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## POLICY BRIEF

# THE BEACON MODEL FOR RESILIENCE BUILDING IN THE BALTICS: KEY LESSONS TO LEARN FROM UKRAINE

Dmitri Teperik

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# INTRODUCTION

"When a catastrophe knocks on your door, you just have a few options to react. I wish we were better prepared, but reality has cruelly forced us to adapt while surviving and to learn how to become resilient in practice, especially mentally", said Kateryna who – as a municipal official in Dnipro – is responsible for civil protection in the city, with over 1 million inhabitants. She was one of 160 Ukrainian participants who were interactively trained on disaster management in the framework of cross-sectoral crisis simulation exercises that my team of the "Resilient Ukraine" programme have been conducting in Ukraine's regions during the year 2022. Although the war has complicated almost every aspect of the life in Ukraine (and surely beyond, as well), the decision to run the exercises was natural as the evolving environment of a great civil contingency provided many opportunities for reflecting and rethinking the incoming experiences of various people, societal groups and organisations in Ukraine.

## ALARMING CONTEXT FOR LEARNING

Ukraine's national resistance to the Russian aggression is often – and rightfully so – praised and described as brave and heroic. Ukrainian society continues to demonstrate many patterns of resilience. The large-scale military hostility of Russia is greatly tempering Ukrainians' skills of survivability and confrontation as well as fostering more efficient cooperation on local, regional and international levels. In combination with other virtues and features (e.g. patriotism and national consolidation), the application of these skills improves Ukraine's societal resilience on the ground significantly. Characterised by its practicality, the notion of resilience provides feasible policy-oriented frameworks to shape thinking, planning, implementation and

assessment of systemic processes and complex procedures that serve the ultimate goal for a nation to endure and transform through a serious crisis.

The war and its far-reaching consequences have already created very exceptional circumstances under which the concept of resilience as whole and some particular components of it are being re-discovered, tested, revalidated and even profoundly revised. Ukraine's experience has a great potential to redefine, by practice, many structural elements of resilience and its implications for various domains of security, infrastructure, democracy, the environment and socio-economic life, including health care, education, culture, etc. Since resilience building is a dynamic multifaced enterprise, **lessons from Ukraine can offer some relevant reality checks for the Baltic states, despite the known differences** in demography, economy and socio-political situations or geopolitical realities (e.g. Baltics' memberships in NATO and the European Union). While NATO measures allies' preparedness against seven baseline requirements for national resilience, there are also several additional overlapping blocks to building and strengthen resilience in a society[1]. During the last 570+ days since Russia's full-scale invasion, a set of Ukraine's experiences has been analysed domestically and internationally mostly through the main foci of planning, resourcing and conducting military operations; documentation of the war crimes, protection of critical infrastructure, diversification of energy sources, coordination of humanitarian aid, veteran affairs, issues with internally displaced persons and refugees etc. Still, **there are other complementing topics of societal resilience and civic cohesion with the long-term impact** which might have been overshadowed by more urgent matters in the mainstream media and public discourses. In order to avoid generalisation, observations from Ukraine can be also conceptualised and concretised through the prism of civil preparedness and societal response to internal crises caused or worsened by war. In other words, policy-planners and decision-makers in the Baltic states should seek practical answers to some ambiguous and non-obvious questions on key human-centric lessons to be learned from Ukraine's resilience.

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[1]    NATO, Resilience, civil preparedness and Article 3, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm

# MINDSETS MATTER

Simplistically saying, since resilience begins with thoughts and ideas and ends with goals and actions, it is vital to for a nation to pragmatically synchronise general perceptions on security and safety risk awareness as well as emergency preparedness. On the one hand, the gaps in resilience-related knowledge and attitudes can lead to exposing personal, societal or even national vulnerabilities that might be utilised by malicious actors or adversaries. On the other hand, even at peacetime, perceptions, let alone mindsets, are difficult to measure and evaluate due to their cognitive and cultural complexity as well as sociological and psychological distortions. Given the accuracy of various pre-validated scales and instruments, opinion polls might still have a bigger risk of social desirability bias, if conducted during wartime[2]. Some unintentional deformation of sociological data might occur as wartime surveys have uncommonly more politically (or ideologically) sensitive questions and therefore receive more politicised answers as well as high proportions of unclear or unanswered positions. Even so, many indications from sociological research on war related perceptions remain trustable and can describe the situation if not completely, then quite accurately, especially if combined and explained with, supported and complimented by systematic observations on the ground.

**"** **Pragmatically synchronise general perceptions on security and safety risk awareness as well as emergency preparedness.**

[2]    Blair Graeme, Alexander Coppock, and Margaret Moor. When to Worry about Sensitivity Bias: A Social Reference Theory and Evidence from 30 Years of List Experiments." American Political Science Review 114, no. 4 (2020): 1297–1315. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000374.

De Juan, A., & Koos, C. 2021. Survey participation effects in conflict research. Journal of Peace Research, 58(4), 623–639. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320971034.

Kit Rickard, Gerard Toal, Kristin M. Bakke, John O'Loughlin, 2023, How Reliable Are Polls In Wartime Ukraine? PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 830, February 2023, https://www.ponarseurasia.org/how-reliable-are-polls-in-wartime-ukraine.

Meinungsumfragen im Krieg, Ukraine-Analysen Nr. 278 vom 15.02.2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/278 (in German).

