



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The 10th Bratislava Global Security Forum, taking place in Slovakia from June 19–21, 2015, evolved against the backdrop of a steadily deteriorating security environment around Europe as well as in Europe itself, in particular as a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the unabated violence perpetrated by the Islamic State in the Middle East. A number of other topics also featured prominently on the agenda, such as the alarming spread of Russian propaganda across Europe and its neighbourhood, NATO's adaptation ahead of the 2016 Warsaw summit, the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, the prospects for Visegrad Group and Central European cooperation, and the future of Europe seen in the light of the EU Energy Union and the threats posed by potential British and Greek exits. The Forum's highlights included speeches by Prime Minister David Cameron, Senator John McCain, Presidents Bronisław Komorowski, Toomas Ilves and Andrej Kiska, as well as a round table with the Visegrad Four Prime Ministers. In addition, GLOBSEC's smaller, informal fora, including the [GLOBSEC Young Leaders' Forum](#) and three Public-Private Fora on defence, energy, and innovation & cyber security, brought a wealth of insights and recommendations on many other topics, which can be found in the full report from the conference. Recommended actions are marked with a star (★).¹

RUSSIAN BEAR AWAKE: SCENARIOS AND STRATEGIES

The post-Cold War order was all but buried when Russia annexed Crimea and the Kremlin waged war in Eastern Ukraine. It was GLOBSEC's challenge to take a deeper look at the potential contours of a new European order and of the relationship between the West and Russia that lies at its heart. George Friedman argued that Russia's insecurity about NATO being so close to its borders makes Russia take unusual risks. President Putin continues to be unpredictable and, as Carl Bildt pointed out, "more opportunistic than strategic".

The GLOBSEC expert community was unwavering in defining Russia as a threat. Similarly, a public [City Talks debate](#) led by Nik Gowing showed 76% of the audience supporting the notion that NATO and EU member states must assume Russia will work to subvert them, including by using military force. As Joerg Forbrig argued in the [GLOBSEC Policy Papers series](#), each side will continue trying to weaken the other's cohesion. This requires clear commitment by Allies to the norms underlying the European order. If the West gets fragmented, the Putin machine is likely to move. "We fought, we died, we led together and it's time we remember it and take on this new challenge," said Senator John McCain.

Russian speakers at the conference underlined the paradox that given the importance of good Russian-European relations for both sides' global competitiveness, any destabilisation of Europe is in direct contradiction with Russian interests. Meanwhile, having failed to modernise Russia, Mr. Putin is doing everything in his power to cement support at home. The massive propaganda effort aimed at his domestic populace includes "weaponising history", the rewriting of historical facts to support the feeling of national humiliation connected with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The GLOBSEC community was warned that spreading fear and flooding TV screens with military images might be a systematic effort by the Kremlin to prepare Russia for war. Given the trends in Russian society, manifested by the murder of Boris Nemtsov, the West should not take it for granted that a Russia without Putin would be more open toward engagement into a rules-based international order. Russia will sooner or later have to be re-engaged on global issues like terrorism or Iran. At this stage, however, as NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow put it, it is very hard to cooperate with a superpower that is violating the most sacred rules of international law and refusing to tell the truth about its military activities.

Thus, the conflict with Russia is likely to last long. The future will depend on Europe's ability to adapt to Russian revisionism, which is the new normal. This, insisted President Andrej Kiska, requires the West to overcome its current indifference, inconsistency and indecisiveness. Western leaders must retain the confidence that it is them who represents the legitimate and strong side. How far Mr. Putin is able to take his adventurism depends mainly on the West itself. Appeasement is not an option: "We have 70 000 Russian troops training at our border and 7 US tanks in Tallinn. Spiegel writes 'Provoking Russia'," tweeted President Toomas Ilves.

While it is unrealistic to expect that economic sanctions would provide the ultimate solution to Russian aggression, they remain essential as a fulcrum of Western unity. Sanctions have helped deter Russia from larger scale actions in East Ukraine. Still, they must be supplanted by other elements of strategy, particularly as regards

¹ Recommendations are those of the Central European Strategy Council, the conference organiser. They are largely based on opinions expressed at the GLOBSEC Bratislava Global Security Forum 2015.



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detering further aggression in Ukraine and beyond. To sustain EU unity on sanctions, however, it is important to introduce more solidarity and mutual support between members. It is also key to be discerning about targeting; the loss of Russia's civil society, which continues to represent a beacon of hope despite brute repression from the regime, would be a tragedy.

