

**Responses, Resilience, and Remaining  
Risks in the Eastern Neighbourhood**  
*Evidence from Radicalization and Migration*

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## ABSTRACT

This working paper capitalizes on EU-LISTCO's analytical framework to explore the influence of migration and radicalization on risks created by areas of limited statehood (ALS) and contested orders (CO) in the Eastern Neighbourhood (EN). The paper argues that EN is characterized both by ALS and CO and examines the possibility of governance breakdown and violent conflict in the context of migration and radicalization processes. Currently, countries like Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine experience internal and external problems due to unresolved conflicts, corruption, or state capture. On the other hand, such issues often play out in a political arena among different political, economic, and societal actors with frequent involvement by external powers, especially the Russian Federation. Based on this analysis and methodology, we argue that neither migration nor radicalization in the EN will lead to governance breakdown or violent conflict in the EU neighbourhood in short- or medium-term time horizons. Although eventual escalation of radicalism to extremism or massive irregular migration from the EN could bring negative effects for the EU stabilization, countries in the EN region have sufficient components of societal resilience in place to avoid becoming a danger to the EU's security.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This working paper will analyse the impact of radicalization and migration on areas of limited statehood (ALS) and contested orders (CO) in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood (EN). Both ALS and CO are considered risks factors that can affect the internal and external environment of the EU. The research will help to understand the possibility of these two risk factors becoming threats by causing governance breakdown and violent conflicts in the EN and how the EU can mitigate these risks. It tries to answer the question: how do radicalization and migration affect ALS/CO in Eastern Neighbourhood countries?

Risks are considered and classified in terms of the effect of specific risk factors which influence the society (Borucka and Ostaszewski 2008). According to Börzel and Risse (2018: 4–6), ALS and CO are also risk factors

which represent challenges for the external action of the EU and its member states. ALS are situations when central government authorities and institutions are too weak to set and enforce rules and/or do not have the ability to fully control violence. These areas characterize large portions of the regions surrounding the EU in the east and in the south. However, ALS are neither ungoverned nor ungovernable, and we can find both territorial ALS (like Donbas, Transnistria, Abkhazia or South Ossetia) and sectoral ALS (like state capture and other vulnerabilities). CO are areas in which state and non-state actors challenge the norms, principles, and rules of the organization of societies and political systems. In addition, each risk category can bring specific “tipping points” or “threshold[s] at which risks turn into threats” (Eickhoff and Stollenwerk 2018) and turn ALS and CO into governance breakdown and/or violent conflict. Researchers argue that “tipping points” can be understood either as moments triggering governance breakdown or violent conflict related to short-term mechanisms or as processes with long-term and potential factors that may trigger governance breakdown or violent conflict (Magen et al. 2019). At the same time, these moments are not due to a single problem but are triggered by complex issues and a mixture of variables, e.g., radicalization with irregular migration combined.

The EN is characterized both by ALS and CO which provide the fractious conditions for violence and governance breakdowns (Kakachia and Lebanidze 2020). Currently, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine all experience both territorial and sectoral ALS due to unresolved conflicts (Waal and Twickel 2020; Tkach 1999; Legucka 2017) and systemic problems like corruption or state capture (Capasso et al. 2020). CO, on the other hand, often play out in a political arena among different political, economic, and societal actors with frequent involvement by external powers (Cornell 2001). The severity of impacts on governance produced by the presence of CO can vary from total governance breakdown (Georgia in the 1990s) to violent protests (Ukraine in 2014) to peaceful electoral revolutions (Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, Moldova 2009) (Horowitz 2003). Also, powers such as Russia put the regional order into question. Russia is directly responsible for the continuing presence of regional ALS, such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, the Crimea, and Donbas (Asmus 2010; Talbott and Tennis 2019; Galeotti 2019). Currently, the Donbas region represents the most dangerous zone of conflict where military skirmishes have never fully abated since 2014 (Babak 2020). The challenge for EU foreign policy is to foster conditions in which challenges to



these orders remain peaceful and do not contribute to governance breakdowns and violent conflict in the surrounding.

This working paper analyses the issues of migration and radicalization and their influence on risks created by ALS/CO as well as the possibility of governance breakdown and violent conflict in the EN. The focus will be on selected EN countries—Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova—applying the case study and empirical research methods. The main problem with governing risk is to discover the level of risk and find ways to mitigate it (Marjolein and Ortwijn 2011). Risks created by ALS/CO do not always become real threats to European security. Whether this happens depends on the extent to which resilient societies in EN successfully contain these risks through effective and legitimate governance. This is why the European Commission highlights the role of societal resilience, defined as “the capacity of societies, communities and individuals to manage opportunities and risks in a peaceful and stable manner, and to build, maintain or restore livelihoods in the face of major pressures” (European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2017: 3). Hence resilience needs to be considered within a broader perspective (Eickhoff and Stollenwerk 2018) as a large-scale state-building and governance solution on many levels. In other words, resilience affects tipping points in such a way that it mitigates the effects of the risks and prevents governance breakdown and violent conflict (Ibid.). To make a risk and resilience perspective more useful to practitioners, we consider that societal resilience has three dimensions—social trust, legitimacy and institutional design (Börzel and Risse 2018).

Based on this analysis and methodology, we argue that neither migration nor radicalization in the EN will lead to governance breakdown or violent conflict in the EU neighbourhood in short- or mid-term time horizons. Although eventual escalation of radicalism to extremism or massive irregular migration from the EN could bring negative effects for the EU stabilization, we argue that they do not yet pose direct threats to European security. The remainder of this paper will analyse actual, probable, and potential impacts of migration and radicalization on risks created by ALS/CO. In the next section, we examine the relation between radicalization and migration and their influence on violent conflict or governance breakdown, and illustrate the extent to which societal resilience-building has become practice in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. In section 3, we first map radicalization in Georgia,



Moldova, and Ukraine by analysing key factors of this phenomenon in those countries. We then examine the impact of migration on ALS/CO in the EN. We conclude by reflecting on the implications of our findings for policy and practice. We argue that societal resilience in the EN has in many cases had a positive effect in preventing the spread of military conflicts throughout the countries studied and the neighbouring region. The most important element of societal resilience in the EN appears to be the interpersonal and individual trust that was so helpful in supporting governance during times of crisis (e.g., the work of volunteers during revolutions or by delivering aid to the armies during Russian aggressions in Georgia or Ukraine) and, in the case of migration, in remitting money to the families in Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia crucial for the economies of those countries.