For the Baltic states, it is essential on an ongoing basis to maintain an adequate level of geopolitical threat perception within society at large – as of Spring 2023, 82% of Lithuanians, 82% of Estonians and 77% of Latvians shared the opinion that Russia's invasion of Ukraine affected the safety and security of their countries[3]. The data from the same research highlighted also a universally high concern among the Baltics regarding the possibility of war in NATO countries (this opinion was expressed and supported by 69% of Lithuanians, 68% of Latvians and 67% of Estonians). At the same time, the vast majority of the Baltic respondents (86% of Lithuanians, 84% of Estonians, and 77% of Latvians) believe NATO to be important for the future national security of their countries as they are convinced that membership in the Alliance makes foreign attack less likely (79% of Lithuanians, 76% of Estonians and 67% of Latvians)[4]. Comparatively, the level of Ukrainians' aspirations towards NATO is nowadays very similar to the Baltics (83% of Ukrainains support joining the Alliance as of July 2023)[5], but the public opinion on NATO in Ukraine has been undergoing a very dynamic process during the last decade and has been dramatically influenced by the Russian aggression, specifically in 2014 and 2022[6]. A lesson for the Baltic states suggests that **mainstreaming the awareness of realistic geopolitical threats and a high level of trust in shared security guarantees and assurances contribute to perceiving the Baltic societies more resilient on the national level**.

In addition to the geopolitical level, a coping mindset requires strong conscious strategies on personal and group levels, as well. A recent comparative study on resilience indicators during the war demonstrated similarities in the predictors of a high level of community and societal resilience in Ukraine,

[3]   NATO Audience Research: pre-Summit polling results 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2023/7/pdf/2300707-pre-summit-research-2023.pdf.

[4]   Ibid.

[5]   Sociological Group "Rating", Opinion poll on support for international alliances: survey in Ukraine and Europe, July 4-10, 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_ua_eu_nato_072023.pdf (in Ukrainian).

[6]   Analytical portal "Слово і Діло", *Як змінювалося ставлення українців до членства в НАТО* [How the attitude of Ukrainians to NATO membership changed], published on 3 October 2022, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2022/10/03/infografika/suspilstvo/yak-zminyuvalosya-stavlennya-ukrayincziv-chlenstva-nato (in Ukrainian).

Estonia and Lithuania[7]. In particular, preserving a sustainable hope among the populations results in strong perceptions regarding the crisis management capacities of communities, its residents, local and governmental authorities, and other organisations. On the other hand, lower levels of personal socio-economic wellbeing, higher sense of danger and some mental health issues (e.g. distress symptoms) can negatively affect resilience-related perceptions of people[8]. As many Ukrainians were admittedly unprepared for the escalation of war in 2022[9], their personal resilience suffered dramatically[10]. Nevertheless, a year-long adaptation, supported by national consolidation, horizonal cooperation and widespread involvement in volunteer movements, has increased Ukrainians' perceptions on their own resilience and morale[11]. Moreover, as of Spring 2023, 71% of Ukrainians declared their happiness[12] as there are also some tendencies for socio-economic optimism among Ukrainians[13]. Despite the casualties and atrocities of the war and due to larger civic solidarity, they have managed to restore hope for a better, more prosperous future, although it has taken a lot of energy and resources. For that matter, a simple rule applies that if something is not fixed before a crisis, fixing it during the crisis is more time-consuming and unimaginably costlier in every possible aspect. A lesson

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[7]  Kimhi, S., Kaim, A., Bankauskaite, D., Baran, M., Baran, T., Eshel, Y., Dumbadze, S., Gabashvili, M., Kaniasty, K., Koubova, A., Marciano, H., Matkeviciene, R., Teperik, D., & Adini, B. 2023. A full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022: Resilience and coping within and beyond Ukraine. Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12466.

[8]  Ibid.

[9]  Gradus Research, Opinion poll on public attitudes towards the anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Russia, published in February 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://gradus.app/documents/337/Gradus_Report_-_War_Anniversary_UA.pdf (in Ukrainian).

[10]  Cedos, *Перші дні повномасштабної війни в Україні: думки, переживання, дії*. Published in March 2022, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://cedos.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/pershi-dni-povnomasshtab-noyi-vijny-v-ukrayini-2.pdf (in Ukrainian).

[11]  Cedos, *Рік повномасштабної війни в Україні: думки, переживання, дії.* Published in June 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://cedos.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/rik-povnomasshtabnoyi-vijny-v-ukrayini-dumky-perezhyvannya-diyi.pdf (in Ukrainian).

[12]  Київський міжнародний інститут соціології (КМІС), *Самооцінка щастя населенням України до і після широкомасштабного російського вторгнення*. Published in July 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1257 (in Ukrainian).

[13]  Sociological Group "Rating", Opinion poll on moods and economic situation of the population, June 1-2 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_1000_ua_moods_job_xx_i_062023_press.pdf (in Ukrainian).

for the Baltic states gives a clear presumption that **universally accessible safety and tangible welfare play indispensable role in contributing to the strengthening citizens' socio-economic, organisational (i.e. intragroup co-operation) as well as psychological preparedness to crises**.

> **" Preserving a sustainable hope among the populations results in strong perceptions regarding the crisis management capacities of communities, its residents, local and governmental authorities, and other organisations.**

## COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Since societal attitudes can shape perception-based civic behaviour, it is instrumental to understand how solidarity-driven willingness to act transforms into practical capacities and achievements in coping with a major crisis. **In combination with situation awareness and emergency communication, group identities, sense of belonging and shared social capital enhance the coherence of organisations and communities** as well as initiate protective factors that help to increase societal and institutional resilience due to collective commitments to overcome a crisis and restore after it[14].

