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## Resilience

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>RESILIENCE CAN BE A SOLUTION TO WITHSTAND HYBRID ATTACKS</b> .....	3
<i>Interview with Vice-Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine Olga Stefanishyna</i>	
<b>RESILIENCE-BUILDING AS A TOOL OF EU PRAGMATIC FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY</b> .....	6
<i>Dr Olena Khylyko</i>	
<b>THE EUROPEAN CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE AS A TOOL OF GEOECONOMIC COMPETITION WITH RUSSIA: THE CASE OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP</b> .....	14
<i>Vitalii Terebylo</i>	
<b>HYBRIDISATION OF STATE TERRORISM AND SECURITY CHALLENGES TO RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF PROXY-WARS</b> .....	25
<i>Dr Sergii Glebov</i>	
<b>RESILIENCE IN STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND PRACTICE OF ROMANIA</b> .....	36
<i>Artem Fylypenko</i>	
<b>THE EFFECTS OF MYTHMAKING ON RESILIENCE AND FOREIGN, SECURITY POLICY IN POLAND</b> .....	42
<i>Alicja Prochniak</i>	

# RESILIENCE IN STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND PRACTICE OF ROMANIA

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*In recent years, Romania has been paying increased attention to the topic of resilience. In its National Defence Strategy 2020-2024 basic approaches to strengthening the resilience of Romania are described and it is assumed that resilience covers all stages of a crisis, from prevention (where possible) to adjustment and limitation of effects (when necessary), and includes positive transformations that strengthen the ability of current and future generations to provide what they need. In practice, enhancing Romania's resilience was realised in establishing the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience, a public institution under the authority of the MFA of Romania. This article attempts to analyse the steps Romania is taking to build resilience, and the ability for Ukraine to benefit from Romania's experience.*

Global changes in the security environment (the increasing role of informational warfare and disinformation, cyber-attacks, lawfare, economic coercion, etc.) force NATO member states to pay more attention to the resilience of state and society. The world is returning to a state of global confusion, with the existence of "grey zones", and the active use of methods of irregular warfare. The enemy tries to use the weaknesses of government to split and disorganise society, make chaos.

The turning point was Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in 2014 and continues to the present day. During this war, Russia has used the entire arsenal of hybrid warfare, from disinformation to the participation of regular troops. In these conditions, it becomes obvious that

the state's ability to resist hybrid threats depends not only on the level of technical equipment and the level of training of the army, but also on civil preparedness.

In July 2016, at the Warsaw NATO Summit, Heads of State and Government made a commitment "to continue to enhance [...] resilience against the full spectrum of threats, including hybrid threats, from any direction. Resilience is an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and effective fulfilment of the Alliance's core tasks."<sup>1</sup> Seven baseline requirements for civil preparedness, which need to be achieved, were identified:

- 1) assured continuity of government and critical government services;
- 2) resilient energy supplies;

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1 Commitment to enhance resilience. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw, 8-9 July 2016, NATO, [\[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133180.htm\]](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133180.htm)

- 3) ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people;
- 4) resilient food and water resources;
- 5) ability to deal with mass casualties;
- 6) resilient civil communications systems;
- 7) resilient civil transportation systems.<sup>2</sup>


Another great challenge for the North Atlantic Alliance was the COVID-19 Pandemic, which raised doubts about the ability of NATO to resist collectively such a kind of threat. NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoaană, during a webinar with the American Enterprise on Resilience in December 2020, said “In the years ahead, we have to put a much greater emphasis on resilience, and this is not only about resilience of our governments, it’s a whole of society resilience and engaging with the triple helix of government, of private sector, essentially importantly engaging the private sector, and also engaging our civil societies”<sup>3</sup>

At the Brussels NATO summit on 14 June 2021, Heads of State and Government affirmed “that national and collective resilience are an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and the effective fulfilment of the Alliance’s core tasks, and vital in our efforts to safeguard our societies, our populations and our shared values.”<sup>4</sup> In this commitment there was also mention of the COVID-19 Pandemic, a response to which was “has underlined the importance of civil-military engagement and cooperation, and demonstrated the vital roles that our armed forces play in supporting our societies.”<sup>5</sup>

## Resilience in Strategic Documents of Romania

The Black Sea region in the current conditions looks the most vulnerable spot in the NATO system of deterrence. NATO’s three littoral states – Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey not only have different levels of economic development and military potential but also different kinds of relations with Russia.