## **2. RADICALIZATION, MIGRATION, AND RESILIENCE IN THE EN**

In this section, the paper discusses how radicalization and migration impact risks created by local ALS/CO, and to what extent local components of societal resilience can offset these risks. Risks in the EU's neighbourhoods may pose a serious danger to its security and internal stability, but only if they deteriorate and turn into violent conflict and/or governance breakdown (Börzel and Risse 2018). In the EN, however, societal resilience may be sufficient for the time being to mitigate the effects of the risks and prevent governance breakdown and violent conflict.

In the EN, high levels of social inequality coupled with widespread poverty, high rates of unemployment, and the presence of rent-seeking elites all create conditions for social and political radicalization and in some cases extremism. In order to methodologically locate the radicalization phenomenon in this context, several differences between radicalism and extremism must be noted. The tendency that leads to violence or governance breakdown is extremism, which in the literature is often confused with radicalism and radicalization. Previous findings have shown that the terms radicalism and radicalization indicate a political disposition and a political process whereby, in the rejection of rule (by, e.g., authoritarian regimes), actors and groups come to accept pragmatic and selective use of violence in the pursuit of political goals (Bicchi et al. 2020; Krastev 2014). Thus, in the political context, a radical is someone who desires an extreme change of part or all of the social order and may use some extreme methods to achieve this.

Unlike extremists, however, radicals tend not to look to past glory, as their goal is a future for all, usually advocating emancipation and universal human rights (Bicchi et al. 2020). Extremists, in contrast, espouse violence on principle and thus cannot be integrated into democratic societies because their ideology is based on rejection of democracy, rule of law, and universal human rights (Bötticher 2017: 74–75). In Ukraine and Georgia, for instance, some groups of radicals have been integrated into political life, and that is why they did not follow an extremist ideology.

Regarding migration, mechanisms which can lead to governance breakdown or violent conflict are irregular and forced migration (Bicchi et al. 2020). In the EN, the most massive migrations trends are irregular, economic, and forced migration (in particular of internally displaced persons, or IDPs). Regions which experience high net migration loss are predominantly borderlands, mountainous with harsh climates, agricultural, and/or suffering dramatic declines in key industries (Bélorgey et al. 2012). Migration leads to further changes in societies, including lack of labour force, high youth unemployment, increased mobility of terrorist groups, and arms smuggling. For example, rural emigration has negatively affected the development and reproduction of educational quality and the provision of healthcare services. Some countries (such as Moldova and Ukraine) report severe shortages of teaching staff in rural areas and consequent growing inequalities in quality of and access to education, and an absence of community-based social and healthcare services as a result of low salaries. However, these problems do not directly trigger violent conflict or governance breakdown: in the short-term, the potential risks are mitigated by the very nature of migration (legal, circular, and seasonal) and its positive impact on the Ukrainian economy (revenues from remittances in 2019 were about \$12 billion) (Capasso et al. 2020; Jaroszewicz 2018). Nevertheless, migration can be understood as a process that raises both opportunities and challenges for countries and societies (Castle and Miller 2009). In the long run, negative demographic and migration trends in the region may trigger violence and governance breakdown, in particular in local ALS, which are disproportionately affected by both international and internal migration and displacement, and if or where this becomes an increasing factor in local CO. The scale of the process is lower than that to the EU's South (Frontex 2020). Nevertheless, it also raises several problems within Eastern European countries and outside. In this paper, we concentrate on the consequences of migration that potentially can



increase risk or present a challenge. We do not examine the positive effects on social mobility, which “has a critical role to play in strengthening Eastern partners’ resilience” (Petrova and Delcour 2020: 348).

The negative effects of radicalization or illegal migration noted above can be mitigated by societal resilience, preventing risks from turning into threats leading to violent conflict or governance breakdown in ALS or CO. We argue that societal resilience does not necessarily have to be provided by state institutions but can also occur through local governance as well as non-state actors. For example, when the Ukrainian state and its structures proved weak in the face of the “little green men” problem (Russian troops in unmarked uniforms) in Crimea and against Russian aggression in the east of the country, Ukrainian society self-organized, i.e., through the formation of “committees”, in support of the national army. According to Madoian (2020: 7):

Since the eruption of conflict, civic engagement in and around Donbas has become more dynamic. Local activists have been the main guardians of a Ukrainian identity and allied with the government to support humanitarian efforts and mitigate the effects of war.

Civil society organizations in smaller communities urged local administrations to address the most pressing long-standing problems. For instance, an NGO in the town of Druzhkivka engaged with local authorities to make local infrastructure more accessible to people with disabilities (ibid.). Such actions proved a bottom-up logic to peace and governance and allowed for long-term consolidation of essential governance provision for states and societies (Eickhoff and Stollenwerk 2018). Based on empirical exploration of reciprocal interaction between resilience, risks, and the role of external actors in Georgia and Ukraine, we can draw a broad conclusion, that those countries show a basic quality of domestic resilience able to withstand risks created by ALS/CO and prevent the emergence of violent conflicts or governance breakdown.

Social trust has been a key source of resilience in the EN. Still, generalized trust in the EN is rather low (23.1% in Ukraine, 8.8% in Georgia and 17.6% in Moldova) (World Values Survey Association 2020), and this is connected with risks associated with ALS/CO because people are not willing to support states’ policies and are less active in political and social life, which weakens those states internally and externally. The generally low level of legitimacy of



political institutions may be a legacy of the post-Soviet period, when political institutions were ineffective and there was a general lack of good governance. At the same time, inter-personal trust is high (above 60%) (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2018). Trust in groups of unfamiliar people turned out to be of utmost importance in Ukraine during the initial phase of the Russian aggression, when volunteer movements provided financing for the basic needs of the Armed Forces and volunteer battalions operating on the frontline and, therefore, provided military capacity in the absence of effective state mechanisms. In fact, both the Orange Revolution of 2004–2005 and the Revolution of Dignity of 2013–2014 proved the high capacity of Ukrainian society for self-organization, which made up for the distrust in state institutions.

