A pre-requisite to successfully deal with the situation is to understand the Eastern Partnership Countries’ situation and needs. For this task, this paper rests on three advisory papers on the security situation in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine written by Giorgi Bilanishvili, Victoria Roşa, and Mykhaylo Samus, Leonid Litra, Andriy Klymenko, Dmytro Shulga respectively. Resting on their expertise, this paper will try to match interests and demands within the EaP with the means and assets Europeans have at their disposal.

To structure this comparison, the paper will focus on five main areas: (1) Diplomacy and conflict resolution, (2) Media and information warfare, (3) Cybersecurity, (4) Intelligence- and Security-Sector reform, (5) Military Security and Defence-Industrial Cooperation. In these five areas, the demands of local actors will be compared with the assistance the EU and its member states offer and try to deduct recommendations.

While the Eastern Partnership as a whole includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, the paper will focus primarily on the three states that have signed an Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Those three states have committed themselves to closer approximation to Europe and must bear most of the burden of Moscow-led disruption.

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³ Republique Francaise, Reflexion structuree sur l’avenir du Partenariat oriental, Contribution francaise, Paris, 25.10.2019;

Diplomacy and conflict resolution

Except for Belarus, all EaP countries have been suffering from military conflict and separatism: the Abkhazia and South Ossetia issue in Georgia, the Transdniestria issue in Moldova, Crimea and the war in Donbas in Ukraine, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. With the exception of the last one – which started as early as 1988 –, none of these conflicts would have escalated to war and full-fledged separatism without the active assistance of Russia. For Moscow these conflicts were a token to insert itself as veto-player in the country's domestic political sphere. Between 1994 and 2014, the EU and some member states tried to mediate a possible solution of these conflicts reconciling Moscow's and the local countries' interests. The different initiatives are beyond the scope of this article, but it is obvious that none of them bore significant results.

In Georgia, Moscow's formal recognition of its proxy-regimes in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali as independent states has made a formal resolution of the conflict impossible. But this does not mean that the conflict is stable and frozen. Russia uses these regions to exert pressure on Georgia proper, particularly by fencing the demarcation line between South Ossetia and Georgia and moving these fences deeper into Georgia, as well as provocative actions from these territories like hostage taking and arbitrarily closing the borders. The demarcation line between Georgia proper and the breakaway regions has never been demarked. Because the Russian narrative that "Georgia started the war in 2008" prevailed in the West, the Georgian government since 2012 does not want to deploy armed forces or border guards to stop the Russian border troops from moving the demarcation line. For similar reasons, Georgia has refrained from militarily fortifying its side of the border.

As there is no direct or indirect negotiating format between the two parties – Russia has broken off the OSCE talks and demands formal recognition of the breakaway regions as preconditions for further talks – there is no preliminary management regime for practically dealing with the demarcation line as there is in the Donbas.

In Tbilisi, how to handle Russia has become an increasingly toxic and polarised domestic issue, that galvanises much of the unease Georgian society and opposition has towards the increasingly authoritarian behaviour of the Georgian "grey cardinal" and oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, who dominates Georgian politics.

Europe relieved sanctions on Russia for its actions on Georgia after only three months. The EU has deployed a monitoring mission – the EUMM –, but this mission has no access to the breakaway regions. Similarly, the EU has a special representative for the South Caucasus, whose mandate is to facilitate conflict resolution, but

in fact, Moscow has broken off negotiations, and the human rights situation in South-Ossetia and Abkhazia anything but improving.⁴

A strict non-recognition policy regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia needs to be the basis for any EU diplomatic engagement in the region. Additionally, the EU could put humanitarian issues and clear demarcation of the administrative line on the diplomatic table and sanction Russian companies, banks, as well as personnel for their engagement in the breakaway regions if Moscow maintains its obstructive stance.

In Moldova the EU formally is part of the 5+2 negotiation format under the OSCE umbrella (Moldova, Transdniestria, the OSCE, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the EU and the United States are part of the format). However, this format has not brought about any significant results. Possible ends to the conflict were negotiated, or rather dictated by Moscow: the 1997 Moscow memorandum⁵ and the 2003 Kozak memorandum.⁶ Both would have turned Moldova into a federal state, with a gross over-representation of Russian-controlled Transdniestria and pro-Russian Gagauzia. In the "federation" Russia could not only block Moldova's EU accession, it would also be able to foil domestic reforms and hence guarantee Moldova being ineffectively governed and institutionally weak. With the prospect of such a "solution", no wonder that Transdniestria became a highly controversial issue in Moldova's domestic politics.

If Igor Dodon wins the presidential election in October 2020, Transdniestria will be on the table again: In addition to federalisation, Moscow also demands a stricter, and "internationally recognised" version of Moldova's neutrality. As no official proposal has been published yet, one can only guess which restrictions Moscow wants to put on Moldova's relations with Europe and how this would affect the DCFTA implementation. As Dmitry Kozak, who negotiated with Moldova in the past, has succeeded Vladislav Surkov in the presidential administration, it may be assumed that from Moscow's perspective, Moldova is first and foremost a testing ground for Ukraine.

There is little the EU can do if Moldova subscribes to such a "peace-plan" as a sovereign decision. However, the EU needs to be ready to support Moldova if it decides to decline the "offer".