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 **Another great challenge for the North Atlantic Alliance was the COVID-19 Pandemic, which raised doubts about the ability of NATO to resist collectively such a kind of threat**

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As noted by Romanian researchers Ionela Ciolan and Amanda Paul “for decades, the Black Sea has played second fiddle to the Baltic Sea in NATO’s priorities. This is partly due to fears that a Russian attack on the Baltic states was more likely than conflict in the Black Sea, and also a lack of consensus from allies over the need to enhance its presence in the latter. While NATO’s engagement in the region improved after Crimea’s annexation, it remains insufficient.”<sup>6</sup>

The presence of NATO in the Black Sea region is limited by the 1936 Montreux Convention, while the occupation of Crimea and its militarisation have changed the military balance in Russia’s favour.

2 Roepke W-D., Thankey H., *Resilience: the first line of defence*. NATO, 27 February, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/02/27/resilience-the-first-line-of-defence/index.html]

3 *Building transatlantic resilience: Why critical infrastructure is a matter of national security*. NATO, 10 December, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\_180067.htm]

4 *Strengthened Resilience Commitment*. NATO, 14 June, 2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\_texts\_185340.htm?selectedLocale=en]

5 Op.cit

6 Ciolan I., Paul A., *Kremlin’s quest for mare nostrum: Enhancing Black Sea security to stop Russian encroachment*. The European Policy Centre, 18 June, 2021, [https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Kremlins-quest-for-mare-nostrum-Enhancing-Black-Sea-security-to-stop~3fcff0]

Romania remains the most consistent supporter of strengthening the presence of the North Atlantic Alliance in the Black Sea region. At the same time, Bucharest seeks to advance initiatives to enhance NATO's capabilities in the region. Recently, Romania has paid significant attention to resilience issues. This has been reflected in strategic documents of the country.

While in the National Defence Strategy 2015-2019 the term "resilience" was practically not mentioned, in the National Defence Strategy 2020-2024, it is mentioned more than 20 times. The whole chapter 1.2 is titled "Romania – a state resilient to threats, security and prosperity provider for its citizens".



***Bucharest seeks to advance initiatives to enhance NATO's capabilities in the region.***

***Recently, Romania has paid significant attention to resilience issues***

The concept of Romania's resilience, according to the National Defence Strategy is addressed from a double perspective: "the inherent capacity of entities – individuals, communities, regions, state – to resist and adapt articulately to violent, stress-causing events, shocks, disasters, pandemics or conflicts, on one hand, and the ability of these entities to return, as soon as possible, to a functional, normal state, on the other hand."<sup>7</sup>

The Strategy assumes that strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerabilities require a flexible multi-dimensional strategy,

as well as a broad perspective on all systems, in order to limit the risks related to a crisis, but also to improve the capacity to quickly manage the adjustment mechanisms at local, national and regional levels. "Resilience covers all stages of a crisis situation, from prevention (where possible) to adjustment and limitation of effects (when necessary), and includes positive transformations that strengthen the ability of current and future generations to provide for what they need."<sup>8</sup>

The Strategy stresses that in 2020-2024, more than ever, efforts to strengthen resilience need to be calibrated, in order to respond to new types of subtle and subversive threats, including those generated by technological developments. "A central role is therefore given to multi-faceted collaboration: public-private, citizen-community and civilian-military aimed at strengthening society and critical infrastructures' resilience, as this responsibility is at the junction point between the society and the individual levels with the institution-public and private levels."<sup>9</sup>

