Making Resilience a Keystone of European Enlargement

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Russia's fully fledged aggression against Ukraine marks a new era for post-Cold War Europe. We are entering a period of intense confrontation with Russia that threatens peace and prosperity on the continent. The Russian leadership has demonstrated that it is prepared to use brutal military force to achieve its desired objectives. As it moves to the pounding of Ukrainian cities with missiles and the deliberate destruction of civilian energy infrastructure, the war is creating shockwaves and risks spilling over into NATO territory.

Geopolitically, Putin's Russia is aligning with authoritarian China, Iran, Syria and North Korea to undermine the existing world order and re-establish spheres of influence that recall 19th century geopolitics. These regimes also share common objectives: to limit US influence in Europe, Southeast Asia and the Middle East and weaken the Transatlantic security alliance.

After more than nine months of all-out war, things are not going according to Putin's plan. Russia is suffering heavy losses on land, in the air and even at sea. It is struggling both to make new advances and to hold the more than 1,000-km long frontline. Ukraine has regained the strategic initiative and liberated more than 50 per cent of the territory that Russia occupied after February 2022. Regardless of how this war ends, Putin has already suffered a loss of strategic power, as demonstrated by: (a) a united NATO that has started to think more strategically; (b) Finland and Sweden joining NATO; (c) falling Russian arms sales due to sanctions and poor performance on the battlefield in Ukraine ; (d) the gradual and eventual permanent loss of premium energy markets in the EU; (e) its increased dependency on China; and (f) its waning influence in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. All of this opens up new opportunities for the Eastern Partnership region. Equally, however, it also brings about a time of heightened risk.
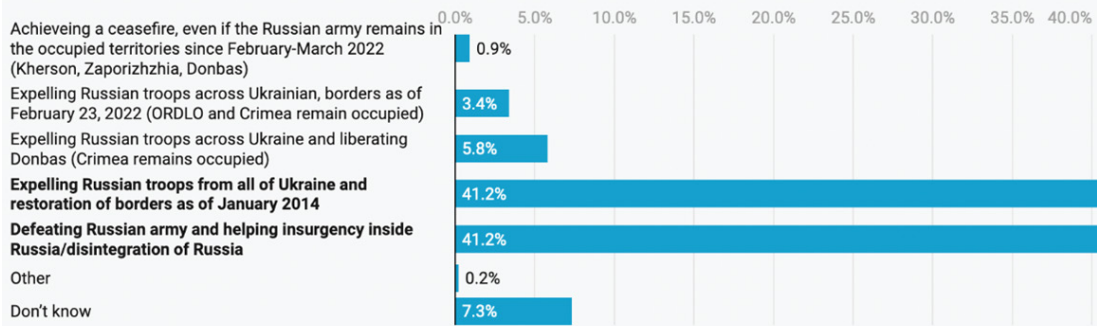
The Outlines of Ukraine's Victory

Ensuring that Ukraine wins this war has become a geostrategic objective of both the United States and the European Union. The Transatlantic community has so far held fast to the position that Ukraine must be supported for "as long as it takes", and that it is up to Kyiv to decide when and how to negotiate with Russia. To that end it is providing military, financial and humanitarian assistance.

In addition to destroying the Russian army on the battlefield and endangering Russia's hold on Crimea, President Zelenskyy is trying to restore territorial integrity, seek reparations for the damage caused by the war, prosecute the Russia leadership for crimes against peace and ensure that individual war criminals face justice. Ukrainian society fully supports this agenda.

What situation will you personally consider as a victory in the war? (one answer)

Among 94% of respondents who are completely confident or rather confident that Ukraine will win the war.

Achieveing a ceasefire, even if the Russian army remains in the occupied territories since February-March 2022 (Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donbas)	0.9%
Expelling Russian troops across Ukrainian, borders as of February 23, 2022 (ORDLO and Crimea remain occupied)	3.4%
Expelling Russian troops across Ukraine and liberating Donbas (Crimea remains occupied)	5.8%
Expelling Russian troops from all of Ukraine and restoration of borders as of January 2014	41.2%
Defeating Russian army and helping insurgency inside Russia/disintegration of Russia	41.2%
Other	0.2%
Don't know	7.3%

The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation conducted a face-to-face poll in cooperation with the Center for Political Sociology from May 7 to 15, 2022 only in the seven western (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Volyn and Zakarpattia) and four central (Vinnytsia, Kropyvnytskyi, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy) regions of Ukraine. 1,000 respondents were interviewed at the places of their permanent residence. The sample is representative of such indicators as gender, age, type of settlement and area of residence. The maximum random sampling error does not exceed 2.2%.