4 Nino Tsagareishvili, Aleko Tskitishvili, Nino Tlashadze; State of Human Rights along the Dividing Lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, The Human Rights Center, Tbilisi, available at: <https://civil.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/STATE-OF-HUMAN-RIGHTS-ALONG-THE-DIVIDING-LINES-OF-ABKHAZIA-AND-TSKHINVALI-REGIONS.pdf>

5 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Memorandum on the Basis for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transdniestria, 8 May 1997, available at: <https://www.osce.org/moldova/42309>;

6 "Меморандум Козака": Российский план объединения Молдовы и Приднестровья, Подробности: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/458547.html>

Media and information warfare

On Ukraine, diplomatic support by both the EU and its member states had been firmer. The EU has put sanctions in place against people and companies running business in Crimea – although extraterritorial US sanctions de-facto serve as the enforcement-mechanism of these sanctions ensuring compliance.⁷ All EU member states also endorsed the UN General Assembly's December 2019 resolution, which condemns Russian militarisation of the Crimea, Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.⁸

On the Donbas, more comprehensive sanctions have been put in place, including the ban of weapons and dual-use goods, restrictions for Russian state-owned companies, and restrictions on assisting Russian companies extracting unconventional carbon resources. The longer these sanctions last, the more painful they become for Russia's economy, regime-cronies and the military-industrial complex. As they are coupled to the full implementation of the Minsk II agreement, they would provide an incentive for Moscow to work towards resolution – if Moscow were sure that European unity would last.

This of course is easier said than done. Minsk II is not a good agreement, with many loopholes and an imperfect sequencing. The German and French government had to play a two-level game, confronting Russia in negotiations while trying to satisfy public demands for a “balanced” stance in public communication. However recent developments both in Europe and in Ukraine put this policy at risk. In Europe, President Emmanuel Macron has committed himself to a reset-policy with Russia and perceives the war in Donbas as a soon to be removed obstacle to rapprochement. In Ukraine, counter-revolutionary forces (hostile to the Maidan revolution) claimed power under Zelenskyy and particularly after his March 2020 government reshuffle.⁹ While the intention of the government to roll-back as much post-Maidan reforms as possible, it remains to be seen how far it can actually go given both domestic as well as economic, financial, and political constraints, and how far it may use the advertising outreach to the so-called People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk (known by their Russian abbreviations DNR/LNR) as a lever or excuse to advance its agenda in Kyiv.

Information warfare means deployed by the Kremlin have gained significant attention since the war in Ukraine started in 2014. However, Russian information warfare made use of the weaknesses of existing media systems. While the ones in Ukraine have been covered most extensively, the overall situation is similar in the EaP countries: Revenues gained through subscription and advertising in media (both print, online, and TV) is low, hence all major outlets are cross-financed by oligarchs, local interest groups, foreign agents, or both. Especially amongst elderly people, television is the predominant source of information, and all major TV stations are in the hands of oligarchs. All political leaders – Salome Zurbishvili in Georgia through Bidzina Ivanishvili's networks, Igor Dodon in Moldova through Vladimir Plahotniuc's network and Russian media, Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Ukraine through Igor Kolomoisky – own their popularity to oligarchic media, and hence are unwilling to put limits on their influence and appeal. Public broadcasters are either financially starved or are mouthpieces of the government with little public trust.

While the EU offers support for independent and investigative journalists,¹⁰ it demands less in terms of media market regulation. While mutual recognition of property rights, broadcasting services, non-discriminatory clauses, etc. are parts of the DCFTA, it provides no guidance on how to redefine national media rules to curtail foreign influence and oligarchic propaganda. In fact, in the EU only few states have a robust media-landscape themselves, while others are themselves vulnerable to foreign disinformation and oligarchic campaigns.

Ideas to force oligarchic media towards more transparency have unfortunately not been adapted. These would have stated that media enterprises need to fund themselves (through advertisement or subscription) and could not be cross-financed by other branches of an entrepreneurial conglomerate. This would prevent oligarchs funding propaganda channels with their wealth in order to influence elections. Stricter rules on transparency of media ownership should make it more difficult to disguise ownerships and cross-financing through various offshore-holdings. Unless the EU demands adaptation of such laws, nothing will happen.

⁷ For a comprehensive analysis of sanctions see: International Centre for Policy Studies, Sanctions against Russia, Current Status, Prospects, Successes, and Gaps in the Multilateral International Sanctions Regime, Kyiv 2020, see: <http://www.icps.com.ua/en/our-projects/publications/sanctions-against-russia-current-status-prospects-successes-and-gaps-in-the-multilateral-international-sanctions-regime-against-the-russian-federation/>

⁸ Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov : revised draft resolution <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3837519?ln=en>

⁹ See: See for a preliminary assessment: Melinda Haring, Ze End?, Atlantic Council, March 4th 2020, available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ze-end/> and Peter Dickinson, Zelenskyy changes course with government reshuffle, Atlantic Council March 5th, available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/zelenskyy-changes-course-with-government-reshuffle/>;

¹⁰ See for the corresponding EU activities in the Eastern Partnership: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/tackling-challenges-independent-media-eastern-partnership-countries_en

Cybersecurity

All countries with an association agreement have transformed their state TV and radio outlets into public media broadcasting companies. However, the public media is underfunded and can hardly compete with private or foreign media. Some years after the reforms, the “public” broadcasters are accused of being little better than old state-operated TV in terms of independence. While some EU member states who own public broadcasters have tried to bilaterally assist the new Ukrainian national channel (particularly the BBC),¹¹ there is no EU-coordinated support.