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[14]  Matthew L. Spialek & J. Brian Houston, 2019, The influence of citizen disaster communication on perceptions of neighbourhood belonging and community resilience, Journal of Applied Communication Research, 47:1, pp. 1-23, DOI: 10.1080/00909882.2018.1544718.

Odeya Cohen, Avishay Goldberg, Mooli Lahad, Limor Aharonson-Daniel, 2017, Building resilience: The relationship between information provided by municipal authorities during emergency situations and community resilience, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Volume 121, pp. 119-125, ISSN 0040-1625, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2016.11.008.

Bradley, E.H. and Alamo-Pastrana, C. 2022, Dealing with Unexpected Crises: Organizational Resilience and Its Discontents, Chapter in the book "Responding to the Grand Challenges in Health Care via Organizational Innovation" (Advances in Health Care Management, Vol. 21), Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1474-823120220000021001.

T. O. Sigurjonsson et al. (ed). 2023, Cross-Driven Institutional Resilience. Case Studies of Good Governance in Europe during the Covid-19 Pandemic, Palgrave Macmillan Cham, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31883-2.

In this regard, Baltic and Ukrainian experiences are quite similar as they show that citizens' engagement in the matters of public safety and national security can be nourished, supported and directed equally by the state actors, non-governmental organisations and volunteers' movements. However, one of the main differences is the fact that the Baltic states have been developing their understanding of and refining the structure for civic defence and security involvement during last three decades, while Ukraine is making the long-discussed improvements and adjustments to its total defence posture during the war since 2014[15].

Although collective and individual willingness to participate in defensive activities vary across the Baltic societies due to some historical and socio-political differences, its general level has been satisfactorily high during the last geopolitically turbulent years[16]. Besides, the Baltic nations have been traditionally paying special attention on youth patriotic education and para-military trainings[17]. The latest available data from 2022-23 indicate that 64% of Estonians, 60% of Latvians, 53% of Lithuanians are ready to organise, support and contribute to armed resistance in various capacities if they country

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[15]  Zaleski, K., Sliwa, Z., & Veebel, V. 2020, Baltic visions and dilemmas of territorial defence after 16 years in NATO. Journal of International Studies, 13(4), 184-196. doi:10.14254/2071-8330.2020/13-4/13.

Flanagan, Stephen J., Jan Osburg, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Kepe, and Andrew Radin, Deterring Russian Aggression in the Baltic States Through Resilience and Resistance. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2779.html.

Eleanor Beardsley, 2022, Thousands of Ukrainians are training to protect their cities in case Russia invades, published on January 19, 2022, accessed on 1 August 2023 https://www.npr.org/2022/01/19/1073792421/ukraine-russia-attack-military.

Lada L. Roslycky and Vladyslav Sytyuk, Voluntary Formations of the Territorial Defense Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are Key to National Resistance and Should be Treated as Such, published on 6 June 2022, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://voxukraine.org/en/voluntary-formations-of-the-territorial-defense-forces-of-the-armed-forces-of-ukraine-are-key-to-national-resistance-and-should-be-treated-as-such.

[16]  Andžāns, M. (Ed.), 2021, Willingness to Defend Own Country in the Baltic States: Implications for National Security and NATO`s Collective Defence. Rīga Stradiņš University. https://doi.org/10.25143/willingness_to_defend_2021_ISBN_9789934563997_58-77.

[17]  Urych, Ilona, and Grzegorz Matyasik. "Preparing youth for defence: Socialisation, education, and training of young people in Europe for national security". Security and Defence Quarterly 38 no. 2 (2022): 1-15. doi:10.35467/sdq/149891.

would be under a military attack[18]. As of May 2023, around 71% of Ukrainians declared their willingness to defend their country either by military means or as defence supporting volunteers[19].

> **Rapid capacity to establish a great variety of cross-sectoral, local and regional cooperation formats that are reinforced by professional networking and are based on enthusiasm, flexibility, horizontal communication and good practices of community needs assessment.**

Since the beginning of the Russian war, Ukrainians have been demonstrating a rapid capacity to establish a great variety of cross-sectoral, local and regional cooperation formats that are reinforced by professional networking and are based on enthusiasm, flexibility, horizontal communication and good practices of community needs assessment[20]. In 2023, the majority of Ukrainians (about 61%) participated in numerous volunteer activities, including assistance with some physical work (about 10%), supporting charities and making financial donations (about 31%) and helping with both money and

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[18]   Estonian Ministry of Defence and Eesti Uuringukeskus, *Avalik arvamus riigikaitsest* [Public Opinion and National Defence] (Tallinn: Estonian Ministry of Defence, June 2023), https://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/avalik_arvamus_ja_riigikaitse_kevad_2023.pdf (in Estonian).

Ieva Bērziņa, 2023, *Latvijas sabiedrības un valsts attiecības Krievijas-Ukrainas kara kontekstā*, Stratēģiskais apskats 02/23, https://www.naa.mil.lv/sites/naa/files/document/I.Berzina_Latvijas_sabiedriba_%20un_valsts_attiecibas_Krievijas_Ukrainas_kara_konteksta.pdf (in Latvian).