- ★ Maintain international pressure on Russia through diplomatic, political, and economic means (sanctions).
- ★ Restore faith in Western values and institutions and communicate their advantages to audiences both at home and abroad, as argued by Michael Chertoff.
- ★ Remain uncompromising about redrawing borders by force and not recognising Crimea.
- ★ Punish Russia's violations more resolutely than so far and raise the costs for the use of force.
- ★ Use the EU's strengths of cohesion, solidarity, power and affluence to create internal solidarity within the Union in order to defend against the Russian threat. Strengthen solidarity between EU Member States to overcome negative effects of sanctions.
- ★ Stay vigilant across Eastern Europe, including the incipient "mischief-making" in Moldova, as suggested by Governor Mikheil Saakashvili, as well as in the Western Balkans.
- ★ Washington should re-prioritise Russia, re-engage with its European allies and strengthen its presence as a key guarantor of security in Europe.
- ★ Central Europe should reach out vigorously to US leaders from both parties to build awareness about the region's concerns as well as its contributions to international security.
- ★ Germany must take the concerns of those EU members and neighbours that are particularly exposed to Russian pressures more seriously and formulate its position unambiguously.
- ★ Don't leave Russia behind: invest massively into cooperation with civil society actors who can both speak and act in the interest of Russia's democratic and pro-European future.

UKRAINE'S FUTURE: INDEPENDENT, STABLE, PROSPEROUS?

Russia's destabilisation tactics are the main obstacle to Ukraine's faster progress and democratization prospects brought about by the Maidan revolution. The greatest motivation to reform lies within Ukraine's civil society, not its vast bureaucracy. As Timothy Snyder explained, Maidan was an effort of Ukraine's civic leaders to strengthen the state by reaching out to the EU. In its counter-revolutionary zeal, Russia tries to erase both civil society and the EU from the equation and keep the Ukrainian state weak. Having mismanaged the conflict and failed to inspire a public uprising that would cripple Ukraine, President Putin unwillingly provided a powerful incentive for the creation of the Ukrainian nation, with Ukrainians willing to pay the highest price for their freedom.

There was keen awareness at GLOBSEC about Ukraine's internal problems such as the strong resistance of the political establishment to reforms; growing public frustration; the enduring links between the new administration and the old regime; serious economic and financial instability; and continued uncertainty about energy supplies and Ukraine's standing as a major transit for Russian gas to Europe. While concerns remain about the capacity of Ukraine to use European support effectively, it is difficult to adopt reforms when the country is in a state of war.

The GLOBSEC community emphatically urged the West to provide Ukraine with more substantial economic but also direct military support. Supported by a strong body of outside advisors, including from Central Europe itself, reform should be directed at decentralisation, demonopolisation and deregulation. Several speakers sought to dispel the false dilemmas about arming Kyiv in the face of naked aggression. Calls for Ukraine's EU perspective were omnipresent. In the words of President Kiska, this means presenting a "usable roadmap for membership, not a polite diplomatic way to avoid talking about membership openly". When Ukraine succeeds in its European aspirations, it will represent a powerful inspiration to nations across the post-Soviet space, including those Russians who do not agree with Mr. Putin and his policies.

Despite the immense challenges, the GLOBSEC community was optimistic about Ukraine's future. It was clear that achieving Ukraine's independence, stability and prosperity will require a massive effort on the part of domestic actors and the international community.

- ★ Craft a strategy on Ukraine which takes Russia into account but provides a central focus on the specific challenges for the Ukrainian society and its leaders.
- ★ Give Ukraine a European membership perspective.
- ★ Provide Ukraine strategic assistance with reforms, a "vision and coordination" as Minister Miroslav Lajčák termed it.



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- ★ Support reform with strategic communication: the Ukrainians must realise that even painful reforms are in their interest.
- ★ Ramp up bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation with Ukraine, including the provision of lethal weaponry as needed.
- ★ Kyiv should put premium on reducing corruption and red tape and improving the business environment, including by exposing the role of oligarchs and targeting their monopolies. Also, improve energy efficiency by smart energy use and further diversification of energy imports.
- ★ Central Europe should engage Kyiv on economic reform, regional and cross-border cooperation, but also, as highlighted by Štefan Füle, the integration of civil society with Europe, city twinning, student exchange programs and joint cultural events.