Apart from oligarchic media and bad or polarising reporting by mainstream media, Russian propaganda and the spread of discouraging, de-mobilising lies, “fake news” through social media and obscure online platforms has become a menace in all EaP countries.¹² In Ukraine, there are civil-society watchdogs and investigative journalists that do an amazing job tracking down and analysing fake news and propaganda. Many of these organisations receive EU support, or support from EU member states. However, beyond Ukraine, there needs to be a capacity building programme first to built-up organisations and structures to take up the task. In any case, the EU – even if it receives proper information from local actors – lacks the strategic communication capacity to counter disinformation campaigns in these countries, or to coordinate government communication with member states.

Russian propaganda is targeted not only against Eastern Partnership countries, trying to undermine their independence, but also against the EU and the West in general. The narrative that the Kremlin promotes through its media is extremely hostile towards the EU and its key member states and is widely consumed not only by Russian citizens, but also in the Eastern Partnership countries and among Russian-speaking diaspora (be they in Baltic states or in Germany e.g.).

Since Soviet times Belarus and Ukraine are industrialised countries with various high-quality technical, mathematical and natural science Universities that provided the underlining human resources for both the IT industry as well as cyber-intelligence. As Soviet laws inherited by all post-Soviet countries heavily over-regulated all sorts of businesses but the IT sector, this sector was able to grow in the 1990s and attract capital from abroad. On the other hand, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova were primarily agrarian (or oil-producing) economies with few skilled labour and education facilities. Hence, regarding the IT sector, they are consumers, dependent on Chinese, Russian, European, and American IT enterprises to provide infrastructure and services.

On cyber-security, Ukraine is the most advanced country, although many Western comparative studies suggest otherwise. This is because Western auditors predominantly care about rules, regulations, laws, and formal procedures, not real capabilities and capacities to repel attacks. The legislative and administrative cacophony in Ukraine has many roots, as consecutive security sector reforms to deliniarise the overlapping competences of different intelligence and investigative services failed, and Ukraine’s criminal and procedural laws are in dire need of an overhaul.

On the other hand, what does this say about Ukraine’s ability to repel and react to cyber-attacks? For one, the SBU, the State Service for Special Communication and the National Police’s cybercrime departments are well staffed. They work closely with Ukraine’s telecommunication providers and private sector IT companies, the strongest amongst all Eastern Neighbourhood countries.¹³

Since the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, Ukraine also became a laboratory for Russian cyberwar tools and forms of attacks.¹⁴ Attackers not only comprise of high-capacity attacks by Russian intelligence services, but also by freelance cyber-criminals and amateurs from Russia. The state’s critical infrastructure, governmental services, election commission, the healthcare service, etc. they are under constant attack. The biggest incidents, like the NoPetya malware attack, the “Black-Energy” and “KillDisk” attacks on Ukraine’s power grid are the

11 See for the BBC’s activities abroad: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where-we-work/europe-and-caucasus/ukraine/>

12 For an overview on the situation in Ukraine see: <https://ukraineworld.org/articles/books/words-and-wars-ukraine-facing-russian-propaganda> and <https://ukraineworld.org/articles/infowars> respectively; in Georgia and Moldova the situation is similar although the actors and local information-laundering structures are different.

13 The roughly \$5 billion strong sector employs more than 200.000 specialists, producing 20% of Ukraine’s service exports (see: <https://ain.ua/en/2019/08/30/ukrainian-it-industry-2019-2020/>). Outsourcing labour-intensive coding to Ukrainian companies attractive for Western enterprises. Each year 25.000 new specialists and 16.000 university graduates join the sector (see: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/victoriacollins/2019/10/01/the-ukrainian-tech-industry-and-the-launch-of-the-ukraine-it-creative-fund/#2aba3b584031>). Many of these specialists also work in voluntary organisations, or for investigative journalists.

14 Laurens Cerulus, How Ukraine became a test bed for cyberweaponry, As Russian hackers face down Western spies, the country has become a live-fire space for hackers, Politico, February 20th 2019; available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-cyber-war-frontline-russia-malware-attacks/>

most notable, and most prominent attacks that made it into international news. But the system is tested every day. International cooperation is not only beneficial for Ukrainian authorities, many Western intelligence services and IT security enterprises reach out to their Ukrainian counterparts to exchange information on recent malware and attack patterns. If there will be a new tool in cyber-warfare, it will most likely be tested in Ukraine.

In Georgia, the situation is quite the opposite from that in Ukraine. While cyber-security was not an issue right after independence, the country adopted modern Western standards and legislation during the Saakashvili era. Its 2012 law on Cyber-security is amongst the best in the EaP. The 2013 Cyber Security Strategy for 2013-2015 provides the framework for institutional de-linearization and incident response.¹⁵ The various services dealing with analysis, incident response, critical infrastructure protection, cyber security training, and cyber forensics are concentrated in the Ministry of the Interior. To this day these progressive laws earn Georgia appraisals from Western authorities.