Chart: Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation • Source: DIF/Oxford poll, May 2022 • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Ukrainian public support for territorial concessions to Russia in exchange for peace remains low. In fact, support for such a compromise has fallen slightly from 10 per cent to 8 per cent.[1] Kyiv is not simply seeking any kind of deal, which would allow Russia to rearm, regroup and reinvade. It is seeking a just peace. The end of the war must set a powerful international precedent to deter countries from unleashing unprovoked aggression, committing war crimes and destroying civilian infrastructure.

How Ukraine is rebuilt after the war will define the trajectory of its social and economic development. Kyiv is pursuing an agenda of modernisation and seeking to gain access to Russian frozen assets for this purpose. The task of aligning the rebuilding and European integration agendas will be complex but it is vital to ensure the two processes are mutually reinforcing.

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1   Dynamics of readiness for territorial concessions for the earliest possible end of the war: results of a telephone survey conducted on 7–13 September 2022, Kyiv International institute of Sociology https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1133&page=3

Integrating with the EU and NATO will also be an important element of Ukraine's victory. The EU decision to grant Ukraine candidate status demonstrates strategic thinking on the part of the European Commission. Geopolitical rivalry with Russia will shape the EU's role in the region, including how future waves of enlargement proceed. The EU has work to do to ensure the enlargement process works. The sooner the EU pays serious attention to internal reform and other complementary initiatives to keep partners engaged at the top political level, the better. The establishment of the European Political Community is a step in the right direction.

For its part, Ukraine is eager to deliver on all seven steps in the European Council Conclusions published in June 2022 in order to open accession negotiations as soon as possible. Even amid the brutal Russian assault, Ukraine's parliamentarians and government are implementing reforms. Independent experts assess that to date Ukraine has achieved 4.7 out of 10 points in delivering on the EU requirements. Progress is most visible in the work of special anti-corruption agencies and on judicial reform (reforming the High Council of Justice and High Qualification Commission of Judges).[2] Ukraine also applied for NATO membership on 30 September 2022. Although the timing was an asymmetric response to Putin's new annexation frenzy, NATO membership is key to Ukraine's security. Polls show that 73 per cent of Ukrainians now support joining NATO.[3] EU and NATO memberships are the only viable security arrangements for Ukraine.

Building Resilience for Stormy Times

Assuming that the collective West continues to assist Ukraine until it wins, we are likely to face a period of turbulence and confrontation both during Russia's aggression in Ukraine and after Putin's defeat. We are already seeing the Kremlin's attempts to ignite anti-government, pro-Russia protests in Moldova and undermine Maia Sandu's government by cutting energy supplies to Chisinau.[4] The military fiasco in Ukraine will rock Russia and could lead to a period of instability, infighting and chaos that has ripple effects across the whole of Eurasia. There may be a new flow of people fleeing Russia, possibly significantly larger than that which followed Putin's "partial mobilisation". Disruption of existing energy flows and trade routes, arms proliferation, cyberattacks and environmental destruction will shake the region. The level of shocks and instability will depend on the degree of states' dependence on Russia, the level of Russian penetration into its political and economic elites, and the capacity to pursue independent foreign policy; in short, on their resilience.

The defeat of Putin's aggressive revisionist policy in the region will also mean a new window of opportunity to push for renewed democratic change in Belarus, the resolution of regional 'frozen conflicts', the consolidation of democracy and a competitive economy in the neighbourhood.

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2   Candidate Check-2: Where Ukraine is in the implementation of 7 EU recommendations regarding candidacy, New Europe Centre, 15 November 2022 http://neweurope.org.ua/en/analytics/kandydat-check-2-de-ukrayina-perebuvaye-u-vykonanni-semy-rekomendatsij-yes-shhodo-kandydatstva/

3   Dynamics of readiness for territorial concessions for the earliest possible end of the war: results of a telephone survey conducted on September 7-13, 2022, Kyiv International institute of Sociology https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1133&page=3

4   Betting on destabilising and weakening Moldova. Minister of Interior about protests. NewsMaker, 6/10/2022
https://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/stavka-na-oslablenie-i-destabilizatsiyu-moldovy-glava-mvd-o-protestah/

To prepare for an uncertain world, as EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell has stressed, the EU must be flexible and resilient.[5] In a world of radical uncertainly, resilience is paramount. The term has become a new mantra, appearing in Council Conclusions on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 and the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Beyond statements, however, there is little to demonstrate how the EU is approaching resilience.