Empirical legitimacy, which concerns the social acceptance of the existing governance structures (Börzel and Risse 2018) by different actors and institutions among the local population is directly related to the political culture of EN societies. EN citizens' political identity and culture are largely conditioned by the dominance of a post-soviet model of governance and society-government relations, leading to belief in a top-down logic and expectations that state or elite non-state actors will provide solutions. The level of acceptance and trust in the government among the societies in the EN is rather low, and the one way citizens express their discontent is by voting 'with their feet' and emigrating. The low legitimacy of public institutions is also due to the still high levels of corruption, informality, and state capture, resulting in the disproportional enrichment of business-political elites. As a consequence of the corruption, people do not believe that state actors (government, parliament, or president) can help them solve their problems. Among the non-state actors, the Orthodox churches enjoy a high degree of popular support (above 60% in Georgia and Ukraine, and above 80% in Moldova) (Caucasus Research Centre 2018; Razumkov Centre 2020). Ukrainians see the primary role of the Church as defending the interests of the poorest citizens, especially when the government makes decisions that lower people's standard of living. They also view religion as strengthening people's morality and helping to revive national identity and culture (Razumkov Centre 2020). In this regard, the Church constitutes an important instrument of strengthening societal resilience, and the establishment of the new Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which was granted autocephaly in 2019, increased the public role of the Church. However, there have been cases of



priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate openly advocating against the Ukrainian state and declaring their support for the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which shows that religion (in this case, two competing factions) can both shape public opinion and contribute to the weakening of societal resilience.

Of utmost importance when considering radicalization and migration issues in the EN has been the third component of resilience, namely institutional design, which is connected to set rules (both formal and informal) (Börzel and Risse 2018). For instance, in Ukraine the state has quite effectively controlled radicalization, partly through co-option mechanisms and partly due to the creation of new institutions; for example, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs was established in 2018 to ensure the formation and implementation of state policy in the field of social protection of war veterans. Regarding migration, EN countries tend to lack a systematic state approach (Jaroszewicz and Kaźmierkiewicz 2014). For example, although Georgia has introduced a state system of assistance and management of IDPs, this is based on developing legal norms in line with UNHCR priorities. The effectiveness of this system is equally dependent on the international financial support to Georgia in this field. In the event of a collapse of this assistance or a significant limitation of external financing, IDPs, who are still not fully integrated into society, may become a challenge for the Georgian authorities, necessitating an effective and self-sufficient IDP-focused policy which could seriously increase the budget load. In Ukraine, migration is barely managed in any way, despite some attempts to do so by the state; in 2010, the State Migration Service was established, and in 2017, the document “Strategy of the state migration policy of Ukraine until 2025” was adopted. Nevertheless, the state has little influence on immigration flows. One of the main tools is the “Migration profile of Ukraine”, published every year as a collection of analytical and statistical information on migration in Ukraine. The report started within the framework of Ukraine's implementation of the EU Visa Liberalization Action Plan for Ukraine. Still, the lack of state control is compensated by other factors, such as the circular and short-term nature of the migration itself and remittances, which constitute an important part of Ukrainian GDP (about 9% or \$12 billion in 2019) (National Bank of Ukraine 2020). Worth also emphasizing is the role of social remittances—practices, identities, and social capital—that are transferred from migrants to their home countries (White and Grabowska 2019). Social remittances can be even more important than



financial ones where they play an important role in strengthening resilience; migrants may acquire new ideas, practices, values, norms, and beliefs which can induce social change and be a means to modernization. On the other hand, migration can also undermine social trust because of the separation of family and social group members, which can weaken social bonds.

The EU's role in strengthening resilience in the EN is observed mainly in the institutional field (Open Society Foundation Kyiv 2016). In Ukraine, for example, some important institutional changes took place under pressure from international actors, including the EU, such as establishing the National Anticorruption Bureau and introducing an electronic system of asset declarations for officials and politicians. These aimed at limiting corruption opportunities and therefore at increasing government legitimacy. Nevertheless, anticorruption activities have met with fierce resistance from some in the political elite afraid of revealing their illegal activities and reducing future profits (Kościński and Szeligowski 2017). The key to fighting corruption in Ukraine remains the still unfinished reform of the justice system, which still makes it possible for corrupt judges and prosecutors to sabotage anti-corruption actions in their final stage. Although the judicial system has been subject to some change since the Revolution of Dignity, such as the introduction of a new three-tier system of courts, restricting judicial immunity, and launching a procedure for the evaluation of judges, this has not decisively affected the old practices.

Thus, while processes radicalization and migration in the EN have the potential to contribute to a tipping point at which governance breakdown or violent conflict may emerge, in particular in contexts affected by ALS/CO, it seems for the moment that countries in the region have sufficient components of societal resilience in place to avoid becoming a danger to the EU's security and internal stability.

### **3. RADICALIZATION AND MIGRATION IN THE EN: A CASE STUDY**

In this section, we discuss the main empirical findings on the extent to which radicalization and migration influence security and societal resilience in the EN. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, which can be characterized as a period of violence and destabilization, many people in this region expressed increased readiness for change concerning historical disputes, military conflicts, and the involvement of external actors, all of which weakened the

young post-Soviet states (Cornell 2001; Waal and Twickel 2020). ALS/CO in the EN have been most visible in Georgia and Moldova after the internal conflicts in the early 1990s and the Russia-Georgia war of 2008, and in Ukraine since the start of Russian aggression in 2014. Below, we provide a brief mapping of how resilience and migration impact risks associated with ALS/CO and their potential to trigger new conflicts or governance breakdowns in the EN.

### 3.1. Radicalization

This section will elaborate the risks arising from ALS/CO through the lens of radicalization. In the EN, there are several factors that facilitate the rise of radical groups. First, there are the many protracted conflicts, during which many of the fighting groups became extremists. Secondly, it is due to ideological elements fuelled from outside (chiefly by Russia or ISIS) and the rise of populism (Dolidze et al. 2018; Pokalova 2020). Thirdly, in the case of Ukraine in particular, there is a pre-existing disposition to use violence coupled with an informal integration of paramilitary groups into the state, including financing through corrupt businesses and connection to local law enforcement agencies (Curtis et al 2020).

#### 3.1.1. Georgia

In Georgia's case, radical groups arose in the early 1990s and have participated in all of its internal ethnic (Georgian-Abkhaz, Georgian-Ossetian) and political clashes (Georgian civil war) (Secrieru 2017). The Georgian conflicts attracted not only foreign fighters but also mobilized domestic radicals, such as the Mkhedrioni paramilitary units (existing between 1989 and 1995). Later, members of this group constituted a political party in Georgia which generated many political activists and continued functioning in Georgian politics for years afterwards. Most of these radicals came from Russia, and most were motivated by ethnic, nationalist, or religious reasons, though some also constituted mercenary groups for financial gain. Among the examples of these radicals were the various foreign fighter groups active in Georgia's conflicts. A key characteristic of these groups was that they were not just present on one side of a given conflict (separatist or government) but influenced the conditions in the state as a whole, including corruption and criminalization (Kukhianidze 2009).