However, the progressive legislative framework says little about cyber-resilience and -hygiene in society and the private sector. IT capacities of the education systems are rather limited. Cooperation with Estonian cybersecurity services and the US FBI a decade ago provided for a nucleus of protected critical infrastructure and personnel mainlining it, but there has been little added to IT security thereafter.

The “I’ll be back” attack carried out in October 2019 took down over 15.000 private and public owned websites and servers in Georgia, but left the country’s critical infrastructure intact. The massive scale of the attack overwhelmed cyber incident response capacities, and unveiled weak cyberhygiene and security standards both in the private sector, judiciary, and government. While the scale of the attack was large, it was not enormously sophisticated. The Georgian government was also late in clearly attributing this attack to Russia, which gave Russian information warfare agents time to spread disinformation and wrong attributions about the attack.

Moldova had long combined the worst of both worlds: a divided and dysfunctional IT security sector and legal cacophony like Ukraine and the absent cyber-industry and lacking cyber capacity of Georgia. Only after 2015, in the wake of the EU-association, the country introduced new laws on cyber-security and introduced cybersecurity structures (two CERT teams).

As effective cybersecurity needs private-public partnerships between the government and the IT sector, the lack of the latter – like in Georgia – put severe limitations on Moldovan cybersecurity capacity. Under the Sandu government, new tax deductions and other benefits were created to attract particularly Romanian IT enterprises to open franchises in Moldova. It now remains to be seen whether the growth is sustainable under the new government, what role Russian services will assume in Moldova’s security sector, and what this will mean for the IT sector at large.

Finally, there are cybersecurity implications of unresolved conflicts. Russian services use the DNR as a dependence to create credible deniability when testing new cyberweapons against Ukraine and the West. Because Transnistria de-facto receives natural gas for free, bitcoin farms mushroom on the territory. Because Tiraspol is out of reach for Moldovan law enforcement, these farms also provide safe heavens and hubs to finance all sorts of covered operations and criminal activities.

In the DCFTA, there are quite some provisions on cybersecurity matters, most of which regard approximations on standards for digital services, certification, and creating the structures to liaise with corresponding cybersecurity institutions in the EU. What the EU lacks is auditing these local structures, engaging in capacity-building programmes to enhance local authorities’ capabilities and conduct joint cyber-incident response exercises to train and educate decisionmakers.

¹⁵ Cyber Security Strategy of Georgia 2012-2015, available at: https://dea.gov.ge/uploads/National%20Cyber%20Security%20Strategy%20of%20Georgia_ENG.pdf

Intelligence and security sector reform

Reliable, effective, and legitimate intelligence services are a prerogative to prevail in Russia's attempt to subdue the EaP states through a campaign of covered operations – incorporating espionage, sabotage, information warfare, political manipulation through proxy-organisations, corruption and bribery, economic pressure, terrorism, nurturing violent separatism and irredentism, and others.

Intelligence agencies in all of these states faced similar problems of the whole law enforcement sector encountered in the post-Soviet space: as a pillar of Soviet regime security, they were staffed with Soviet loyalists that were deemed a security risk after independence; low salaries but social benefits like own hospitals, schools, etc., enhanced social prestige in a planning economy but offering little incentives in a monetarised market economy; multiple services and state agencies had overlapping competences and competed with each other as this was the Communist Party's model to remain central arbiter between services, over-bureaucratization and opaque procedural laws meant that even if a case were established, proper documentation and prosecution was difficult to achieve. Intelligence agencies often were the only shortcut in this conundrum, but their "evidence" often rather represented the Communist Parties will than "evidence" in an empirical sense. Hence intelligence services were rather a political tool of influence than an "intelligence" agency in the proper sense. After 1991, not all newly elected political leaders were willing to let go of this tool.

In Ukraine, intelligence sector reforms were delayed, with occasional post-revolutionary leadership make-overs. At the heart Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) was the KGB that remained on Ukraine's soil. Even though some services were split off over time, the service's legal competences remained vast. Soon, inter-service rivalries emerged with the Ministry of Interior, especially after Arsen Avakov, who has been minister since 2014, began accumulating competences and new services under his own reign. Despite several attempts by the EU, the US, and NATO to push for reforms in Ukraine's intelligence sector,¹⁶ Kyiv dogged the pressure and by early 2020, the reform attempt had failed.

That does not mean Ukraine's services are ineffective. Quite the contrary, the SBU is quite capable. The problem here is legitimacy. Then and now, the SBU is a tool of presidential power. That is a problem if the president turns illegitimate, as Yanukovich did, or engages in personal vendettas against political rivals. Furthermore, several scandals with the "Directorate-K", that should in

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theory fight corruption and economic crime, but often engages in its own operations payed for by oligarchs and powerholders, are a cause for unease. Under the condition of a permanent information war with Russia, having little public trust in the intelligence services is something no country can afford. Furthermore, other Western intelligence services are hesitant to cooperate with the SBU as long as it remains unreformed.

