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Enhancing resilience: the state of play in NATO, European Union, and Poland[1]

Introduction

History has taught us that security is an ongoing process, not a state granted to us forever. Change is the only constant we can be certain of. Since 2014, the security situation in Central and Eastern Europe has changed and is rapidly deteriorating. First, Russia annexed Crimea and now, it has invaded Ukraine. However, what we see in our news outlets on a daily basis, is just the tip of the iceberg.

For the past couple of years, the West has been observing an evolution of challenges and threats. The situation has become more and more complex. We see new players in the international arena, as well as the "old guard's" new levels of ambition. On top of that, we are operating in a rapidly changing technology environment. Yes, means of war have changed. Nowadays, we have to look at space and cyber and the vast hybrid domain. We cannot afford to focus solely on one challenge. Terrorism remains a real threat. The security situation in Syria, Afghanistan, and the Korean Peninsula remains unstable. The rivalry between China and the US is a fact. Moreover, Russia's aggressive policy proves that Putin aims at rewriting international order. The ongoing war in Ukraine shows that conflicts can be waged not only in the traditional battlefield, but also using the information sphere, cyber domain, and the economy.

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[1]   The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In order to respond to this complex security environment, we have to build resilience at state, local, and societal level. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an eye-opener for us, Europeans, as well as for the rest of the world. It had made us realise that major threats to our safety and security do not need to have a military component and that the plethora of options at the disposal of our adversaries has been expanded. Disinformation, fake news, cyber-attacks, and "little green man" are on the rise. The recent "weaponisation" of migration shows that there are no limits to hybrid means. Regardless of military aggression, one may assume that our adversaries will continue to pressure us through hybrid means. It goes without saying that they are cheaper, easier to apply, and more difficult to attribute to the perpetrator. That is why we have to be vigilant. The number and character of existing threats leads to the conclusion that no state can handle them alone. At the same time, no state is able to meet them in a "traditional" way by focusing on only one domain. Cooperation is key. That is why the concept of resilience has come to fruition both in NATO and in the EU.

Systemic actions, both at the government and society level, are crucial for adequate and effective monitoring and analysing of existing threats, as well as for being able to respond to them. Resilience can be military. Resilience can be civilian. Resilience can mean an increase in military capability. It can also mean educating children to distinguish misinformation from facts. Ensuring secure supply chains in times of a pandemic is also part of resilience. While understanding the complexity of this subject matter, each country must decide which elements of resilience are crucial at a given time. Focusing on a chosen element of resilience, we must remember that there are overlapping areas as well as those blurred, which cannot be overlooked. Even today, when Russia is waging a war against Ukraine, we realise that building military capabilities is as important as strengthening skills to counter disinformation.

The purpose of this paper is to present the growing role of resilience in the international fora, particularly in NATO and the EU, as well as in Poland. The assumption is that to counter threats, especially hybrid threats, states and international organisations need to strengthen resilience both at local as well as governmental level. The author attempts to prove that only a holistic approach ensures resilient states and societies. The research is based on publicly available documents and does not include sources covered by any confidentiality clause.

Resilience in NATO

Most people are familiar with Article 5 (collective security), some – especially recently – have heard about Article 4 (consultations when security is threatened), but few people know that the starting point for the security of all NATO members is resilience, broadly identified in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty. It says that "in order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately

and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."[2]

This means that each Ally must first and foremost take care of its individual security. How can this be ensured? Primarily, by building and strengthening resilience at the government and society levels.

At the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016, the heads of states and governments issued a political declaration of strengthening resilience. Concrete steps were taken in this regard and seven baseline requirements for resilience were adopted. States committed to ensuring:
– continuity of government and critical government services;
– resilient energy supplies;
– ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people;
– ability to deal with mass casualties;
– resilient civil communications systems;
– resilient transport systems;
– resilient food and water resources.

It is common knowledge that these requirements are intertwined. The failure in securing one element may have consequences for the others.

However, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that increased awareness of the importance of these guidelines. The pandemic highlighted the lack of society's preparation to deal with crisis situations and its susceptibility to disinformation and various types of manipulations carried out by state and non-state actors that used this crisis to their advantage. The number and quality of methods used by adversaries in relation to society intensified.

Therefore, at the NATO Summit in June 2021, the commitment to further strengthening national and collective resilience, which is a key element of effective deterrence and defence, was reaffirmed. A commitment to take additional steps towards a more integrated and coordinated approach was made. Heads of states and governments noted the progress achieved in this area since 2016 and highlighted crucial steps to be taken in the coming years.

As part of the NATO 2030 Agenda, Allies are expected to develop proposals for the establishment and revision of NATO's resilience goals before the 2022 Madrid summit. These goals will guide national efforts in this regard. Further steps are also expected to improve coordination and cooperation with the EU and other partners. On top of that, states decided to appoint national senior resilience representatives to coordinate and oversee the implementation of NATO guidelines and national goals. Furthermore, a decision was taken to set up a special committee dedicated to resilience.

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2   *The North Atlantic Treaty*, Washington D.C., 4 April 1949, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm [accessed: 25 May 2022].