*Gyventojų apklausa: išaugęs pasitikėjimas kariuomene ir NATO sąjungininkais, sustiprėjęs kritinis informacinės aplinkos vertinimas ir ryžtas priešintis*, published on 20 February 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://kam.lt/gyventoju-apklausa-isauges-pasitikejimas-lietuvos-kariuomene-ir-nato-sajungininkais-sustiprejes-kritinis-informacines-aplinkos-vertinimas-ir-ryztas-priesintis/ (in Lithuanian).

[19]   Разумков Центр, *Ефективність реалізації державної політики у сфері утвердження української національної та громадянської ідентичності: соціологічні індикатори*, published on 29 June 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/efektyvnist-realizatsii-derzhavnoi-polityky-u-sferi-utverdzhennia-ukrainskoi-natsionalnoi-ta-gromadianskoi-identychnosti-sotsiologichni-indykatory-traven-2023r (in Ukrainian).

[20]   Дмитро Теперік *et al*., 2023, *Міжсекторальна співпраця: уроки на шляху до стійкого суспільства*. Аналітичний звіт, Міжнародний центр оборони та безпеки (ICDS), Таллінн, Естонія, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w2SynsUREgp3VWSuOrOnfRm6YQWS-f_T/view (in Ukrainian).

physical work (about 20%)[21]. Due to the war, civic engagement in Ukraine has remarkably increased in many sectors, including defence and security, healthcare, education, cyber security, media monitoring, youth work, evacuation, infrastructural projects, protection of human right, veteran affairs, anti-corruption activities, etc[22]. Moreover, Ukraine's civil society has soundly expressed a strong commitment to play a vital role in the country's reconstruction and modernisation[23]. Nevertheless, such **active (and sometimes even unhealthily selfless) involvement of Ukraine's citizens in volunteering and other civic engagements causes psychological burnouts and mental traumas**[24]. Many Ukrainians, including first responders and civic volunteers, not to mention numerous members of the armed forces, have received multiple psychological traumas and still suffer from the lack of mental health professionals[25]. About 75% of children in Ukraine have signs of cognitive stress[26]. Although Ukrainian society has had quite obvious motivation and reasonable time since 2014 to prepare and increase the capacity of crisis

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[21] Фонд «Демократичні ініціативи» ім. Ілька Кучеріва, *Опір агресору, волонтерство, обстріли інфраструктури: як повномасштабна війна вплинула на життя українців*, published on 24 January 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/2005394607643dac7fea2797.37532999.pdf (in Ukrainian).

[22] Leonchuk, O., Nisetich, A., Zetina-Beale, R., & Johnson, E. M. 2023. Ukraine's other army: Civil society through the lens of citizen finance and volunteering: Implications for the war, democratization, and reconstruction. RTI International. https://www.rti.org/publication/ukraines-other-army/fulltext.pdf.

UNICEF and EU empower youth in conflict-affected Ukraine. Strengthening resilience and civic engagement of adolescents and youth is key for peaceful futures, accessed on 1 August 2023 https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/unicef-and-eu-empower-youth-conflict-affected-ukraine.

[23] Emma Landi, The Role of Civil Society in Ukrainian Reconstruction, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), published on 30 June 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.csis.org/blogs/development-dispatch/role-civil-society-ukrainian-reconstruction.

Salzburg Global's Ukraine Civil Society Forum, Ukraine Civil Society Recommendations on Civil Society's Role in National Reconstruction, published on 5 July 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.salzburgglobal.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Documents/2020-2029/2023/795-01/SalzburgGlobal_Recommendations_CivilSociety_Eng.pdf.
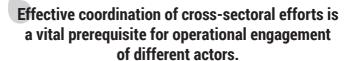
[24] Kateryna Zarembo, The Resilience and Trauma of Ukraine's Civil Society, published on 1 June 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://carnegieeurope.eu/2023/06/01/resilience-and-trauma-of-ukraine-s-civil-society-pub-89852.

[25] Médecins Sans Frontières, Protecting mental health amidst the trauma of war in Ukraine, published on 3 August 2023, accessed on 3 August 2023, https://www.msf.org/protecting-mental-health-amidst-trauma-war-ukraine.

[26] GO Global and Gradus Research, 2023, дослідження "*Освітній фронт. Вплив війни на освітян*", http://globaloffice.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/PREZENTATSYA_VPLIV-VIJNI-NA-OSVITYAN.pdf (in Ukrainian).

psychologists and other relevant specialists, the amount of resources is still inadequate and barely covers some urgent needs, but as of now, cannot address the mid- nor the long-term requirements of the society at war[27].

Here arises another important lesson for the Baltic states that **engagement in civic resistance, humanitarian assistance and volunteer movement can significantly consolidate the nation and enhance its operational resilience in communities and organisations, but prior the mobilisation, active members of civil society and respective NGOs must be fully prepared, professionally trained and sufficiently resourced in order to be efficient resilience actors in crisis management**. Additionally, Ukraine's experiences illustrate that special attention should be paid on making mental health part of emergency and recovery solutions, expanding the accessibility of pro bono services in legal, conflict mediation and psychological, gender and donor relations expertise. Ignoring it can wreck not just single lives, but destabilise the whole society for a longer period. Moreover, an effective coordination of cross-sectoral efforts is a vital prerequisite for operational engagement of different actors whose commitment must be supported not just by good intentions and sincere motivation, but equally importantly by relevant training on resilience skills and understanding of synchronised crisis procedures. Otherwise, if unprepared or uncoordinated, neither quality, nor quantity of resources can be appropriately utilised for a crisis relief. At worst, unexpected mismatch in needs and skills of mobilised volunteers or aid providers as well as poor administration of assistance or funds can disturb, distract or even jeopardise resilience operations on the ground.