FROM WALES TO WARSAW: COLLECTIVELY DEFENDING THE ALLIANCE

NATO has to accelerate its adaptation to a new age of confrontation; an age in which fast action and public impact will be decisive. The fact that Russia is not only fighting a war in Ukraine but aims to undermine the Post-Cold War European order means that NATO as an institution, as a building block of that order, has become a target. Criticism was heard about the perceived slowness in implementing the Wales commitments, in particular as regards defence spending and the protection of NATO's Eastern border under the Readiness Action Plan. Meanwhile, voices pushing for a more ambitious adaptation strategy at the Warsaw summit gained prominence at the GLOBSEC Forum. This could include revising the NATO Strategic Concept, better planning for Article 5 scenarios, beefing up the NATO Response Force as well as developing NATO's Readiness Action Plan into a permanent arrangement to include the basing of NATO troops along the Eastern flank. The current security situation was not foreseeable in 1997 and therefore a permanent presence of troops there would arguably not constitute a violation of the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

It is increasingly likely that pulling the carpet from under NATO's Article 5 is President Putin's end-game. While direct military confrontation with the Alliance could be suicidal for any adversary, NATO has a particular vulnerability in the Baltics whose destabilisation could lead some allies to question outside involvement. Yet NATO must be prepared to act strategically, tackling head-on the most difficult bit – reaching political consensus, basing its actions on mutual trust and shared intelligence. Destabilisation starts at home; the role of NATO nations is crucial in identifying the threat and providing the first response. Disturbingly, a new Pew Research survey presented at GLOBSEC confirmed persisting public reluctance about honouring collective defence commitments.

- ★ Start fulfilling the Wales summit pledges on increased defence investment and modernisation.
- ★ Implement the Readiness Action Plan, including by better communicating these measures to publics and parliaments across NATO.
- ★ Rally support around a “Warsaw Initiative on Strategic Adaptation” to enable the adjustment of NATO's posture beyond the Readiness Action Plan.
- ★ Ensure that NATO nations have the full range of defensive capabilities in their collective inventory to draw on for the entire spectrum of conflict, in particular for all-out war if such a conflict is initiated by Russia.
- ★ Approve the permanent basing of multinational NATO forces on the territory of NATO's Eastern members, e.g. by creating a “trip-wire” force in the region.
- ★ Boost capacity to identify and counter Russia-instigated hybrid warfare in NATO's most exposed areas, focusing on the Baltics, especially through targeted exercises involving the North Atlantic Council. Set up a Centre of Excellence for Hybrid Warfare based in Germany.
- ★ NATO members of the EU should spearhead the Union's adaptation to hybrid warfare and promote NATO-EU synergies in this field.
- ★ Invite Montenegro for membership by the Warsaw summit and reconfirm the Euro-Atlantic perspective for Ukraine and Georgia.

EUROPE: A PERFECT (DIS)UNION?

A unified and strong EU, based on renewed economic growth, is a precondition for the Union's ability to act as a respected global power. This requires the EU to actively defend the values it stands for, said Prime Minister David Cameron, but also to engage more closely with its natural allies including the United States and assist those who fight for democratic values abroad. The EU needs to improve strategic thinking on key issues such as how to approach Russia, what to do with the Neighbourhood Policy, how to begin dealing with the “dreadful mess” in



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international relations (Edward Lucas) and on the way forward on such dynamic challenges as the recent influx of migrants from the Mediterranean.

- ★ National politicians should stop nationalising successes and brusselising failures, which has undermined the attractiveness of the European project to the citizens.
- ★ Europe's leaders have the responsibility to address the legitimate concerns of European citizens that are now expressed in illegitimate ways by populists.
- ★ Europe's leaders must spend more time addressing political matters. The primary challenge is to build a new, fundamentally political narrative for Europe, including the issue of what it would mean to have no Europe at all.
- ★ Relaunch the transatlantic relationship on the basis of a new grand vision, e.g. a closer integration of the West through projects like TTIP.
- ★ Take steps to overcome the economic crisis, deepen EU integration, and overcome fragmentation of the European economy by opening trade and connecting markets.
- ★ Take globalisation as an opportunity; actively engage with other regions and powers like China and India with a view to committing them to a values-based international order.
- ★ Encourage leadership through communitarian institutions.
- ★ Renew political impetus for greater institutional coordination between the EU and NATO.
- ★ The EU must remain open to new members; avoid grave communication errors such as the pause in enlargement suggested by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.
- ★ Rethink and resource the EU's Eastern Partnership to make association and eventual membership in the EU more attractive than the Russia-centred Eurasian Union.
- ★ Tackle the problem of weak governance around the EU, including by increased spending and better targeting of foreign aid.