At the multilateral level, the Partnership Fund for Resilience Ukraine (PFRU) is a rare example. Launched by the British government in 2020 and supported by the US, Sweden, Switzerland and Canada, the fund has a budget of €40 million.[6] Much of its original strategy was to mitigate the risks of Russia's destabilisation efforts, manage the conflict in the Kyiv-controlled parts of Donetsk and Luhansk, and prepare conflict-affected communities for eventual reintegration with Ukraine. Nonetheless, however pressing these challenges were at the time, to progress we will need **to widen our approach to resilience.** For too long, policy decisions have been driven by the logic of efficiency. The COVID-19 pandemic put resilience in the spotlight, however, and highlighted the need to invest in decentralised, autonomous, agile and adaptable systems. The immediate threat from Russia's and China's coercive policies means that resilience must become *fundamental. **It is a key capacity for a state and its society to be able to exercise sovereign powers under hostile influence, to be prepared for disruption, and to be able to recover from shocks and adapt and grow after a disruptive experience.***

Learning from Ukraine

Resilience as applied to states and societies is a new and fast-evolving field. Prior to the full-scale invasion, research showed that Ukraine already had a certain reserve of resilience.[7] Today's Ukraine, however, offers new insights into what makes societies resilient in times of crisis:

> **Total defence**: establishing territorial defence forces and the presence of a wide, committed volunteer movement to help the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Over 80 per cent of citizens make contributions to efforts to support the army and over 95 per cent of businesses provide assistance.

> **A strong and effective network of civil society organisations** enables citizen engagement, nurtures agency and results in high levels of hope: 88 per cent of the population is hopeful about the future of Ukraine as a member of the EU and 97 per cent believe Ukraine will win the war.[8] This dynamic of meaning making is the way resilient nations build bridges from present-day hardship to a fuller, better constructed future.

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5   EU Ambassadors Annual Conference 2022: Opening speech by High Representative Josep Borrell, 10 October 2022
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-ambassadors-annual-conference-2022-opening-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell_en

6   https://um.fi/special-target-groups/-/asset_publisher/hVUm8qOoXH3u/ahaKytInterventionType/id/59727172

7   Resilient Ukraine, Chatham House 2020, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/06/resilient-ukraine

8   https://dif.org.ua/article/dovira-do-derzhavi-yak-zberegti-natsionalnu-ednist-zaradi-peremogi

› **Crowd intelligence:** citizens as contributors to, not just consumers of security. A chat bot on the Telegram social network called 'The Enemy Is Here' (https://t.me/evorog_bot) mobilised 300,000 Ukrainians to report collaborators and war crimes.

› **Information resilience**: the importance of effective, trusted sources of information and instant, unified public awareness messaging. A decentralised approach to delivering internet connection thanks to the Starlink satellite constellation. Effective cooperation with Meta on content moderation and correction of account blocking policies. Previous efforts in media literacy have increased awareness of the risks of Russian disinformation and contributed to cognitive resilience. Trust in media has been sustained and even increased during the war.[9]

› **Resilient leadership**: direct daily addresses by President Zelenskyy have framed the evolution of the war. Consistency of messaging by mayors and heads of military administrations in all regions of Ukraine. Increased trust in top leadership: 71 per cent trust the President of Ukraine.[10]

› **Digital governance:** President Zelenskyy's government prioritised digitalisation across all of public administration. Moving many services to the DIA online platform (https://diia.gov.ua/) has allowed state support to be maintained for millions on the move. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) were able to access funding and documents, and to report damage in real time. At least 200,000 people have used the app to report that their homes had been destroyed.

› **Decentralised collaborative governance:** decentralisation reform has created **strong local governance** that has legitimacy and the capacity to react quickly. Mayors are at the forefront of ensuring the resilience of public services such as heating and organising support for IDPs. Previous experiences of collaborative governance (participatory budgeting, petitions, public hearings) have fostered greater initiative in democracy, which greatly depends on public consent to govern.

› **Smart use of intelligence** to pre-bunk Russian disinformation and disrupt psychological and false flag operations.

› **EU lifelines**: security assistance provided through the European Peace Facility, opening the EU market to Ukrainian goods (albeit temporarily), establishing Solidarity Lanes to export goods where normal routes to market are closed due to the Russian navy blockade of the Black Sea and triggering the Protection Directive for Ukrainian refugees.

› **EU-Ukraine crisis twinning** linked Ukrainian and European specialised agencies to provide support, especially in the first weeks of the war, and provided much-needed expertise, resources and psychological support for teams in Ukraine. One example is the support provided by Sweden and the UK to the Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security.