The Strategy involves measures to develop effective tools to strengthen society and critical infrastructures' resilience, which can be divided into four main areas of activity:

- information security: enhancing awareness of hostile/influence actions carried out in the public space via classic or online media or think-tanks, increasing the capacity of education, research, think-tanks and media institutions to identify and counter disinformation movements supported by hostile state or non-state actors;
- health care: supporting health education and education programmes for emergency situations;

7 *Strategia Națională de apărare a țării pentru perioada 2020-2024*. Administrația Prezidențială, 2020, [[https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia\\_Nationala\\_de\\_Aparare\\_a\\_Tarii\\_2020\\_2024.pdf](https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_2020_2024.pdf)]

8 Op.cit

9 Op.cit

- cyber security: the start of comprehensive secondary and higher education programmes, e-skills and online security, as well as the development of the skills needed to combat false/fake information;
- critical infrastructure protecting: enhancing the awareness of the population, central and local public institutions, as well as of the business environment on the importance of measures to protect critical infrastructures in order to provide for the continuous and safe operation of basic public services and utilities (electricity, water, heat, sanitation, public transport, social services).<sup>10</sup>


The topic of resilience is also developed in another strategic document of Romania – National Military Strategy 2021-2024. In particular, among national military objectives for 2021-2024 is recommended “removing the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and strengthening national resilience.” Also, a term “military resilience” is introduced in the document as “an ability of forces to absorb kinetic and non-kinetic shocks associated with actions specific to the military, conventional and hybrid conflict, including fighting in conditions of CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear), degraded electromagnetic and cybernetic. In essence, military resilience is the ability the military instrument to build up credible forces and successfully carry out the defence operation, even in the conditions of the realization of the surprise by the opponent.”<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the main attention in enhancing resilience even in areas of health care and protecting of critical infrastructure is concentrated primarily on measures to counter disinformation. This may be due, inter alia, to the fact that Romania occupies one of the last places in Europe in terms of the number of vaccinated,

which is associated with a lack of public confidence in vaccination. If we compare these measures with seven NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness, we can see that some important requirements (for example, assured continuity of government and critical government services or resilient civil communications systems) have not been mentioned at all. Such an approach limits the range of tasks that the state sets for itself.

### **Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience: Tasks and Perspective**

The practical step in enhancing the resilience of Romania was in opening the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience. It was created by the Government’s Emergency Ordinance in 2020. The organisation and the functioning of the Centre are regulated by the Government Decision.

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 **among national military objectives for 2021-2024 is recommended “removing the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and strengthening national resilience”**

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The Centre was created by an inter-institutional working group established and coordinated by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It included the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Romanian Intelligence Service, the Romanian Foreign Intelligence Service, the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG) and the Special Telecommunications Service.

The initiative of Romania to establish such a centre was supported by Bucharest 9 partners. In a joint declaration of the heads of state at

<sup>10</sup> Op.cit

<sup>11</sup> *Strategia militară a României*, Ministerul Apărării Naționale, 2021, [<https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/STRATEGIA-MILITAR-A-ROMANIEI-1.pdf>]



the Bucharest 9 meeting on 10 May 2021, it was mentioned that evolving challenges to security and to societies, stemming from exploiting systemic vulnerabilities and weaponising new technologies, require strengthened resilience efforts at national and allied level, as underscored by the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. It was welcomed that the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience was to be launched by Romania, as well as the work of the dedicated Centres of Excellence in Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius.<sup>12</sup>

On 31 May 2021, the inauguration ceremony of the headquarters of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience was hosted with the attendance of the Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, Prime Minister Florin Cîțu, the NATO Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoaană, and the Vice-President of the European Commission for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič.