> **Effective coordination of cross-sectoral efforts is a vital prerequisite for operational engagement of different actors.**

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27    Mental Health Europe (MHE), Mental health and geopolitical crises: Ukraine and beyond, published on 1 October 2022, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.infocoponline.es/pdf/MHE_Mental_Health_and_Geopolitical_Crises.pdf.

# IT IS ALL ABOUT THE VALUES

As the Russian military aggression is changing its character from the war of rapid defeat to the war of long attrition, many Ukrainians are experiencing symptoms of anxiety, emotional exhaustion and apathy. As of Spring 2023, 88% of Ukrainians declared a high level of war-related distress while various psychological traumas of war are reported by 40% of Ukrainians[28]. Such **stressful conditions amplify a sense of insecurity and set serious limitations for future planning which is crucial for the mental ability to preserve perspectives of hope.** Nevertheless, 77% of Ukrainians are fully confident in the victory over Russia, although this vision is based rather on emotional conviction of the high trust toward the Ukrainian Armed Forces and their psychological belief in prevail of justice[29]. This self-assurance is not just reinforced by international military support, enormous financial assistance and remarkable humanitarian aid, but also incorporates several sacred values of Ukrainians that cannot be negotiated or traded off[30]. Apparently, the **moral imperatives of freedom and dignity prescribe to many Ukrainians to remain patient, not surrender and fight for survival.** In a binary choice, the value of freedom is clearly preferred by the majority of Ukrainians (75%) over the equality (25%), at the same time, there is also an evident demand for a greater security (55%) (versus 44% for freedom)[31]. Nevertheless, the majority of Ukrainians declare sharing democratic values and have strong aspirations to build a stable and

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[28]  Gradus Research, 2023, проєкт "Градус суспільства під час війни", https://lb.ua/society/2023/05/05/554120_88_ukraintsiv_vidchuvayut_visokiy.html (in Ukrainian).

Як війна змінила українців: що кажуть соціологи, published on 9 March 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://texty.org.ua/fragments/109144/yak-vijna-zminyla-ukrayinciv-sho-kazhut-sociolohy (in Ukrainian).

[29]  Civil Network OPORA, Analytical report based on the survey results "WAR, PEACE, VICTORY, AND FUTURE", published on 27 July 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.oporaua.org/en/viyna/analytical-report-based-on-the-results-of-war,-peace,-victory,-and-future-survey-24828.

[30]  Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center sociological service, Survey on Symbols, Events, and Personalities Shaping Ukrainians' National Memory of Russia's War Against Ukraine, published on 16 May 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://dif.org.ua/article/symbols-events-and-personalities-shaping-ukrainians-national-memory-of-russias-war-against-ukraine.

[31]  Центр Разумкова, *Суспільно-політичні орієнтації громадян України*, published on 21 June 2023, accessed on 1 August https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/suspilnopolitychni-oriientatsii-gromadian-ukrainy-traven-2023r (in Ukrainian).

inclusive democracy[32]. As of May 2023, 73% of Ukrainians thought that democracy is the most desirable type of government for Ukraine[33]. Similarly, solid support to democracy is spread among the Baltic nations: 84% of Latvians, 80% of Estonians and 79% of Lithuanians shared the opinion that democracy is the best governance system in their countries[34].

Still, due to various socio-political and socio-economic factors, Ukrainian society lags behind the Baltics in the global Human Freedom Index 2022, according to which Estonia ranked number 3 of 165 (with the index value of 8.73 of 10), Latvia is on the 15th position (8.42 of 10), Lithuania is on the 17th position (8.34 of 10) and Ukraine has got the 89th position of 165 (6.68 of 10)[35]. As the index measures 83 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom in 12 different areas (such as rule of law; security and safety; movement; religion; association, assembly, and civil society; expression and information; relationships; size of government; legal system and property rights; sound money; freedom to trade internationally, and regulations), the impact of the ongoing war can explain Ukraine's progress in respecting human freedoms and democracy building to certain, but not the absolute extent. Presumably, **believing in (and very often also following) the democratic values helps many Ukrainians cope with the crises and overcome the burden of the consequences of war, but these moral principles are not sufficiently operationalised nor properly reflected in procedures of governance and protection of human rights**. In any case, a clear democratic perspective remains the only empowering option for a European Ukraine as its young generation, despite the huge losses from the war, report the following trends among young people that contribute to building a free and resilient society: a sense of

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[32] Київський міжнародний інститут соціології, *Опитування "Можливості та перешкоди на шляху демократичного переходу України"*, published on 30 June 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20230630_p/May%202023_wartime%20survey_Public%20version_Ukr.pdf (in Ukrainian).

[33] Центр Разумкова, *Суспільно-політичні орієнтації громадян України*, published on 21 June 2023, accessed on 1 August https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/suspilnopolitychni-oriientatsii-gromadian-ukrainy-traven-2023r (in Ukrainian).

[34] 7th edition of GLOBSEC Trends 2022, published 31 May 2022, accessed on 1 August 2023, https://www.globsec.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/GLOBSEC-Trends-2022.pdf.

[35] Ian Vásquez, Fred McMahon, Ryan Murphy, and Guillermina Sutter Schneider, A Global Measurement of Personal, Civil, and Economic Freedom, The Human Freedom Index 2022, https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/human-freedom-index-2022.pdf.

national identity, improvement in tolerance, a proactive socio-political involvement, and transparent and just peacebuilding[36].