Furthermore, Georgia is a multicultural, multiethnic country (ethnic minorities make up 13.2% of the Georgian population) and the full-fledged inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities in Georgia's political, cultural and social life remains a challenge (Dolidze et al. 2018). Ethnic diversity has been a challenge for Georgian unity since gaining independence in 1991. The biggest examples of that were wars between Georgians, Abkhaz and Ossetians (finally ending with creation of two separatist republics, supported by Russia) and separatist movements in Adjara during the time of the rule of charismatic Aslan Abashidze, which ended peacefully). Because of these conflicts, however, Georgia became not only an 'importer' of foreign fighters but also an 'exporter' of them to other conflicts in the post-Soviet area (Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine) and the Middle East (the civil war in Lebanon, civil war/war in Syria, and also as fighters of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS) in Syria and Iraq, during the biggest foreign fighter mobilization in history between 2014 and 2017) (US Department of State 2017; Pokalova 2020). The Georgian experience with foreign fighters, both inside and outside the country, is strictly related to its internal security challenges, such as extremist attacks and radicalization of young Georgian Muslims i.e., in Pankisi Gorge, were the "passivity of the government, a lack of communication, and low sensitivity to the community" pose problems that may become additional facilitators of radicalization (Dolidze et al. 2018: 8). Fighters entering the country have always caused more violent and sustained actions during conflicts, often exaggerating the brutality of military and paramilitary clashes. From the other side, Georgia has not created a workable policy for fighters returning from military conflicts abroad. Returning foreign fighters need a social and state political framework in terms of reconciliation and re-socialization (especially people with post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD) or those who are not ready to give up the military/armed way of life) (Krikorian 2015; Pokalova 2018). In Georgia, radicalization has tended to increase in the last 2–3 years. Far-right groups even announced plans to form a joint party, the National Front, and that they would "take part in absolutely all political processes" (Gelashvili 2019: 1). Right-wing groups are indirectly supported, or at least not openly condemned, by the ruling party and other political actors, and extreme right-wing opinions largely coincide with general public attitudes, meaning that there are significant discursive opportunities for mobilization (Gelashvili 2019). Such groups represent anti-constitutional and anti-democratic attitudes

(Stephan 2018). The most well-known is Georgian Idea, a group that aligns itself with a religious base (in this case, Orthodox Christian) and advocates the reinstatement of a monarchy in Georgia and a ‘balanced’ foreign policy, implying closer relations with Russia and forgoing aspirations to join the EU and NATO. Other significant groups include Georgian March, Georgian National Unity, and Georgian Power. In contrast to Georgian Idea and Georgian March, which remain publicly active, Georgian National Unity and Georgian Power have recently moved to online activism (Svanidze 2018; Transparency International 2018). There are no indicators that right-wing actors in Georgia will become a consolidated and powerful movement. They remain small, fragmented, and relatively marginal and do not pose for now an important factor in order contestation, but in the long-term it is “necessary to address the political opportunities that enable mobilization in the first place. This includes both discursive opportunities and the potential access of right-wing extremists to the political space” (Gelashvili 2019: 9).

To summarize, we can identify numerous domestic and external factors in Georgia which, alone or in a combination, may lead to new violent contestations or governance breakdowns. They include a bundle of socio-economic and political factors, but Georgia has continued its preventive efforts by focusing on initiatives in education, civic and political participation, media, and access to information, preserving minority culture and identity, justice and law-enforcement activities, and social and regional integration (US Department of State 2020). That is why radicalization in Georgia is not a main factor in risks created by ALS/CO in Georgia.

### **3.1.2. Ukraine**

Likewise, there were more than 30 radical and paramilitary groups, including far-right ones, that took part in the hostilities in Donbas on the Ukrainian side. Among the most important were Right Sector, Azov Battalion, Aidar, Donbas, and Dnipro-1, which were volunteer battalions consisting of up to a few hundred individuals with their own chain of command, logistics, and funding, although on the frontline they cooperated closely with the Armed Forces of Ukraine and often relied on artillery support from the regular Ukrainian army (Käihkö 2018; Klein 2015). Their presence in Donbas was crucial at the initial stage of the Russian aggression, compensating for the deplorable condition of the army. However, on at least a few occasions, they also showed poor commitment and discipline, and later on, with only a few



exceptions, they were integrated into the official army structures. There were cases when some of these groups committed crimes and abuses, with probably the most notorious example being the Tornado battalion, which was disbanded by the Ukrainian authorities in June 2015 after it transformed itself into a de facto organized crime group (Miller 2016). Nevertheless, the Ukrainian authorities have so far been hesitant to investigate and prosecute extremist actions and crimes committed by the volunteer battalions, given their contribution to the war with Russia and high level of trust (over 50%) within the society (Razumkov Centre 2019).

One radical group with connections to local law enforcement agencies is Oplot (“Stronghold”), which exemplifies many of the factors facilitating the rise of radical groups in the country. It started among those with a disposition to use violence, as a Mixed Martial Arts fight club. It was also financed through corrupt business practices, as its members were often employed to provide corporate security for questionable business activities. The group also developed connections to local law enforcement agencies; their leader, Yevhen Zhylin, had even been a former police officer, and the group cooperated with the police during Euromaidan, for instance, helping to transfer protesters to police stations (Coynash 2018). Oplot also promoted external ideological values; for instance, Zhylin came up with the initiative to erect a Soviet-style monument to Stalin in Kharkiv in 2013. Nevertheless, the group also seemed to enjoy informal and unofficial sanction by the Ukrainian authorities, who, during Yanukovych’s time, sought support from the radicals (Goujon and Shukan 2015), especially when the regime was constrained by laws and norms that made it impossible to enforce punishment and enact terror, or when the state lacked the capacity and manpower to act.

Many radical groups had been financed and supported by Russia long before 2014 and actively joined the ranks of the Russian-controlled forces in Donbas soon after the beginning of the aggression (Likhachev 2016). Oplot was one of the most notorious, with the former head of its Donetsk branch Oleksandr Zakharchenko becoming the self-declared leader of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) in 2014–2018. Numerous other Ukrainian radical and paramilitary groups, including Cossacks and other irregular military groups bearing “Orthodox” (adherent to the Russian Orthodox creed) names, also participated in the hostilities on the Russian side, committing war crimes in Donbas. There are several pro-Russia “security” groups, de facto mobile

paramilitary units that still exist in central and western Ukraine, mainly under the umbrella of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, although Ukrainian experts believe these groups are closely monitored by the Ukrainian security services and the National Police (Coynash 2018; Szeligowski et al. 2019).