As was mentioned by Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Bogdan Aurescu, for a start the centre will function as a domestic institution. At a second stage, after reaching the initial operating capacity, it will be internationalised, and open to the participation of experts from EU member states, NATO or partners of these organisations who wish to join.<sup>13</sup>

The activity of the centre is led by a President with the rank of Secretary of State, assisted by a Vice President with the rank of Undersecretary of State, appointed and removed by the Prime Minister, at the proposal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>14</sup> drian Bratu, a career diplomat, director for

diplomatic strategies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was appointed a President of the Centre.

According to the Government Decision the Centre will:

- elaborate and develop concepts, doctrines, working methodologies, develop and provide trainings in the field of resilience;
- ensure consultancy in the post-disaster stage or crisis situation, in order to return as quickly as possible to the state of normality;
- develop and manage national and international experts and practitioners in order to increase resilience, elaborate and implement collaborative programs with the national and international academic environment;
- on request, participate in the planning and development of the scenarios of national and international exercises in the field of resilience, international exercises, hosted by partner countries, involving Romania;
- develop platforms for the exchange of information in the field, with public, civil and military, academic and civil society partners in the NATO and EU allied states;
- conduct information, education and popularization campaigns on the role of NATO, the EU and national deterrent institutions in deterrent and civil training for non-military crisis management;
- facilitate the transfer of expertise between public institutions and public authorities and public institutions and

12 *Joint declaration of the heads of state Bucharest 9 Meeting*. President of Poland, 10 May 2021, [<https://www.prezydent.pl/en/news/art,1251,joint-declaration-of-the-heads-of-state-bucharest-9-meeting.html>]

13 *ForMin Aurescu: Euro-Atlantic Resilience Center*. STIRI-COVID.eu, 31 May, 2021, [<https://stiri-covid19.eu/formin-aurescu-euro-atlantic-resilience-centre/>]

14 *Hotărîre privind organizarea și funcționarea Centrului Euro-Atlantic pentru Reziliență și pentru completarea Hotărîrii Guvernului nr. 16/2017 privind organizarea și funcționarea Ministerului Afacerilor Externe*, 2017, [[https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul\\_2021/2021\\_pdf/2021.03.19\\_hg.pdf](https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul_2021/2021_pdf/2021.03.19_hg.pdf)]

public authorities in NATO, EU and partner countries, between the business environment, civil society and the academic community in Romania and the business environment, civil society and the academic community in NATO, EU and partner countries etc.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, the Centre will also develop different programmes and initiatives in the field of resilience, underpinned by the following three pillars: risk mitigation through anticipation and adaptation; development of analytical tools and best practices; and practical cooperation on education, training and joint exercises.



***It should be noted that the main focus in Romanian strategic documents is on information threats, which is not entirely consistent with NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness***

In the following period, a series of working groups will start functioning within the Centre, focusing on: societal resilience; resilience in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies; resilience of communication systems and of novel technological ecosystems; resilience to crises and complex emergencies; resilience for ensuring continuity of government and of critical services; resilience of transport infrastructure; resilience of states in NATO's and the EU's neighbourhood to anti-Western influence of state and non-state actors.<sup>16</sup>

The establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience in Romania was welcomed in a communique of the Brussels summit of NATO on 14 June 2021.

Summing up, it is worth noting that Romania has recently taken steps to strengthen its resilience. This was reflected in strategic documents and practical actions, in particular, in the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience. It would be useful for Ukraine to get acquainted with the activities of this Centre and establish cooperation with it.

It should be noted that the main focus in Romanian strategic documents is on information threats, which is not entirely consistent with NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness. The concept of ensuring a national resilience system, which was approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine in September 2021, is generally closer to NATO principles. At the same time, Romania is more resilient to information threats, among others, due to public consensus towards the EU and NATO. Still, many challenges that these two countries face in the Danube and the Black Sea region, make them natural partners in developing a bilateral dialogue on the issues of resilience building and sharing experience in this field.

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15 Op. cit

16 Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience. [<https://ue.mae.ro/en/node/1551>]

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