A principal lesson for the Baltic states instructs hereby to preserve (and defend, if necessary) the democratic values and human freedoms not merely in the rhetoric, but foremost in perceptible ways and means across various societal groups, with a special focus of attention on younger generations to strengthen their democratic participation as well as and intellectual and cognitive capacities to recognise and prevent emerging threats to democratic values in the Baltics.

**Preserve (and defend, if necessary) the democratic values and human freedoms not merely in the rhetoric, but foremost in perceptible ways and means across various societal groups.**

## MORE OF UKRAINE'S LESSONS TO THINK ABOUT

As a country that is suffering from the continuing war for almost 10 years, Ukraine provides not just a useful experience, but actually a dynamically evolving set of different experiences comprised of multiple practices, decisions and outcomes with various degree of success. **The heterogeneity and applicability of this set should be scrupulously analysed in order to inspire rethinking of human aspects in the current crisis preparedness as well as forecasting scenarios for civil engagement during future security conflicts.** So, what the motley mosaic of Ukraine's experiences can portray to the Baltic societies in 2023?

In addition to the known and visible casualties of war, it can also cause myriad of hidden disturbances and collateral damages that might remain

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[36] Cedos, *Вплив війни на молодь в Україні*, published on 2 May 2023, accessed on 1 August 2023, http://cedos.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/ua_28.04_vplyv_viyny_na_molod_v_ukrayini.pdf (in Ukrainian).

underreported as their consequences (if accurately noticed) reveal themselves over a longer period. Regardless of predictable consolidation against a common enemy and increasing solidarity around national values (and evident heroes), some serious problems and division lines that existed in a society before the war, will most certainly remain there as their acuteness might be temporarily overshadowed by some urgent difficulties. The old societal troubles and chronical diseases (e.g. corruption, disinformation, paternalistic attitudes) will be most probably supplemented by new challenges and socio-psychological wounds. The previously existent and recently arisen vulnerable groups and communities (in geographical as well as in ideological sense) can possibly initiate publicly resonating discussions on various conflicting topics (e.g. ethnolinguistic issues, condition for peace, terms of reconciliation). Moreover, **very destructive to societal cohesion can be populistic discourse on measuring the degree of patriotism, assessing and declaring the level of personal contributions to defence, over-bragging or speculating with volunteer achievements, comparing the gravity of different traumas or benefits from international support and humanitarian aid.** The unity of a nation can be also remarkably undermined by mishandling and miscommunicating the topics of discrimination or victimisation of internally displaced persons, refugees abroad and veterans of war. Expanding social disconnection feeds propensity to decrease empathy associated with maliciously ideological and polarizing (mis)beliefs and hostile attitudes towards different societal groups and communities. Furthermore, a **lingering war provokes a bigger sense of injustice and can actually deepen the disillusionment resulting from the disappointing discoveries about the present reality and shrinking or unclear prospects for the future**.

> **" The old societal troubles and chronical diseases (e.g. corruption, disinformation, paternalistic attitudes) will be most probably supplemented by new challenges and socio-psychological wounds.**

If, optimistically speaking, security predictions nowadays seem brighter than darker, the probability of grimmer scenarios cannot be underestimated, but likely there are certain measures to reduce harmful effects of the negative developments in a society. The set of Ukraine's experiences highlights the bravery, dedication and sacrifice of individual Ukrainian citizens who were and still are ready to make independent decisions and bring them to life, either personally or in small groups of interests and larger communities. Although the political agenda might be interested in drawing and presenting it differently, the essence of Ukraine's societal resilience was not and is not systemic nor systematic, but **occurs rather as a complex of fragmented, episodic and irregularly creative civic responses to evolving challenges of war and ignorance, sluggishness and imperfections of the state machinery.**

> **Strategic depth that allows not just to reorient its logistical and manufacturing capabilities, but as a mental sanctuary also provides relatively safe opportunities for medical and psychological rehabilitation.**

Even though the flexibility, rapidness and innovativeness of Ukrainians' resistance efforts have critically, yet unsystematically contributed to making many communities and the society as whole more resilient, the great advantage of the country was and continues to be – doctrinally speaking – its strategic depth that allows not just to reorient its logistical and manufacturing capabilities, but as a mental sanctuary also provides relatively safe opportunities for medical and psychological rehabilitation. Serving as a bridge to the free world, Ukraine's strategic depth is also a window of clear air in both figurative and direct meanings since it stimulates cognitive recuperation and feeds motivation, courage and enthusiasm of many Ukrainians to survive and win the war. In these circumstances, even sporadic, but massive manifestations of resilience have determinant effects on personal, group, community, regional and national levels.

Since the Baltic states do not possess any considerable strategic depth, the societal resilience of these nations **must be systematically (re)built and strengthened in advance by carefully calculated preparations, including pillars of emergency trainings, patterns of targeted communications, procedures of crisis management, mechanisms of civic mobilisation, analyses of multiple identities, rationales for work with disadvantaged audiences, reinforcing weak socio-psychological connections, establishing new cooperation networks, etc.** The ecosystem of resilience actors should embed long-term orientation with analytical and transformative capacities to anticipate risks, changes, deviations, trends and prospectives. Given limitations of the operational environment and restricted availability of various resources, the Baltic states simply cannot afford the luxury of not methodologically preparing the building blocks of societal resilience, which is an indiscernible precondition for coping and survival during a major crisis. Furthermore, respective preparations inspire additional measures to programme and empower a new generation of growth mind-setters in the Baltic societies with the future-oriented attitudes to endure and thrive.