In Moldova, the KGB successor is called "Security and Intelligence Service (SIS), whose vast competences were never unbundled. Like in Ukraine, the SIS is not only an intelligence service, but also a law enforcement agency. Combining these two functions, it holds considerable domestic power. However, compared to the SBU the SIS suffers from underfunding and permanent squabbles and alternations of reform, oligarchic, and pro-Russian governments and presidents. Hence, while the SIS shares much of the pre-2014 SBU's problems and vulnerabilities, it does not have comparable effectiveness and resources.

In the wake of signing the Association Agreement, the Council of Europe drafted recommendations for Moldova's rule of law reforms that included the SIS.¹⁷ But as the President is responsible for the intelligence services, Igor Dodon was neither enthusiastic about reforming nor strengthening the SIS after claiming power in 2016. The state capture and corruption under Vladimir Plahotniuc's various puppet governments had a similarly corrosive effect on morale and effectiveness.

As the overall threat to Moldova's political system (both covered or hybrid threats as well as open military threats) have a dimension beyond Transdnistria (effectively would require intelligence on Russia proper), Moldova's isolation (neutrality) and non-compatibility with Western norms

¹⁶ For further details see: Gustav C. Gressel, Guarding the guardians: Ukraine's security and judicial reforms under Zelensky, ECFR Policy Brief, August 2019, available at: https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/guarding_the_guardians_ukraine_security_and_judicial_reforms_under_zelensky

¹⁷ Council of Europe, Council of Ministers, Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16806cd3a5>

(hence also limited intelligence exchange) are a risk. Moldova always runs danger of being surprised by events and new covered operations orchestrated by Moscow.

In Georgia, the Georgian Intelligence Service (GIS) was reformed and stripped of its law enforcement competences through various reforms from 2005 to 2010. In terms of de-linearization and adapting to Western rules, Georgia's law enforcement sector – including intelligence – is by far more progressed because of the radical reforms conducted in the Saakashvili era. However, is it effective? In the GIS's reports on Georgia's threat situation,¹⁸ the service describes the subversive threats that the country faces. However, there is little action from the side of the government to stop them. Whether there are insufficient laws, lack of coordination between different law enforcement services, political obstruction from within the government, or insufficient evidence produced by intelligence that causes the inaction is difficult to establish.

Because Georgia has advanced most in adapting Western rules and regulations, NATO in March 2020 included the GIS in its cyber-threat exchange network. Given Georgia's vulnerability to cyber-attacks (as described above), this is a step in the right direction.

On intelligence sector reform and support, the EU has very heterogeneous policies. All the Association Agreements contain provisions for Security Sector reforms, concentrating primarily on aspects of rule of law, separation of powers, and human rights protection. Developing tangible recommendations for reforms have been outsourced to the Council of Europe. Hence the progress of the EaP countries on intelligence and security sector reform does not occupy much space in the EU's evaluation and negotiations on AA/DCFTA implementation.

The only exception to this rule is Ukraine, where the EU has an advisory mission – the EUAM – to evaluate and support civilian security sector reform including intelligence. Hence the EU can be much more focused and targeted when insisting on certain key points in higher-level negotiations. EUAM experts can supervise and evaluate actual reform-implementation instead of only looking at the adaptation of laws and regulations. Through regional offices they can see how reforms affect practical work in the country. All this facilitates much more targeted assistance, advice, and criticism.

The other problem is that most work on intelligence matters was outsourced to the United States, which supported Moldova's, Georgia's, and Ukraine's services not only with advice but at times with critical information. This division of labour does not work since the administration of US President Donald Trump is pushing for politics fundamentally at odds with the US intelligence community and the EU.

Military security and defence-industrial cooperation

With the exception of Belarus, every state in the Eastern Partnership has a territorial conflict on its soil in which Moscow has successfully inserted itself as central arbiter and uses it to retain influence. With the exception of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, all wars had been intentionally escalated or have been artificially created by Russian intelligence and military assets. It is quite self-evident that military pressure was such an easy tool for Russia, because its neighbours were militarily weak. But the military balance influences decision-making even short of war. Exposure to military pressure can be used to intimidate and blackmail at will. This is why the Kremlin so aggressively condemns any Western support for its neighbours' armed forces.

More capable militaries in the Eastern Partnership would not mean that they need to be totally immune to or unconquerable by Russia's armed forces. This is not only unachievable, it is unnecessary. Like for many non-aligned states during the Cold War, the overall aim of defence-preparations should be to credibly induce such high costs to a potential aggressor that military aggression would not pay off in terms of its costs to benefit relation. Ukraine in 2015 and 2016 proved that point: despite Russia still maintained theoretical escalation dominance – the issue fetishized by all opponents of stronger military aid for the country – any further escalation would have imposed much higher costs in lives and materiel compared to modest gains. Hence after losing some minor battles, Russian forces retrenched and only prolonged the phoney war.

However, the Ukrainian case also illustrated that increasing the effectiveness of national military capabilities is not just about equipment, but a more comprehensive, time-consuming effort that needs to be prepared in peacetime. Transforming the post-Soviet states' armed forces into militaries that are able to defend their respective country also is such a difficult affair because they do not have the tradition, thinking, experience, and historic concepts they could rest on when re-inventing their armed forces. The Red Army – and the Imperial Russian Army before – were not defensive and had no intellectual tradition of territorial defence.