The mobilization of volunteers in Ukraine was also combined with an influx of foreign fighters from abroad, on both sides of the conflict. Both the Russia-backed separatists and pro-Ukraine forces facilitated that inflow with ideological calls and propaganda (particularly among the pro-Russia separatists and Russian forces) because of the weakness of their own forces (Ukraine) (Karagiannis 2016). What is extraordinary regarding this phenomenon is that many radicals involved in the conflict in Ukraine underlined their need for a life of combat rather than a political or ideological motivation. This led to the phenomenon of “neo-communists” and “neo-Nazis” fighting arm-in-arm and contributed to the more extensive radicalization and brutalization of the conflict.

Of particular concern for Ukraine are those radical groups that are issue-driven and do not publicly adhere to any party ideology (Szeligowski et al. 2019). An example of such a mixed and ad-hoc group is the radicals that initiated the trade blockade of the occupied territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in spring 2017. These were not individuals affiliated with political parties but war veterans who won support for their case to “stop trade with the enemy” from a substantial part of the society and obliged the government, which opposed the action, to eventually approve their demands and permanently institute the blockade despite the certainty of economic losses (Kostanyan and Remizov 2017). Other less prominent examples include radical groups employed by oligarchs and business representatives, and sometimes also by organized crime groups, for illegal activities. Frequently, their tasks include asset-grabbing—the illicit acquisition of a business belonging to a competitor—or intimidation of their patrons’ opponents. However, there have been cases in which war veterans were employed as contract killers. A driving force for change in this respect could be the new Ministry for Veterans Affairs, established in November 2018 (titled the Ministry for Veterans Affairs, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons since September 2019), yet it remains to be seen how effective the institution will be.



While not all Ukrainian radical groups and volunteer battalions are ideology-driven, some of them are affiliated with right-wing political parties and organizations, and a few of their commanders even managed to enter parliament in the October 2014 elections, although as members of other political factions. No far-right party managed to pass the threshold at that time, and they largely remained outside the political mainstream, focusing on street marches. In March 2017, the leaders of three nationalist organizations—Svoboda, National Corps (civil branch of the Azov battalion), and Right Sector—signed a joint political manifesto (Svoboda 2017) calling for the transformation of street actions into parliamentary politics. Support for the document was expressed by three other organizations—Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, and S14. However, they failed to prepare a joint platform or even put forward a single candidate for the March 2019 presidential elections. Notably, the link between political parties and street groups has been weak, and it may be the case that a strong political movement of the Ukrainian far-right will not emerge, especially given that the political weight of Svoboda, previously present in the Rada (in 2012–2014) as a separate faction, far exceeds that of other radical formations. As radical parties did not make it into parliament in the pre-term July 2019 elections, it is possible that the radicals will become marginalized, potentially escalating both their radicalization and the risk of violent order contestation, because parliamentary politics has turned out to be inaccessible to them.

### 3.1.3. Moldova

After the Russian invasion of Donbas in 2014, there were no skirmishes, unrest, or significant manifestation of support, even if pro-Russian sentiment is very strong, especially in autonomous Gagauzia, the city of Bălți, and separatist Transnistria. Moldova was not a significant source of radical groups. This was caused by a combination of different factors. On the one hand, after the lost Transnistrian war in 1992, successive Moldovan governments have conducted a policy of moral disarmament, so the prestige of military service in the society is low. The Moldovan army now is small—just about 4,000 personnel—but is also badly-equipped and poorly paid. Moldova could therefore not serve as an important reservoir of potential pro-Russian combatants (mercenaries or volunteers) because of its very small number of military specialists or even people with basic military training



(*Ziarul Național* 2018). On the other, Transnistria—pro-Russian and highly militarized region—has also not been an important source of combatants. Ukraine sealed its own border with Moldova, especially the section with de facto Transnistria. Since the beginning of its existence, this region has been well penetrated by Ukrainian secret services. Also, after the outbreak of the Donbas war, Transnistrian authorities have tried to be transparent in their assurances to Ukraine that the region poses no risk. According to the Moldovan Security and Information Service (SIS), to 2018 only about 100 Moldovan citizens had joined the forces of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples Republics, although more than half of them were from Transnistria. As of July 2018, 18 of them had been arrested and 15 sentenced by Moldovan courts. Two others were sentenced in Ukraine. The main reason they cited for joining the war was to earn money; about 70% of them were unemployed or from poor families (Gațcan 2018). According to some sources, the Moldovan mercenaries were paid about €300–€750 monthly (Sanduța and Șevciuc 2018).

However, Transnistria was an important source for a specific type of professional subversive agents—retired politicians and officials, high-ranking military and security officers—about forty of whom were transferred by Russia to the Donbas and Luhansk region to organize and command local forces (Kramer 2014). The highest-ranking Transnistrians were Alexander Karaman—former vice-president of Transnistria and in 2014 vice-prime minister of social affairs and minister of foreign affairs of the DPR—and Vladimir Antyufeyev—former Transnistrian minister of state security and in 2014 vice-prime minister of DPR state security (Antyufeyev also took part in a Russian coup and an annexation of Crimea). Other important figures from Transnistrian state security forces were Oleg Bereza and Andrey Pinchuk, who, in 2014–2015, were ministers of internal affairs and of state security of the DPR, respectively.

A part of Moldovan society, especially members of national minorities and older people with post-Soviet mentality, recognizes unionist movement as radicals or extremists who are fighting against their own state. Unionists—supporters of the idea of a union between Romania and Moldova—are a small but well-organized radical political movement. The unionist electorate is about 10–15%. But for now, in Parliament, there is no unionist party. The Liberal Party was the last unionist parliamentary faction, but was compromised by its cooperation with oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc and was not



elected in 2019. Popular support for the incorporation of Moldova into Romania has usually been reported at 15–20% but rose to 34% just after the fall of the pro-European Maia Sandu's government in November 2019 (Deschide.md 2019) and later to 44% in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Necșuțu 2021). This is because, for a significant part of society, Moldova lost legitimacy as a state, becoming an ALS. Trust in state institutions is very low among this group, who see the only chance for improvement of the political, social, and economic situation in liquidating the state by incorporation into Romania. This conviction has been strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the Moldovan state has been absolutely inefficient and Romania has been the main donor of medical help (including vaccines) to Moldovan citizens. On the other hand, a significant part of Moldovan society, mainly national minorities and older Moldovans, who are still living with post-Soviet sentiments, are very hostile to Romania and consider unionists to be the real threat. The fight against the unionist movement is used by former President Igor Dodon and his Socialist Party to mobilize voters (Pieńkowski 2018, 2020).