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9   Trust in national radio and newspapers increased, Detector Media, 17 November 2022 https://detector.media/community/article/193899/2021-11-17-dovira-do-natsionalnykh-radio-ta-gazet-zrosla-doslidzhennya/

10   https://dif.org.ua/article/dovira-do-derzhavi-yak-zberegti-natsionalnu-ednist-zaradi-peremogi

Ukraine is demonstrating that key pillars of resilience span human security, social cohesion, accountable governance, economic diversity and cognitive resilience. The country was able to absorb the shock and adapt its functioning thanks to favourable pre-war conditions. A set of reforms implemented since 2014, alignment with the EU as part of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, and gradually growing awareness of domestic vulnerabilities enabled Ukraine to repel Russian aggression. Ukraine is also the first country in the Eastern Partnership to make resilience part of its National Security Strategy.

Embedding Resilience Across Domains

Our approach to resilience must be informed by current risks to the EU and its future member states. This means integrating resilience-building efforts into existing and new interactions between the EU and its partners. The world of the future will gravitate towards alliances of like-minded states that share similar values and aspirations. In the case of the EU, these are the values of democracy, human rights and competitive rules-based markets.

Responding to foreign encroachment is a common challenge for both current EU member states and aspiring member states. A resilience-centred approach to governance means modernising processes and systems, and building links across borders to diminish the effects of coercive malign actions. The Defending Democracy Initiative launched in 2020 set an aspiration to work towards democratic resilience inside the EU.[11]

To build on this effort, the EU should develop a set of tools to engage with partners in the conversation about resilience across various domains. This would allow for information exchange between the EU and partners, as they face similar challenges to their resilience: disinformation, illicit foreign political financing, meddling in domestic politics, threats to the security of energy supplies and deliberate disruption of trade routes. Establishing a dedicated resilience platform would allow for regular exchanges of information and approaches. There are clear leaders in this domain, such as Sweden and Finland, which already apply a whole-of-society approach to building resilience. By combining this with the experience of frontline states such as Ukraine, Moldova and Montenegro, both sides will benefit from developing effective measures to strengthen their resilience.

One way to develop more awareness and the operational application of resilience both in the EU and among future members would be to engage in a resilience-monitoring exercise to deepen understanding of the sources of resilience and the way to close vulnerability gaps. The learning process could start by designing a tool (an index or a score sheet) to enable partners to self-assess their resilience according to an established unified methodology. A similar idea was proposed by the Czech and Swedish governments during the Czech presidency under the title of Individual Resilience Action Plans (IRAPs) for partners. Regular high-level screening of resilience in this way is key to building awareness about vulnerabilities, but also to providing information on which responses are effective and why.

11   Protecting European democracy from interference and manipulation, European Democracy Action Plan, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12506-Protecting-European-democracy-from-interference-and-manipulation-European-Democracy-Action-Plan_en

Policy Recommendations

> **Engage in honest and constructive dialogue** about how to restart the EU enlargement engine. The dividends of enlargement for a newly geopolitical EU are obvious, mainly expanding the security space and countering the violent revisionist efforts of a decaying Russia.

> **Invest in sustaining and strengthening Ukrainian resilience** in the face of Russian aggression. Ensure that resilience is a keystone of Ukrainian reconstruction efforts. The Lugano Declaration lists seven key principles but lacks a focus on resilience.

> **Conduct a deep-dive learning exercise to study Ukrainian resilience** since 2014 and share best practice with the EU and candidate countries. Engage with the PFRU to see how it can be expanded and replicated in other geographies.

> **Embed resilience into cooperation with EU candidate countries**. To sustain the spirit of regional cooperation that was part of the EaP, create a 5+3 Resilience Task Force between five Western Balkans and three Eastern Partnership countries. This would provide a framework to evaluate resilience and structure resilience-building efforts. Ensure that the EU's pre-accession assistance includes support for building resilient governance and societal cohesion.

> **Design specific tools to capture resilience**. These might include Resilience Action Plans or a new resilience index to track progress in building resilience. Invest in building the capacity of national governments and civil society to integrate resilience across governance and societal engagement.

> **Build a community of best practice on resilience** by connecting various institutions that already focus on various pillars of resilience. These might include, but not be limited to, the newly created Euro-Atlantic Resilience Centre (Bucharest), the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, the East StratCom Task Force, the NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence, the Stockholm Resilience Centre and the Hybrid Threats Research Group at Stockholm University.

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