Building up armed forces – and all their underlying traditions, institutions, etc., is a long-term effort, nothing that can be accomplished overnight. This dimension was ignored by the Eastern Partnership, and the EU's foreign relations as such. It also needs to be stressed that there hardly is a “one fits it all” solution for the associated countries: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine have very diverse capabilities, different geographical locations and vulnerabilities, and face different threat scenarios even if the enemy is the same.

¹⁸ The Report: <https://bit.ly/2MEhyQT>

Ukraine has well managed to control and contain the war in the Donbas. After a series of reforms,¹⁹ and with some support and advice of Western armed forces, Ukrainian land forces have achieved the readiness, skills, and equipment to handle Russia's proxy forces and their supporting forces. Even recent Russian attempts to escalate the war could be controlled. Ukraine has dramatically increased its manoeuvre and training activities since 2014, however it insufficiently reformed its ministerial bureaucracy, logistics, and defence planning.²⁰

Even more problematic for Ukraine is the dismal state of its navy and air force. Ukraine's navy newer motor-gunboats and patrol-craft lack the cover of major combatants once they leave the cover of Ukraine's coastal artillery. This has been exploited by Russia at several occasions, not only the famous Kerch-incident, when Russia pirated Ukrainian vessels in international waters, but also by the plundering of Ukraine's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by Russian fishermen and oil- and gas enterprises.

Ukraine's air force Soviet-era fighter planes lack spares and pilots lack flying hours. Air force and air-defence force equipment is still Soviet legacy, without modification to electronic equipment and command and control infrastructure. Not only does Russia exactly know how Ukrainian systems work, they could train and rehearse any incursion, provocation, etc. somewhere in Central Siberia and then execute the best "solution" against Kyiv in a humiliating manner.

As Ukraine has a sizable defence-industrial sector, it started to address these needs. However, the sector faced several problems. First, the Ukrainian defence industry used to produce subcomponents for other defence products assembled in Russia. Second, the Poroshenko administration ignored the corruption and ineffectiveness of Ukroboronprom, the country's state arms industry holding. Zelenskyy appointed the reformer Aivaras Abromavičius to lead the holding in 2019, and there are signs that things get better.

Georgia as well is vulnerable to Russian conventional military assaults, but in a very different manner. The Caucasus ridge is a major natural obstacle against any armoured incursion, except for the two "gates" in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Apart from local puppet forces, Russia has deployed the 4th military base in South Ossetia and the 7th base in Abkhazia. They are backed up by the 58th and 49th combined army respectively across the border. In terms of geographic vulnerability, South Ossetia is particularly problematic. Because

the Kura valley is Georgia's only east-west connection, Russia can use South Ossetia as a hub to cut Georgia in two by a quick offensive. It is a perfect jump board towards Tbilisi.

In Western assessments on defence sector reform Georgia receives the best marks on all Eastern Partnership states.²¹ Georgia is by far the most advanced country on implementing NATO standards in the ministry of Defence, defence-acquisition, and logistics, its defence-planning and processes. After all, this positive development made Georgia one of the few countries in the Eastern Partnership that could acquire some West-European weapons systems. It has also sent many soldiers to NATO missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo and participated with sizable forces in the US-led mission in Iraq.

But all that says little on whether the armed forces themselves would be prepared to meet a Russian offensive, and how long they could hold out. While Georgia tries to imitate NATO armies as much as it can, it faces a very different threat situation. Georgia has long avoided "total defence" concepts like in the Baltic Countries after 2014, or in Finland. Such concepts, resting on full mobilisation, territorial defence, and civilian defence efforts are typical for small, exposed countries being threatened by much larger neighbours. They would be a better template than trying to emulate the US army on a micro-level. Only the last Defence Review moved towards a total-defence concept.²² There is little continuation in defence planning and reform efforts, with new personnel trying to re-invent the same wheel all over, once taking position and producing more "vision" papers and paper concepts than implementing reforms. The best example of this was the abandonment of conscription in 2016 and its reintroduction in 2017. As military structures need to be built up over time, such adventures do terrible damage to the armed forces' morale and true combat capability.

To participate in international missions, Georgia has few, well equipped, professional units, while larger parts of the armed forces are under-funded and receive little training. A full-scale defensive effort against Russia would rest on the manoeuvre brigades and mechanised forces, not special forces and light infantry that deploy abroad. There were no recent larger-scale manoeuvres and deployment exercises that practice the case of a Russian assault. Reserve and territorial defence forces are either non-existent or few and underequipped (depending on which timeframe one looks at). Georgia has not (yet?) fortified the administrative line to the Russian-occupied territories.

19 See: Valeriy Akimenko, Ukraine's Toughest Fight: The Challenge of Military Reform, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2018, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/02/22/ukraine-s-toughest-fight-challenge-of-military-reform-pub-75609>

20 See: Adriana Lins de Albuquerque and Jakob Hedenskog, Ukraine, A Defence Sector Reform Assessment, FOI, Stockholm, available at: <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4157--SE>

21 See: Adriana Lins de Albuquerque and Jakob Hedenskog, Georgia, A Defense Sector Reform Assessment, FOI Stockholm, October 2016, available at: <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4306--SE>
22 Ministry of Defence, Strategic Defence Review 2017-2020, available at: <https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/2018/pdf/SDR-ENG.pdf>;

In Moldova, the military situation is equally dire, although very different. Moldova does not have a direct border with Russia. The Transdnistria region borders Ukraine, which can close its airspace and landlines for Russian forces easily, hence if military escalation happens, it would have to happen with whatever is on the ground in Tiraspol. That said, the materiel and ammunition depots of the former Soviet 14th Army are situated there. Although outdated by Western standards, this equipment still can kill.