To sum up, in the EN further radicalization and its transformation into extremism remains a moderate risk. At the moment, the activity of radical groups in political and economic life is now relatively low. One has to remember that radical marginalized groups have not reached Ukrainian, Georgian, or Moldovan parliaments, although they enjoy considerable influence on state institutions by means of mass protests, for instance. On the other hand, this is an effect of the fact that the radicalization threat in case of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine is caused mainly by territorial losses (to an external actor, i.e., Russia) and conflicts which have been radicalising their societies. An additional factor increasing the possibility of CO is the fact that radical groups in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, regardless of whether they are tied to or inspired by Russia or are extremely anti-Russian, are inherently anti-democratic, even if they define themselves as democratic or sometimes more democratic than mainstream political forces (because they propose online voting, for instance). Radical far-right groups in Georgia and Ukraine have become extremely anti-Russian. On the other hand, pro-Russian “security” groups and de facto mobile paramilitary units (even if closely monitored by the Security Services) sometimes participate in hostilities on the Russian side, supporting separatists in Transnistria, Abkhazia/South Ossetia, and Donbas. Overall, even if anti-Russian radicalism is dominant at

the moment, especially in Georgia and Ukraine, a clash between these two types of CO (plus the Russian one itself) may increase the possibility of paramilitary confrontation.

### 3.2. Migration

Three dimensions of migration in the EN potentially increase the risks of governance breakdown or violent conflict related to ALS/CO. The first is internal displacement as a result of the protracted conflicts in Donbas, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh. The second is economic migration, which has involved about 3 million people from Ukraine (since 2014), 1 million from Moldova (since 1991), and 600,000 from Georgia each year, potentially leading to “brain drain”, when a significant portion of a country’s population of skilled or qualified workers become emigrants, leading to a significant loss of human capital (Fedyuk and Kindler 2016: 42, 104–105). The third is the influx of foreign fighters to Ukraine and Georgia. Without improvement of the economic and social situation in the EN and an end to the regional conflicts, negative migration trends, i.e., IDPs, brain drain, and the influx of foreign figures, will continue. So far, the scale of these problems does not threaten governance breakdown or violent conflict. Additionally, in some cases economic migration is circular and has overall had positive effects and benefits for Ukraine and Georgia’s economies in particular. But there are possible areas which can in future exacerbate risks associated with ALS/CO: e.g., a lack of skilled workers, especially in health sector, or the unstable social and humanitarian situation of IDPs. Also, the lack of an effective migration policy and instruments supporting the return of EN economic migrants to their home countries will increase the risks arising from ALS/CO in the future.

#### 3.2.1. Georgia

The bad economic and social situation in Georgia influences the negative elements of migration like brain drain, internal displacement, or influx of foreign fighters. The scale of these problems does not threaten governance breakdown or violent conflict, but the lack of an effective migration policy and instruments supporting the return of migrants to the country will increase the risks associated with ALS/CO in the future.

Migration is influenced by the risks created by ALS/CO. The first issue is the existence of IDPs, who increase the potential for order contestation as a factor which could be easily used for destabilization of the internal situation in Georgia by internal (political groups) and external (Russia) actors. There are about 280,000 registered IDPs in Georgia, which represents about 7% of the population (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2019). These include internal refugees resettled from Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the 1990s as a result of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and the Russia-Georgia war of 2008, as well as those displaced by natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes). Georgia also has some experience with accepting external refugees who are citizens of the Russian Federation from the North Caucasus (mainly Chechens). Due to the long-term presence of IDPs in Georgian society, there are now also second-generation IDPs (i.e., the children of those initially displaced). Both the first and second generations of Georgian IDPs have Georgian citizenship, but the risk of radicalization is higher among them because of the bad economic situation. The second dimension is economic migration, which, however, does not exceed the scale of that in Ukraine, even after the start of free-visa movement between Georgia and the EU. The third dimension of migration in Georgia—strictly related to radicalization—is the influx of foreign fighters. Since independence, Georgia has been both an importer of foreign fighters, mainly during the Georgian-Abkhaz war in the 1990s and the Georgia-Russia war of 2008, and an exporter of foreign fighters (Secieru 2017). According to estimates, about 300 Georgians have taken part in the war in Ukraine (fighting on the side of Ukraine against Russian “imperial” policy) and more than 400 have travelled to Syria and Iraq, most of them seeking to join the Islamist radicals primarily as soldiers of the “Caliphate”, but also with financial motivations, e.g., as mercenaries (for private military companies such as the Wagner Group, which supports Russia/Syria against ISIS).

### 3.2.2. Ukraine

The migration in Ukraine in the context of ALS/CO has three dimensions and they all impact on potential for governance breakdown or violent conflict. The first one is the case of internal displacement as a result of the 2014 Russian aggression against Ukraine. The country has one of the highest numbers of IDPs in the world (UNHCR 2020). Since Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the start of fighting in eastern Ukraine, the government of Ukraine has reported some 1.5 million IDPs (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine 2020). The second



dimension is economic migration, which pertains to about 3 million Ukrainians who have moved to other parts of Europe since 2014 (mainly to Poland). The third dimension is the influx to Ukraine of foreign fighters on both sides of the on-going conflict in Donbas (Legieć 2017).

IDPs increase the possibility of sectoral ALS in health, education, and housing policy, where Ukraine is not able to provide for their needs. IDPs fled their homes in eastern Ukraine and moved to other parts of the country to seek safety. Most of them live not far from their previous home regions: around half in government-controlled territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, others in Kyiv (210,000) or its surrounding region, or in the Kharkiv (132,422) and Dnipropetrovsk (70,414) oblasts. They are exposed not only to economic problems (high unemployment, lack of housing, or low integration in local communities) (International Organization for Migration 2020), but to mistrust from the local population (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2018). Some services for this group (e.g., social assistance, temporary housing, medical assistance) are provided by non-government actors, including international and civic organizations, as the government is not able to provide all needed help. These problems have not yet led to order contestation in Ukraine, but if intensified by a low level of resilience, these risks can have a severe impact on Ukraine could even lead to new violent conflicts or governance breakdowns.

Economic migration in Ukraine does not constitute a risk of ALS in terms of either inflow or outflow of migrants, and the negative outcomes of the outflow of workforce are balanced by positive ones in the form of social and financial remittances. With regard to inflow, data indicate a quite reasonable number of foreign citizens and stateless persons entering Ukraine, which has remained almost constant over the last three years. This inflow includes immigrants, labour migrants, and visitors to Ukraine. However, Ukraine remains one of Europe's top migrant-sending countries (Fedyuk, Kindler 2016: 1). Around 5 million Ukrainian citizens are living abroad, permanently or temporarily. Estimates vary between 2 and 7 million, depending on the definition of migration or the methodology used. The dominant type of migration, however, is incomplete migration, characterized by circularity and a relatively short period of stay abroad (Piechowska 2020).