The GLOBSEC community agreed that the United Kingdom's potential secession from the EU would cause considerable political and economic damage to all sides. In the run-up to the 2017 referendum, concessions on both sides will be necessary. This can be a revitalising debate for the EU. The UK has many natural friends in Central Europe on a range of EU issues. On the issue of a looming Grexit from the eurozone, support for Greece's continued membership prevailed, particularly in the interest of Europe's unity, international standing and security in the Western Balkans. At the same time, important voices from Central Europe recalled the limits of political support for the Tsipras government in the absence of profound reforms, recalling their countries' own painful experience with economic transformation. The "exits" debate also has an external dimension: Russia is likely to exploit European divisions in order to reduce the EU into a politically fragmented economic bloc and prevent, most importantly, the emergence of a common energy policy.

- ★ Work hand in glove with the Cameron government to keep Britain in the EU.
- ★ Encourage open and critical discussion on EU integration as initiated by the UK in the interest of making the EU stronger, more unified and more effective.
- ★ Promote more democratic accountability by involving national parliaments and civil society.
- ★ Whilst Greece must be exposed to strict measures and forced to reform, it is in the common European interest to help save this country and keep it within the eurozone.

Dependence on Russian oil and gas has restricted Europe's political options during the war in Ukraine. Over the years, Russia has proven to be an unreliable supplier of Europe's energy. Europe will have to focus urgently on diversifying its natural gas supplies, on using the current sources more efficiently and on mobilising investment in new infrastructure as well as renewable sources. The project of the Energy Union paves a clear way forward but requires strategic endurance. According to Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič, the crucial challenge will be to lead the member states to think about energy as a common issue that can only be addressed under a united "European shelter". The imports of US shale gas can represent a powerful contribution to Europe's energy security.

- ★ Use the platform of the EU Energy Union to advance towards a common energy market.
- ★ Make the best use of the current momentum: learn to think about energy in regional and European dimensions and coordinate plans and strategies accordingly.
- ★ Promote diversification away from Russia. Encourage the member states to openly demonstrate their willingness to provide energy assistance to each other if need be.
- ★ Encourage strategic investments into North-South interconnectors such as Eastring.



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- ★ Make the EU the global “prime mover” in renewables. On efficiency and savings, apply a long-term perspective of what is truly necessary, economically justifiable and beneficial.
- ★ Enforce compliance with European rules and institutions.

PROPAGANDA: EXPLOITING THE UNDERBELLY OF DEMOCRACY

While GLOBSEC focused on highlighting the threat of propaganda and information warfare as used by Russia, the tactics used by the Islamic State and its affiliates were also dissected. In terms of content, both adversaries attack the foundations of democracy and the rules-based international order.

Information warfare occupies a firm place in Russia’s overall anti-Western strategy. Russia’s information offensive around its hybrid campaign in Ukraine has not been limited to distorting Western views of the conflict but sought to undermine the Western institutions themselves. It has done so by deploying a toxic mix of instruments that include the media, NGOs, politicians, academics, financial market agents, energy executives, ethnic activists and hackers to a war in which the battle for the minds plays a central role. Using a global infotainment network tightly controlled by the Russian state including Russia Today and Sputnik, Russia has exploited the democratic principle of pluralism without offering alternative credible information. In an environment of declining trust in official authority, promoting conspiracy has been a particularly potent weapon seeking to foster national passivity and neutrality in the entire CEE region, where Russian influence is growing.

Particular concern was expressed about the support provided by the Putin regime to various far right (Le Front National) and far left (Syriza) parties in Europe in order to subvert the European integration process. Faced with a centralised, well-funded propaganda machine, the West has thus far failed to respond effectively. A special closed-door policy session was convened in order to map ongoing and planned activities by players in and out of government, exchange best practices and promote the creation of an independent, inclusive and action-oriented network of institutions and individuals across the transatlantic community to effectively address the challenge of anti-Western propaganda through closer cooperation. The session revealed many promising projects at grassroots level, but also a disturbing lack of political attention and funding. GLOBSEC demonstrated great confidence in the values of democracy, freedom and truth. What is lacking is more decisive action by communicators in and out of government: “People who write the present write history,” said Kurt Volker, “we only need to start writing.” The main challenge lies in creating and communicating a strong counter-narrative that would underpin a “Renaissance of the West” (Roland Freudenstein).