Of the Transdnistrian armed forces only a small fraction is staffed, while the rest would be called up for duty in case of an emergency. On paper, this mobilisation should be completed within five days – like in the USSR –, but experience from Russia's armed forces rather suggest that this takes several months. And the SIS would certainly detect this mobilisation, giving the West time to react. Without supplies from Russia, Romania as Moldova's closest ally could singlehandedly “solve” this problem.

However, Transdnistria can still pose a serious threat. The Russian 82nd and 113th special “peacekeeping” battalions are high-ready units, involved also in training of local forces. Transdnistria also musters roughly 8,000 KGB and Ministry of Interior special troops. Although small, they can act quickly and saw chaos and instigate unrest.

Such a “Donbas-style” campaign would cause severe problems for Moldova's armed forces because they themselves are still stuck in Soviet era – only lacking the heavy equipment.²³ Moldova's armed forces are not trained and equipped to fight alongside and in coordination with police forces in an unconventional war or a counterinsurgency. In an unconventional war, old-style Soviet tactics, particularly the heavy reliance on artillery in urban warfare, would cause considerable collateral damage and hence domestic outrage. Provoking such a catastrophe could in fact be the whole aim of a Russian-orchestrated military incursion. Lacking the land-connection with Russia, such destabilising and provocation actions seem far more likely than a full-fledged military conflict.

Even by Moldovan standards, its armed forces are underfinanced. Moldova spends roughly 0,3 to 0,4 percent of its GDP on defence, one of the lowest in all of Europe. This not only impedes modernisation of equipment, it also puts serve limitations on training and exercise, maintenance, and salaries. On materiel, one may say Moldova lacks pretty everything but uniforms and helmets (both of which were donated by the US).

For the foreseeable future, there is little chance for change in Moldova's defence policy going anywhere. The constant squabble between reformist, pro-Russian, and oligarchic parties have never provided the continuity and guidance to move the armed forces into any direction.

The European Union has addressed the issue of defence only marginally. Most important advisory and reform-support work on Defence Ministry level was conducted by NATO. Training combat forces both in Ukraine and Georgia was conducted by individual NATO member states, most notably the United States and the United Kingdom.

The EU did include some phrases of possible military cooperation into its association agreements.²⁴ If it was followed up by practical action is unknown to the author. However, the problem with the EU's military cooperation is that it addresses the EU's needs, not the need of EaP countries. The EU needs more soldiers in international stabilisation missions. But the EaP states need preparations for an all-out war, combined-arms manoeuvre operations to defend their country against a superior enemy. This is a very different type of operations, for which the country needs different tools, forces, weapons, skills, equipment, procedures, etc.

The Association Agreement also provides for the possible EaP states participation in the European Defence Agency and European defence-industrial cooperation. This is not unusual, some of the key European partners on defence-industrial cooperation are outside of the EU: the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Norway. But with the Eastern Partnership, this is not so easy. Georgia and Moldova do not have significant defence industry on their own, so they cannot bring much to the table. Ukraine on the other hand has a sizable and capable defence industry, but on several products Ukrainian enterprises are perceived as competitors to the EU's unofficial “champions”, and keeping the Ukrainians out is a key interest of several West European member states. Then there is suspicion among many European enterprises to cooperate with Ukraine as the corresponding enterprises were part of the Russian value-chain just a couple of years ago. Polish enterprises were the first to overcome this suspicion, starting cooperation in the field of armour-technology and combat-vehicle upgrades. But this is not a wider trend yet.

²³ Adriana Lins de Albuquerque and Jakob Hedenskog, Moldova, A Defense Sector Reform Assessment, FOI Stockholm, available at: <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4350--SE>;

²⁴ The respective provision is: “cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis-management, in particular with a view to increasing the participation of Ukraine in EU-led civilian and military crisis management operations as well as relevant exercises and training activities, including those carried out in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy” see: https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/november/tradoc_155103.pdf

Recommendations

It is easy to conceive recommendations what the EU could or should do if it were a strategic unitary actor. But as the EU neither is a unitary actor nor has much cohesion of the member states on Russia, such a list would rather be wishful thinking. In general, the EU's priorities on the Eastern Neighbourhood are fundamentally flawed. It first and foremost focuses on trade, investment and regulatory approximation, with state and institution building issues somewhat attached as side-dishes to the menu. But in fact, rule of law and institution building should have highest priority. This includes the security sector. The following recommendations may summarise the paper:

Diplomacy and conflict resolution:

- The EU must not relieve Moscow of its direct responsibility for the wars and conflict in the Eastern Neighbourhood. While Moscow loves to portray itself as neutral mediator and facilitator, it is in fact the perpetrator. Sanctions are the best way to attribute responsibility.
- In all the negotiations on frozen and hot conflicts, strengthening the sovereignty and independence of the Eastern Neighbourhood states should be the key objective, not reunification. For Moscow, reunification only is the bait to make the states swallow de-sovereignisation and quasi-colonial domination by Russia.