At the NATO forum, it is stressed that the responsibility for building resilience lies primarily with states. As the work on resilience has developed, it is becoming increasingly clear that in order to achieve full synergy, efforts need to include three domains: the public sector, public-private partnership, and society.

Resilience in the European Union

The EU's approach to resilience is both inward- and outward-looking. It is by all means a comprehensive approach, with European institutions, member states, and societies taken into account. The plethora of policies and fora where resilience is being approached poses a challenge.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the focus on building state and societal resilience of the EU and its member states. First lessons from the pandemic have been described, among others, in the 2020 Strategic Foresight Report. It presents European Commission's take on resilience as a foundation for EU policies. In the report, resilience is defined as an "ability not only to withstand and cope with challenges but also to undergo transitions in a sustainable, fair, and democratic manner"[3]. In its strategic vision, the Commission analyses resilience through four interrelated dimensions – social and economic, geopolitical, green, and digital. The EC's approach points out that strengthening resilience of each member state strengthens the resilience of the EU as a whole. In order to better review the progress made by each member state, resilience dashboards were created. The purpose of the dashboards is to assess vulnerabilities and capacities in the four above-mentioned dimensions. Building a more resilient society calls for strengthening the mechanisms of shock absorption and enhancing the capacity for adaptation and transformation.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has given impetus to the adoption of European Council conclusions on enhancing preparedness, response capability, and resilience to future crisis. It underlines the complexity of today's security environment and the need for a comprehensive response that takes into account cross-sectoral and cross-border crisis management.

Looking at resilience through the EU's "external lens," it was initially considered in the context of humanitarian and development policies. Resilience was defined as "the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, cope, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks

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[3]   European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "2020 Strategic Foresight Report. Strategic Foresight – Charting The Course Towards a More Resilient Europe"*, COM(2020) 493 final, Brussels, 9 September 2020, p. 2, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0493&from=EN   [accessed: 22 May 2022].

such as violence, conflict, drought and other natural disaster without compromising long-term development."[4]

With time, resilience made its way to foreign policy. And so, in 2016, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini presented the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) to the European Council. The EUGS refers to resilience as "the ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises [...]."[5] Moreover, in the EUGS, building "state and societal resilience to our East and South" is one of the five key priorities for the EU's external action.[6] It is a broad and dynamic concept that needs to be continuously adapted to the changing environment.

Nowadays, the EU should define a common perception of security threats and challenges, reflecting the interests and respecting geo-political sensitivities of all Member States, in line with a 360-degree approach. An important step in this direction was the adoption of Strategic Compass for Security and Defence by the European Council in March 2022. Initially, when the Compass concept was presented, it focused on four baskets: crisis management, capabilities, partnerships, and resilience. Although in the negotiating process these baskets have been renamed (i.e., act, invest, partner, secure), the notion of resilience still plays a prominent role. The Strategic Compass states that "the more hostile security environment requires us to make a quantum leap forward and increase our capacity and willingness to act, strengthen our resilience, and invest more and better in our defence capabilities."[7] Furthermore, it gives concrete proposals with regard to strengthening the EU's resilience linked predominantly to countering hybrid threats. It is strongly associated with cybersecurity, fighting disinformation, and protection of critical infrastructure.

This proves that we are not living in a vacuum and EU policies correctly reflect the changing security environment. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted our focus towards a more inward-looking and security-driven resilience in the EU. Russia's aggression in Ukraine will most likely strengthen this approach further.

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[4]   *Building resilience: The EU's approach – factsheet*, European Commission, 2016, p. 2, https:// ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/EU_building_resilience_en.pdf [accessed: 22 May 2022].

[5]   European Union, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, Brussels, June 2016, p. 23, https://eeas.europa. eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf [accessed: 23 May 2022].

[6]   Alongside building EU's security; pursuing integrate approach to conflict and crisis; supporting cooperative regional orders and a commitment to a reformed multilateral, rules-based system of global governance.

[7]   European Union, A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, https://eeas.europa.eu/ headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/106337/A%20Strategic%20Compass%20for%20 the%20EU [accessed: 23 May 2022].

Poland

Russia's actions in our region have been the main point of reference for Polish foreign and security policy for years. Nowadays, we can see that it was the right approach. It should have also been a decisive factor in the assessment of threats to Europe as a whole. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Russia's aggressive policy has been underestimated by many Western countries. Today, we are witnessing a bloody conflict in the heart of Europe, where borders are being redrawn and civilians are used as human shields – something unimaginable for many in the 21st century. The war in Ukraine is a test for the whole international community. In that regard, Poland has passed the resilience test. Within less than a month, Polish people welcomed to their homes 2 million refugees, proving that we are able to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people.

The Polish foreign policy reflects the complex security environment we are living in. Therefore, it is based on the following priorities and pillars:
– NATO membership;
– strategic security and defence cooperation with the United States;
– EU membership, including the EU Common Security and Defence Policy;
– regional cooperation (particularly with the Baltic and Nordic states and the Visegrad Group) as well as bilateral and trilateral cooperation (the Weimar Triangle).