**Respective preparations inspire additional measures to programme and empower a new generation of growth mind-setters in the Baltic societies with the future-oriented attitudes to endure and thrive.**

## THE BEACON MODEL OF RESILIENCE

Since credo for a better and safer future is one of the essential elements for societal survivability and national endurance, the **Baltic resilience model** can – bearing in mind the lessons from Ukraine – be named as the **BEACON of hope** to address the following focal and fundamental elements for "everydayzation" of resilience practices:

**B**ehaviour – in its practicality, resilience is both attitudes- and values-driven as well as action-oriented approach to emergency management and crisis survivability. As a general result of the respective mindset and decision-making, resilient citizens of the Baltics preserve strong motivation to act out of conviction and demonstrate voluntarily induced changes in civic behaviour patterns.

**E**valuation – knowing and exploring one's own vulnerabilities and strengths is a requirement for a society to become more resilient. Additionally, intelligence-based situation awareness provides inputs into threat assessment about an adversary's liabilities and strong points. Resilient citizens of the Baltics have respective competences and are sufficiently trained to implement the skills of self-analysis and self-learning in order to evaluate the effectiveness of, preparedness for and responses to civil contingencies. Furthermore, evaluation-based capacity of transformation leads to making constant improvements in emergency policy planning and trainings.

**A**gility – ever-changing character of risks prescribes embedding flexibility and the promptness into threat assessment, situation awareness and crisis interventions. Resilient citizens of the Baltics evolve their understanding of emerging dangers constantly while planning, exercising and executing flexibly, and then evaluating thoroughly their joint responses to the mutating threats of domestic, local, regional, national or international nature.

**C**ommitment – motivation to endure and transform though a crisis is based on shared assurances and aspirations of the people. Resilient citizens of the Baltics know how to protect the democratic values and human freedoms, they maintain a strong sense of belonging and social inclusiveness while promoting complementarity of non-conflicting identities. When engaged in civic mobilisation, resilient citizens of the Baltics know individually and in groups the ways and means for effectively coordinated involvement to contribute intellectually, physically, organisationally or financially to crisis relief through emergency communication, cross-sectoral cooperation and mobilisation of various recourses within a community and beyond, if required.

**O**perationalisation – sustainability of resilience actors requires a systematic elaboration of structural policies and relevant procedures and algo-

rithms to ensure efficiency of personal, group and institutional responses to crises. Applying various methods of needs assessment, resilient citizens of the Baltics exercise the crisis response protocols regularly as they are also aware of and able to address and satisfy specific requirements of vulnerable societal groups, communities of interests, neighbourhoods or certain geographic areas.

**N**etworking – as resilience is a very interdisciplinary notion, knowledge and competences from various fields are required to enhance crisis preparedness and post-crisis functionality of communities. Resilient citizens of the Baltics are capable of forming hyperlocal trust-based self-repairing network cells while cooperation with other actors is based on the model of team of teams. These interactions emphasize transferable skills and professional expertise of trained end educated network members and also amplify numbers of direct beneficiaries from crisis interventions.

As every beacon needs a solid, erosion-proof foundation, the model of resilience must be resilient itself in order to survive the negative impacts of frequent changes in socio-political and economic environment as there might suddenly occur some radical political views and/or economic considerations to reduce, distort or even cancel some essential elements, activities or functions of the resilience building.

This is just a general description of the original model and its clusters, however it can be developed further as there are interconnectivity and interdependency between the clusters. If paired two-dimensionally, the evaluation of the clusters can expose and explain the holistic relationship and multifaceted nature of resilience. For example, cluster of commitment has some important features that overlap and complement the cluster of behaviour while characteristics of agility can be expanded to the cluster of networking, and so on where each cluster can be cross-referenced with other, like on a boardgame for the Sea Battle.

Further elaboration of the model adds more functional layers as it can be seen also multidirectionally and multidimensionally as if in a three-dimensional Rubik's cube. The formal and informal checkpoints of resilient systems can be established on the levels of hyperlocal communities, municipalities,

regions, states and even bigger areas with substantial numbers of common denominators (e.g., the Baltics). The implementation of this complex model has a great potential to highlight multidimensionally the existing vulnerabilities and as well as the strengths present in functionalities, topical clusters, groups of people, organisations and/or geographical locations. In other words, the beacon not only gives hope but also eliminates danger shadows and lightens the way forward.

To sum up: resilience is a long, quite eventful journey, not a fixed destination, so – bon voyage, Baltic societies! The beacon light shall guide you smartly.

# THE LATVIAN TRANSATLANTIC ORGANISATION (LATO)

LATO is a non-governmental organisation established in 2000. Its aims are to inform the public about NATO and Latvia`s membership in the Alliance, to organise informative public events about Latvian and Euro-Atlantic security issues, to promote partnerships with other countries, to lay the foundations for Latvia`s international role as a member of NATO, and to foster the international community's understanding of Latvia`s foreign and security policy aims. During the past 20 years, LATO has numerous achievements to be proud of. LATO organises the most influential security conference in the Baltic Sea region: The Rīga Conference facilitates discussion about issues affecting the transatlantic community and annually gathers international experts in foreign affairs andsecurity/defence matters, policy makers, journalists, and business representatives. LATO promotes policy relevant research on topics such as gender equality, peace and security, resilience in the borderland, and the subjective perception of security. A series of various initiatives intended for increasing the interest of Latvian, Baltic and European youth in security related issues have been put in motion, including an annual future leader's forum and masterclasses for young political leaders. LATO's most recent projects are several information campaigns aimed to inform and educate wider publics about resilience, transatlantic bonds, national and international security. LATO has the SecureBaltics.eu internet platform, which serves as an information hub for those who are eager to join thedebate on international security.