After 2014, Ukraine witnessed a large outflow of workers, mainly to Poland, as a result of the declining standard of living in Ukraine (in 2014–2015, cumulative GDP decline was more than 16%). The wave of emigration peaked in 2017–2018 and stabilized in the next few years (Jaroszewicz 2018). Remittances from abroad have significantly increased in that time to more than \$14 billion in 2018 and have contributed vastly to the economic stabilization of the country. Nevertheless, the collateral damage has been that the Ukrainian workforce has shrunk by 5–8%, which has resulted in the economic recovery being slower than initially expected. Ukrainian enterprises increasingly face a labour shortage, with many young and skilled workers seeking better job opportunities abroad. Due to the average low level of education of the Ukrainian migrants, however, the resulting brain drain only affects specific industries (e.g., healthcare and partly in the IT industry) (Piechowska 2020). Although many Ukrainians perceive mass-emigration of their compatriots as one of the biggest threats to the country (Rating Group and Kyiv International Institute of Sociology and Razumkov Centre 2018), economic migration does not pose risks of governance breakdown or violent conflict, mostly due to the fact that Ukrainian migration is characterized by circularity and the relatively short duration of migrants' stay abroad, which also lower the threat to the country.

The impact on the risk of violent order contestation arises from the influx of foreign fighters to Ukraine. According to estimates, in 2014–2019 the number of foreign fighters engaged in the war in Donbas, including Russians that are not part of the regular Russian army, exceeded 18,000 (Legieć 2017). The influx of foreign fighters, which was most intensive at the beginning of the conflict (2014–2015), was strictly related to the issue of radicalization in Ukraine. The conditions of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine have created for these people a kind of “ideological traverse” (Legieć 2017: 29) in which anyone can fight for whatever they wish and against whomever they choose. Choosing sides in the conflict is often a secondary consideration and sometimes even coincidental. As long as this conflict lasts, it will be a factory producing various radicals fascinated by military life and steeped in brutality, increasing the likelihood of governance breakdown or a renewal of violent conflict.



### 3.2.3. Moldova

The Republic of Moldova is the country in Europe most affected by mass migration processes, although the categories of internal displacement or influx of foreign fighters presented in the previous sections do not currently apply. When the Transnistria War started in 1991 and when it escalated in 1992, many were internally displaced from areas of fighting between Transnistrian forces and the constitutional government of Moldova. The most intense fighting was in the city of Bender, from which about 80,000 civilians fled. After the war, however, nearly all of them returned home (Romanovsky 2012), so there IDPs are not currently an issue in Moldova. Also, many of the numerous volunteers and mercenaries (paid by Russia) who fought on the Transnistrian side during the conflict were citizens of other post-Soviet republics (mostly ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, but also Kuban, Terek, Astrahan, Orenburg, Zaporizhia, Ural, Irkutsk, Zabaikalie, Yakutsia Stavropol, and Don Cossacks)(Sukhanin 2019). After the war, however, most of them returned to their countries of origin, and the few Cossacks who stayed created auxiliary forces to the Transnistrian army (Solak 2010).

Since declaring independence in 1991, however, Moldova has lost about a quarter of its population—more than 1% of its population per year—not only because of the low number of births (about 12.8 per 1,000) but also primarily mass-migration. The number of Moldovans currently residing abroad is about 1 million (IOM 2020), i.e., over 30% of the country's population. The main causes of migration are poverty, the lack of well-paid jobs, and of prospects to improve this situation. Moldova, together with Ukraine, remains the poorest European state. There is a lack of a formidable middle class, and the gap between rich and poor remains at a high level. Most of Moldovan society—72.9% in June 2020—consider that the economic situation is getting worse. Only 7.4% recognized it as satisfactory, but 72% as otherwise. In comparison with 2019, only 9.1% found the situation better, but 43.5% worse (Institutul de Politici Publice 2020).

The mass-migration results in growing ALS. Moldova has lost a generation of young and middle-aged specialists due to brain drain, so not only are local businesses unable to develop, but the state is not able to fulfil its basic duties to its own population. Because of mass-migration, in many villages there are schools, kindergartens, houses of culture, or medical centres that have been closed or have limited hours. Since Moldovan independence, about 40% of its

medical staff have emigrated. Due to this (but also due to lack of funds for drugs and equipment), the health of Moldovan society is declining— in 2014 cases of tuberculosis more than doubled in comparison with 1990, and the maternal mortality rate was more than seven times higher than in the EU states. A large proportion of emigrants are students—about 20% study abroad (90% of them in Romania), and most of them do not return to Moldova after graduation (Całus 2016). Mass-migration also causes serious social problems. In 2012, more than 100,000 children had at least one parent abroad. In many situations, the children were abandoned because grandparents or other relatives were not able to (or not interested in) caring properly for them. Separated families are exposed to social degradation and mental trauma, resulting in a higher number of divorces, juvenile delinquency, and alcohol problems (Yanovich 2015) in comparison with families living together. On the other hand, about a quarter of emigrants have moved their families abroad, which reduces the likelihood they will ever return to Moldova (Yanovich 2015).

The Moldovan authorities have tried to manipulate the data to hide the real scale of migration by selectively presenting numbers they expect to demonstrate their policies will be successful (UNFPA Moldova 2019). According to the national census held in 2004, Moldova had 3.38 million people, but the 2014 census showed 2.91 million people (in both cases, the Transnistrian population was not counted). This shows Moldova had lost about half a million citizens in just 10 years. Meanwhile, the Moldovan government presented a number of people who formally declared their intention to migrate to the authorities as the total number of people who emigrated, although citizens have no obligation to do so. For example, in 2001–2017 the official total of emigrants to Italy, the main EU destination for Moldovans, was just 137 people, but in the Moldovan presidential election in 2016, 51,500 Moldovan citizens voted in Italy (MOLD street 2018). In 2019, the National Statistical Office of Moldova published data about net migration. Thanks to the use for the first time of international standards of migration statistics, short-term migration was excluded. According to this, at the beginning of 2019, Moldova's permanent population is 2.68 million. In 2017 alone, about 50,000 more people emigrated than returned to Moldova (MOLD street 2018).