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, signed by President Andrzej Duda in May 2020, identifies the current security environment and means to address it. It lays out that in today's world, resilience plays a prominent role. The strategy emphasises the importance of increasing the state's resilience to threats by creating a system of common civic defence, based on the efforts of the entire nation, and building an understanding for the development of the Republic of Poland's resilience and defence capabilities: build a system of common civic defence, making full use of the potential of the state and local government institutions, education and higher education entities, local communities, economic entities, non-governmental organizations and citizens, which will provide comprehensive resilience of the state to non-military and military threats.[8]

The strategy underlines the need to build national resilience to threats, including hybrid ones. Furthermore, it stresses resilience in the context of the above-mentioned NATO seven baseline requirements i.e., predominantly in the scope of the continuity of government and the functioning of the state, resilient energy supplies, uncontrolled movement of people and relocation of the population, collection,

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[8]   *The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2020, https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dokumenty/National_Security_Strategy_of_the_Republic_of_Poland_2020.pdf [accessed: 25 May 2022].

protection and management of food and water resources, ability to deal with mass casualties, resilient telecommunication networks and Information and Communications Technology systems, population information and alert systems, and resilient transport system.

The strategy puts emphasis on increasing public awareness of the threats in the information domain. Countering information manipulation through education in the field of information security is crucial. Strategic communication should be the foundation of state level efforts aimed at countering disinformation. It goes without saying that strategic communication should include both forecasting, planning, and implementing coherent communication activities.

Education is at the heart of building resilience. We must focus on raising awareness, critical thinking, and crisis response procedures in order to be better prepared to effectively respond to complex challenges and threats, including those of a hybrid nature. However, all these efforts must take place in an inclusive manner. Effective resilience policies are those based on mutual trust between the government, the private sector, and society. Resilient society is aware of its role in challenging situations and is willing to contribute to working hand in hand with state authorities.

That is why Poland, in NATO and the EU, emphasises – promoting societal resilience. Societies are like glue holding our security policies together.

Way ahead

Throughout the last couple of years, the notion of resilience has undergone a major transition. It has been strengthened and expanded. States' resilience has been complemented by societal resilience.

However, with Russia putting European institutions, states, and societies to a test, we cannot rest. Today is the time to take additional steps and set up resilience standards.

The key to resilience is education. That is why we should further develop and implement educational programmes and campaigns aimed at mobilising society, improving its preparedness, and increasing its independence from the state's support in case of crisis. At the same time, comprehensive national security courses for government, industry, civil society, and armed forces leaders ought to be organised. We should raise awareness of asymmetric threats, including influence operations and disinformation campaigns that can spread distrust and increase polarisation between society and government and within the society.

In the light of Russia's efforts at deepening divisions in our alliances and society, eroding trust in institutions, authorities, political leadership, and democracy itself, it is ever more important to boost media literacy, fact-checking practice, and critical thinking. Furthermore, resilience training in local communities should take place.

Preferably, it should be complemented by volunteering programmes to support efforts made by state authorities.

Conclusion

Resilient states are those where a comprehensive approach is dominant, i.e., where the government cooperates closely with the society. Such states have fewer weaknesses that could otherwise be used by adversaries. That is why resilience is also an important aspect of deterrence. The idea is to make a possible attack cost-ineffective and expected goals unachievable.

Building and strengthening resilience is recognised and needed both at international and national levels. This notion has been present to some degree in the EU and NATO. Whereas the transatlantic Alliance has more of a linear approach, i.e., with the seven baseline requirements as the building blocks, in the EU, resilience is spread out across multiple policies and institutions. EU's institutional structure and the external versus internal resilience building approach might be a challenge.

At the same time, resilience is an area where the EU and NATO can build upon shared interests to deliver tangible results in line with ambitious goals set in the EU–NATO declarations from 2016 and 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a global wake-up call. It highlighted the lack of state authorities' and society's preparedness to deal with multifaceted crisis situations. In international fora, the pandemic put more emphasis on building and strengthening resilience. Nowadays, we must accelerate this process not only in order to be better prepared and capable of response, but also to deter. Resilience is the foundation of our security.

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Enhancing resilience: the state of play in NATO, the EU, and Poland
Abstract

This article presents the current state of play on resilience in NATO, the EU, and Poland. It argues that in the past couple of years, the international security environment has undergone dramatic transitions. On top of existing challenges, new threats (including hybrid) and large-scale crises (i.e., pandemics) are emerging. This complex security situation requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Building resilience at state, local, and societal level is key.

This notion is well understood both in the EU and NATO. Resilience is rooted in the Alliance's founding Treaty. Article 3 of the Washington Treaty claims that each Ally must first take care of its individual security. Russia's annexation of Crimea and, subsequently, the COVID-19 pandemic stressed – both in NATO and the EU – the need to be better prepared and able to respond to complex crisis. In the last couple of years, the EU's approach to resilience has been more inward-looking. From building resilience by the EU, it has shifted to resilience of the EU. Russia's invasion of Ukraine puts the West to

a test, including a resilience test. Opening their homes to ca. 2 million Ukrainian refugees, the Polish people have passed the test and proved, inter alia, that they are able to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people.