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# PROGRAM WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

LATO launched its first initiative at the Rīga Conference 2020 with a discussion as part of focus on the Women, Peace and Security Initiative. In 2021, a series of different activities on behalf of LATO have been established including special discussion in the Rīga Conference and upcoming publications and a documentary film. In 2022, we hosted two discussions on the WPS agenda in the Rīga Conference. In the second part of the year, we conducted a mentoring program and offered a special training course for young women professionals dealing with security issues or interested in WPS agenda. In 2023, The Rīga Conference continues to lead the pace with a dedicated discussions in the Rīga Conference and a new mentoring program has been launched for aspiring young leaders.

The promise of the Women, Peace and Security agenda set by the United Nations provides a framework for sustainable peace amidst a global crisis, and it is powered by a fearless women's movement that knows few bounds. But, while the agenda has strong support from governments all over the world, that support hasn't plugged the persistent implementation gaps. This is also the case in Latvia and the Baltics.

The general public's knowledge on the importance, leadership and influence of women enlisted within the defence, military and security sectors are quite minimal and their role in defence is often overlooked. Therefore, LATO has been working on developing a series of activities with an overarching aim of raising awareness and understanding on women in the defence, military and security sectors.

The LATO Mentoring Program targets young women professionals from Latvia to connect them with multiple highly ranked, highly achieving and highly reputed women professionals in the defence and foreign affairs sectors. By connecting both the successful and the aspiring leaders, the program bridges the gap in understanding and support and aims to create a long-term network of like-minded individuals. Thus, LATO not only encourages the growth of young professionals and raises awareness of the need for such encouragement at different levels. The mentoring program is supported by the German Embassy in Riga and NATO Public Diplomacy Division.

# INFORMATION SPACE SECURITY PROJECT #BORDERRESILIENCE

From 1 November to 31 December 2021 the #BorderResilience information space security project was implemented under the leadership of the Latvian Transatlantic Organisation (LATO). The project included four workshops with eight simulation sessions in the Eastern border regions of Latvia. The project aimed to identify the practices of border communities in countering information attacks, especially on border security issues. The experience and knowledge offered by the communities was used to develop policy recommendations and further steps to promote information security in society with the special emphasis on the border regions. At the end of the project, the results, evaluation and recommendations were presented for the stakeholders, who took further steps in implementation on new information security-oriented policies. The final report of the project is available on the websites of the Latvian Transatlantic Organisation www.lato.lv and www.securebaltics.eu. Methodological and social campaign materials were also be developed. The project is turned to become a strategic initiative, which encompasses new projects working together to serve the needs of the larger communities.

The project was implemented in cooperation with the State Chancellery and the NATO Public Diplomacy Division.

# SECURE BALTICS

LATO holds an internet platform SecureBaltics (www.securebaltics.eu).

The site gathers different materials – policy briefs, discussions, interviews, studies, educational materials – created in the framework of the Rīga Conference, as well as work from our partners. It is a stable platform that the Rīga Conference community can rely on and use as a credible source of information in the region.

### Purpose
The purpose of the platform is to collect the know-how that is generated by the excellent minds gathered at the Rīga Conference on an annual basis. The Rīga Co ference gathers regional and international experts in foreign policy and defence, academics, journalists, and business representatives by promoting the discussions on issues affecting the transatlantic community. It has been growing in influence since its inception in 2006.

Every year, for two days the National Library of Latvia is the centre of the most important regional discussions on security issues. However, it is not enough to engage in these discussions only once a year. Therefore, LATO developed SecureBatlics as a practical tool which can encourage the use of any resources and materials that have been produced as part of the Rīga Conference or its follow-up events.

### Reach

The platform provides materials in both, English and Latvian, in order to reach multiple audiences. It is intended for the traditional Rīga Conference comunity of opinion leaders and experts in foreign policy and defence matters as well as any other interested parties that could benefit from the generated materials such as high school teachers looking for study materials.

### Vision

LATO is working on SecureBaltics to become the go-to hub for resource associated with defence and security issues in the Baltics within the next few years.

### Materials

The platform SecureBaltics provides resources:

• For all interested parties, including expert community, in the form of interviews, policy briefs, commentaries on topical issues

• For teachers and lecturers in the form of study materials and tests that can be included in academic curriculum

• For students in the form of lectures and study materials, as well as interactive study materials through games.

### Partners

The SecureBaltics portal is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, NATO Public Diplomacy Division.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dmitri Teperik has over 10 years of experience in contributing as a director or a leading subject-matter-expert to various international research projects, interdisciplinary studies, development cooperation programmes, professional training and outreach activities on comprehensive resilience and complex measures against hostile influence and disinformation. Among the key topics, he has studied socio-psychological factors shaping societal resilience and cohesion, cognitive security, cross-sectoral crisis management, media consumption, situational awareness in the information environment, effects of social media, as well as interdependencies between strategic communication and group behaviour patterns. His main focus areas include Ukraine, the Baltic states, and the post-Communist countries of Eastern Europe. During 2016-23, he also led the "Resilient Ukraine" development cooperation programme which focused on assessing and strengthening national resilience in vulnerable communities in Ukraine.



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