The demographic future of self-proclaimed Transnistria is also uncertain. The population of this entity has dropped dramatically since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1991, the year of proclaimed independence, it had 693,000 residents. In 2004, a local census was organized by the Transnistrian authorities, which counted only 555,000 people. In the following years, censuses were not taken. In 2018, the local statistical bureau noted only 467,000 people (Fomenco 2019). According to some researchers, even these data are uncertain, and the real population is likely closer to 375,000 (Waal 2019).

Nowadays, mass migration is the most important factor deepening the ALS in Transnistria by making its economy and institutions inefficient due to lack of qualified workers and specialists. Even if the situation in the conflict over Transnistria is quite stable and a new war seems unlikely, Transnistrian inhabitants emigrate on a large scale. For example, in 2015 the stable population may have been 475,000, but officially 55,000 were absent for less than one year and 18,000 for one year or more, or about 11% and 3.8%, respectively. The main reason for the migration is the unclear political status of the region and, due to this, a lack of economic prospects. Its residents migrate to search for better-paid work. The depopulation is especially harsh in the rural areas, but the outflow of qualified workers and skilled people with higher educational degrees has also led to severe brain drain. About two-thirds of Transnistrian emigrants choose emigration to Russia because most Transnistrian citizens have family or a friendly connection in the Russian-led Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which makes work or study there easier. Most of them also have dual, or even triple citizenship, the most common being Russian. The role of Ukraine as a host state after the Russian invasion in 2014 has decreased from about 25% to 10%. Smaller groups have moved to Belarus, Romania, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, or Israel (Fomenco 2019).

To sum up, in the EN the risk of governance breakdown or violent conflict due to migration processes remains low, but these processes do increase sectoral ALS, i.e., the labour market, healthcare system (lack of medical workers), and education. It can also intensify CO due to radicalization of groups of people and foreign fighters' activities. While economic migration brings some benefits to households in EN countries, in the long term the outflow of people weakens the societies and economies of these countries. The most affected



country in this context is Moldova, whose mass migration is causing depopulation. It is not enough to introduce a migration policy, but the results can only bring the resolving of the structural problems of this country. This is especially important in the context of increasing the risk of ALS/CO.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Radicalization and migration in the EN countries impact risks created by ALS/CO in the region differently. Potential domestic risks that may lead to violence or governance breakdown are related to socio-economic underdevelopment. High levels of social inequality coupled with widespread poverty, a high degree of unemployment, and the presence of rent-seeking elites create conditions for social and political radicalization. Under these conditions, any major socio-economic shock can act as a tipping point leading to violent protests or governance breakdowns. At the same time, issue-driven radical actions in the EN are connected with Russian activities in the region as well as with domestic actors, like oligarchs, who sponsor far-right activities. In Ukraine, issue-driven radicals have not been numerous so far, although they may become more widespread in the future given the lack of state policy on reintegrating war veterans back into the society and helping them cope with their war trauma. Most of the paramilitary groups involved in the conflict were included into the Ukrainian Armed Forces, which helped mitigate the risk of ALS/CO. Still, political marginalization of radicals may bring future escalation. It is still too early, however, to claim that such integration efforts have lastingly transformed these societies. Ukrainians and Georgians have been able to incorporate radical groups into their political life and prevent the repression of radicals, which may have pushed them to extremism. Obviously, it is a risky strategy since it may have a longer-term, negative impact on the public discourse, including political interactions, as well as polarizing society even further and pushing the political modus operandi to extremes, e.g., by minimising the willingness to seek consensus. Also, there are no indicators that right-wing extremist actors in Ukraine, Moldova, or Georgia will become a consolidated and powerful movement. At the same time, we cannot forget that internal conditions in the EN that affect migration and radicalization are related to the activity of the Russian Federation. Even with high societal resilience, Russia's military activities in the future may again increase the number of migrants and deepen social divisions, transforming existing tensions into the radicalization of people.

In the EN, migration has slowed but still affects or harms local societal resilience and the economic situation through brain drain and the lack of workers, in particular in Ukraine and Moldova. In the social sphere, the declining working population will bring a demographic crisis and economic problems. Ukraine is prominent among these countries with dwindling populations and is set to witness an 18% decline in its population by 2050. Even if, in the short run, the amount of remittances to Ukraine from migrant workers stabilises the macroeconomic situation, the problem in the long run will impact the business environment and industrial development. EN societies remain highly polarized, and the problems for IDPs (except in Moldova) remain significant. Successful reforms, such as those in Georgia, have been limited to petty corruption only and elite-level corruption continues to undermine the resilience of the EN states. Moreover, governments often use the argument of fighting corruption to crack down on their opponents in the opposition. Elite corruption in government also decreases the country's resilience by making the government less effective in dealing with domestic and external challenges. This results in a less efficient and less professional bureaucracy and sub-optimal decision-making at all levels of governance.

Based on empirical exploration of reciprocal interaction between resilience, risks, and the role of external actors in the EN, we can draw three broad conclusions: first, both Georgia and Ukraine show a basic quality of domestic resilience able to withstand some risks and prevent the emergence of violent conflicts or governance breakdown. However, due to their vulnerability, the EN countries cannot on their own cope with all risks they face, especially those associated with their external environment. Second, some risks, mostly related to the role of Russia, remain partly unanswered, either by the EU or by EN countries themselves, leaving open the possibility of new conflicts or governance breakdowns.

Societal resilience is the most important factor in preventing governance breakdown or violent conflict. Across the EN countries studied, the three components of societal resilience—social trust, legitimacy, and institutional design—vary, and did not prevent governance breakdown or violent conflicts in the past, in particular when there was considerable involvement by an external actor (Russia). Overall, generalized trust in the EN is relatively low, and it is group-based trust that often acts as a source of societal resilience



helping EN societies to survive in times of crisis and prevent complete governance breakdown. Supplementing group-based trust with generalized trust in post-socialist transitional societies has been difficult. It requires addressing several long-term socio-political issues which are considered as necessary conditions for high social trust. These include a high density of civil society and voluntary associations, a low degree of corruption, honest and transparent governments, procedural fairness in public institutions, equitable distribution of resources, universal social policies, economic equality, and equality of opportunities. Also, confidence in state institutions in the EN is still very low. Nevertheless, unlike in Moldova, in Ukraine and Georgia a national consensus on foreign policy has been maintained; 83% of Georgians approve their country's efforts to join the EU, and 78% support efforts to join NATO (Thornton and Turmanidze 2018), and at the same time 83% perceive Russia as a political threat and 72% as an economic danger (Center for Insights in Survey Research 2019). Even though the EU and US support democratic changes and reform and institutional design (e.g. anticorruption institutions), building resilience is largely a domestic process where local state and non-state actors take centre stage.



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