- ★ Respond more decisively to Russian propaganda and influence in our countries, in the Eastern neighbourhood and in Russia itself. Differentiate strategies for the three theatres.
- ★ Use fact-checked information in order to counter the “parallel reality” spun by the Kremlin. Be ready for Russia’s “4D strategy” as per Ben Nimmo: dismiss the critic, distort the facts, distract from the main issue and dismay the audience.
- ★ Expose Mr. Putin’s allies in the EU for what they are.
- ★ Dissect, expose and degrade the networks through which Russia feeds movements inside the EU to undermine democracy, integration and the transatlantic relationship.
- ★ Investigate and close media outlets, revoke journalist passes and other privileges to those known to be involved in promoting Russian propaganda.
- ★ Promote media literacy and critical thought.
- ★ Tell your own story: invest substantially in strategic communication; develop and confidently communicate narratives for the European Union and the transatlantic community based on truth, values, achievement and vision. Use the story of Central and Eastern Europe, with the contrast between democracy and authoritarianism it embodies, as an essential ingredient for crafting a new narrative.
- ★ Build the EU’s narrative for the neighbourhood around economic assistance, the promotion of media freedom and individual liberties, and above all, the principle of not invading other countries. Invest in NGOs, create new sources of credible information and educate journalists.
- ★ In Russia itself, confront propaganda by simply talking back, providing alternative information and helping Russian investigative journalists.
- ★ Don’t forget the power of humour: ridicule the Russian nonsense.



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DYNAMIC VISEGRAD: ENERGY, GROWTH, COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION

In the economic dimension, the Visegrad Group continues to demonstrate its potential to grow, which generates a considerable level of optimism amongst both experts and policy makers and confirms that this forum has an important role on both the Central European and the EU level. V4 countries need to urgently coordinate in the area of energy, particularly on the vital issues of diversification of natural gas supplies and investments into energy infrastructure. Digitalisation is of key importance for ensuring the region's competitiveness; Central Europe should develop a "smart and digital" brand and aspire to becoming the "Silicon Valley of Europe". Meeting a week before the European Council on migration, the V4 Prime Ministers argued strongly against migration quotas and in favour of aiding weak countries around Europe. Central European countries have to devise strategies for dealing with the changing demographics without relying on immigrants, to include, as stressed by OECD Secretary General Ángel Gurría, the reform of social and education systems to make the best use of the available human resources.

- ★ The V4 should steadily invest in mutual trust, partnership and a common sense of strategic direction.
- ★ The V4 should avoid cycles of unrealistic expectations and complacency while working on practical cooperation leading to concrete results, as underlined by Jiří Schneider.
- ★ Avoid disproportional focus on consolidation over economic growth; prioritise investment.
- ★ Dedicate more attention to family programs and invest in public as well as private initiatives focused on vocational training and lifelong learning to get ahead of the demographics curve.
- ★ Invest substantially in science, research and innovation as drivers of productivity and competitiveness.
- ★ Work nationally and internationally to encourage public-private cooperation in promoting entrepreneurship and start-ups.
- ★ Speed up the digital transformation of the region by building on success stories like ESET or Prezi and learning from the expertise of global leaders.

ISIS AND RADICAL ISLAM: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL THREAT

With recent attacks on targets across the EU, Islamic terrorism gained a new face – one that will most probably be seen in the Western world more often: small attacks with less casualties but significant emotional impact taking aim at Western values and freedoms. Furthermore, a rising number of young individuals from Western societies fill the ranks of ISIS. Every kind of extremism needs to be faced, be it violent or not-violent; and the root causes of radicalisation must be addressed as vigorously as its consequences. Given that radicalisation begins with the individual, internet-based recruitment represents a major challenge. The Muslim authorities are best-suited to address radicalism at its very roots and contribute to the vital reconciliation between Western perceptions of Islam and Islamic perceptions of the West.

- ★ Recognise the grave ideological threat that the ISIS vision poses to European values.
- ★ Fight islamophobia: promote moderate Islam and tolerant religious education, establish alliances with authorities from the Muslim communities to stop politicising Islam.
- ★ Expose ISIS as a brutal terrorist organisation by showing concrete information on the effects of the war, going so far as showing the casualties on both sides.
- ★ Invest in intelligence capabilities, ensure a better coordination between intelligence collection and intelligence analysis, and actively support advancements in the area of cybersecurity.
- ★ Address the socio-economic problems in Western societies that support radicalisation.
- ★ Encourage international cooperation at each stage of the "chain of radicalisation" (General John Allen) to stem the flow of foreign fighters into ISIS ranks.

On GLOBSEC's 10th anniversary, highlighted its founder Róbert Vass, the Forum hosted 1,130 participants and 160 speakers from 70 countries, including 12 Presidents and Prime Ministers, as well as almost 200 media representatives from 35 countries. Social network posts related to GLOBSEC reached a historic record, with 45,000 views and almost 4,000 followers on Facebook and over 5,600 Twitter posts reaching 120,000 primary and close to 10 million secondary impressions.

This summary was compiled by Mário Nicolini with inputs from Adam Csabay.