

# The EU's Concept of resilience and its effect on EU-Russian Relations



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# Outline



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- Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking
  1. Resilience / risks / securitisation
  2. Resilience and 'normative power' agenda
  3. Resilience as stability / change
  4. Resilience as interference in domestic affairs
  
- Can there be an alternative – and bilateral – vision of resilience?

# Resilience in the EU's documents – 1



- 1980s: economic issues, environmental studies
- In the late 1990s the EU started using the term ‘resilience’ for developing countries
  - first to describe the need for sound environmental policy
  - then to denote the danger of financial crises for the global economy
- The EU continued using ‘resilience’ internally (+cybersecurity) but it was the external use that led to the current resilience concept

# Resilience in the EU's documents – 2



- **2012 – Commission communication (food crises)**
  - Resilience is “the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks”
- **2013 – the Council – principles**
- **2016 - EU's Global Security Strategy – over 40 mentions**
  - resilience of states and societies
  - “in Europe and around it” -> external and internal
  - “to the east stretching into Central Asia, to the south down to Central Africa” → wider impact
- **2017 – Communication – further details**

# Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking:

## 1. Resilience / risks / securitisation



- Resources (and governance techniques) should be primary whereas risks are secondary but the EU's approach is different (traditional securitisation)
- Risks are mostly Russia-related
  - EU – energy supply, potential cyber-threats, hybrid risks as well as in 'strategic communication' + internal unity
  - EU's eastern neighbour – challenge “to determine freely their approach towards the EU”
- Traditional securitisation instead of resilience

# Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking:

## 2. Resilience and 'normative power' agenda (1)



- Resilience is about
    - the ability to withstand the shock, to adapt and recover from it
    - it is about community's involvement, bottom-up approaches, ability to manage uncertainty
    - governance techniques
- but it is not necessarily about democracy and human rights

# Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking:

## 2. Resilience and 'normative power' agenda (2)



- 2016 EU GS: resilience is about 'democracy, trust in institutions and sustainable development' → norms' based
  - Believe in the universal value of [Western] democracy and other normative power values
  - Continuation of the normative power with different (more cost-efficient?) means and in a different environment → defensive normative power
  - Renewal of the interests–values discussion in EU-RU relations?
  - Principled pragmatism? → neoliberal → more of an instrumental use

# Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking:

## 3. Resilience as stability / change (1)



- Ambiguity, which contributed
  - To the spread of the concept (“engineering resilience” - “environmental resilience” - “socio-economic resilience”)
  - To its acceptance in the EU (security community and development community)
- The 2012 Communication:
  - “two dimensions: the inherent strength of an entity ... to better resist stress ... and the capacity of this entity to bounce back rapidly”
- The 2016 Global Strategy and 2017 Communication:
  - the ability to resist but also to adapt when recovering after a stress
  - “resilience is about transformation not preserving the status quo”
- “A resilient state is thus one that is able to survive change by changing itself: just like a resilient metal it bends but does not break.” [Tocci]



# Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking:

## 3. Resilience as stability / change (2)



- Stability for the EU and change for its partners → liberal rather than neoliberal
  - EUGS 2016: “resilience depends on the context”
- EU's tradition of classifying the others → concentric circles
- What is important for Russia:
  - Inequality
  - Double standards (Juncos)
  - Challenge of the stability that Russia praises

## Russia in the EU's Resilience thinking:

### 4. Resilience as interference in domestic affairs



- The adaptability of states, societies, communities and individuals
- The EU pledges to “reach out more to cultural organisations, religious communities, social partners and human rights defenders, and speak out against the shrinking space for civil society including through violations of the freedom of speech and association”
- Important for Russia: interference in domestic affairs “under the guise of local ownership”

# Can there be a bilateral vision of resilience?



- Resilience is a quality of a system, it can only be internal
- → EU-Russia relations are to be addressed as a system
- 3 resources:
  - Economic relations
  - People-to-people contacts
  - Cooperation of NGOs (environmental, social projects, eventually human rights projects)
- How to support them? **Bilaterally** as oppose to **unilaterally**
  - Visa free movement (initially on the Russian side)
  - Sanctions' reduction (sectoral)
  - Rule of law (on both sides)

**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**