Media and information warfare:

- Outsourcing rule of law, democracy, and human rights issues (evaluations, reporting, recommendations on media-freedom, media policies, judicial reforms, intelligence, etc.) to the OSCE and the Council of Europe should be discontinued, as these organisations are under the increasing influence and pressure from authoritarian regimes.
- Develop sizable and coherent support and capacity building programmes to support local civil society watchdog organisations and investigative journalists. They are essential for democratic control of the government as well as fighting disinformation. Particularly in Moldova and Georgia, this support is direly needed.
- Support national public broadcasters, not only to become independent public agencies, but also to assist and give advice in programme management and support in content creation. Also to assist them providing information content for local ethnic minorities.
- Conditionalize stricter rules for transparency of media-ownership and financial independence of media outlets to the reception of financial aid. This should make cross-financing of media outlets by Russia or local oligarchs more difficult.

The EU's priorities on the Eastern Neighbourhood are fundamentally flawed. It first and foremost focuses on trade, investment and regulatory approximation, with state and institution building issues somewhat attached as side-dishes to the menu. But in fact, rule of law and institution building should have highest priority.

Cybersecurity:

- Audit local cybersecurity structures and link CERT teams to European ones. Exercise cyber-emergency response situations with EaP countries to practice joint responses to cyber-incidents.
- Engage in capacity-building programmes particularly for Georgia and Moldova.

Intelligence:

- Intelligence sector reform needs to be embedded in a wider judicial and security sector reform: deliniarisation of overlapping competences, de-bureaucratisation, flattening hierarchies, re-distributing competences from the centre to the local branches in the regions and municipalities. Even proper intelligence services alone cannot fight subversion if the investigative police and prosecutor service are unable to follow up on the leads.
- The EU needs to develop a detailed catalogue of tangible reform-steps, goals, and benchmarks to evaluate and measure the progress in security sector reform. Leaving the formulation of goals and ambitions to the politicians of EaP countries usually leads to diluted and half-way reforms, and obstruction of implementation. Local ownership looks fine on paper, but it doesn't work in reality.
- Structured capacity-building programmes for the security and judiciary sector to train investigators, officers, etc. in the West and familiarise them with European standards and procedures.
- Link specialised financial investigation services with cyber-intelligence services to detect covered actors and forefront-organisations of Russian subversion.
- Adapt EU-wide standards and regulations for stricter financial surveillance, counter-money laundering policies, improved transparency on real estate and corporate ownerships to prevent Europe from being a safe-heaven for corrupt elites and a turntable for illicit financing of propaganda- and subversion in the EaP.
- Improve the EU member states' intelligence assets and capabilities in the EaP countries to increase situation awareness on the ground.
- Post EUAM-style missions to Georgia and Moldova: to assist reform, provide training and expertise for local intelligence- police- and other investigative services, and to assess reform-implementation in the EaP countries.

Military and defence-industrial cooperation:

- Development of cooperation between the association countries and the EU within PESCO.
- Set up training missions in EaP states to train the armed forces of the Eastern Partners in combined arms manoeuvre tactics and Western-style defensive operations. Send European officers to the local military training and education facilities and train NCOs, officers, staff-officers and general staff officers according to Western practices. Refine curricula, training schemes, and career systems for military personal.
- Conduct exercises (wargames) on possible Russian escalation scenarios with national security personnel and military leaders in order to improve national security and emergency planning in EaP countries, but also to familiarise military planners and policymakers in the West with the situation in EaP countries in case a crisis commands Western response.
- Conceive a "foreign military aid" programme under which EaP countries can take up cheap loans to buy European military equipment in line with common strategic planning. They should particularly address combat-enablers (C2-systems, electronic warfare, airspace and maritime surveillance) to reduce specific technical vulnerabilities vis-à-vis Russia.
- Conceive special defence-industrial cooperation programmes involving local (predominately Ukrainian) defence industry and European enterprises to upgrade Soviet legacy equipment and to co-develop hybrid (in terms of a blend between local and European technology) weapons systems to address specific needs of the EaP countries. Such systems would be more effective against Russia, but still considerably cheaper compared to outrightly European products.

But as often in Europe, just because something is necessary, it does not mean that it is done. For the run-up of the next European Partnership Council in June, the key objective will be to fight all attempts to bury the Eastern Partnership and to strengthen the modest outreach and support the EU offers right now. The Covid-19 crisis, which not only has paused political life and foreign policy in much of Europe, has also stirred up a lively debate on solidarity and responsibility amongst member states, reinforced by shameless Chinese self-promotion and Russian charm offensives. One may only guess what effect all this has on foreign policy, and how "geopolitical" the post-crisis Europe will be.



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This policy paper focuses primarily on the three Eastern Partnership states that have signed an association agreement with the European Union: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Those three states have committed themselves to closer approximation to Europe and must bear most of the burden of Moscow-led disruption.

The paper compares the EU's policies with local needs and problems in the field of diplomacy and crisis resolution, media and information warfare, cybersecurity, intelligence and security-sector reform, military security and defence-industrial cooperation.



The views, opinions and statements expressed by the author are his own and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Open Society Foundation. Therefore, the Open Society Foundation is not responsible for the content of the Policy Paper.

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