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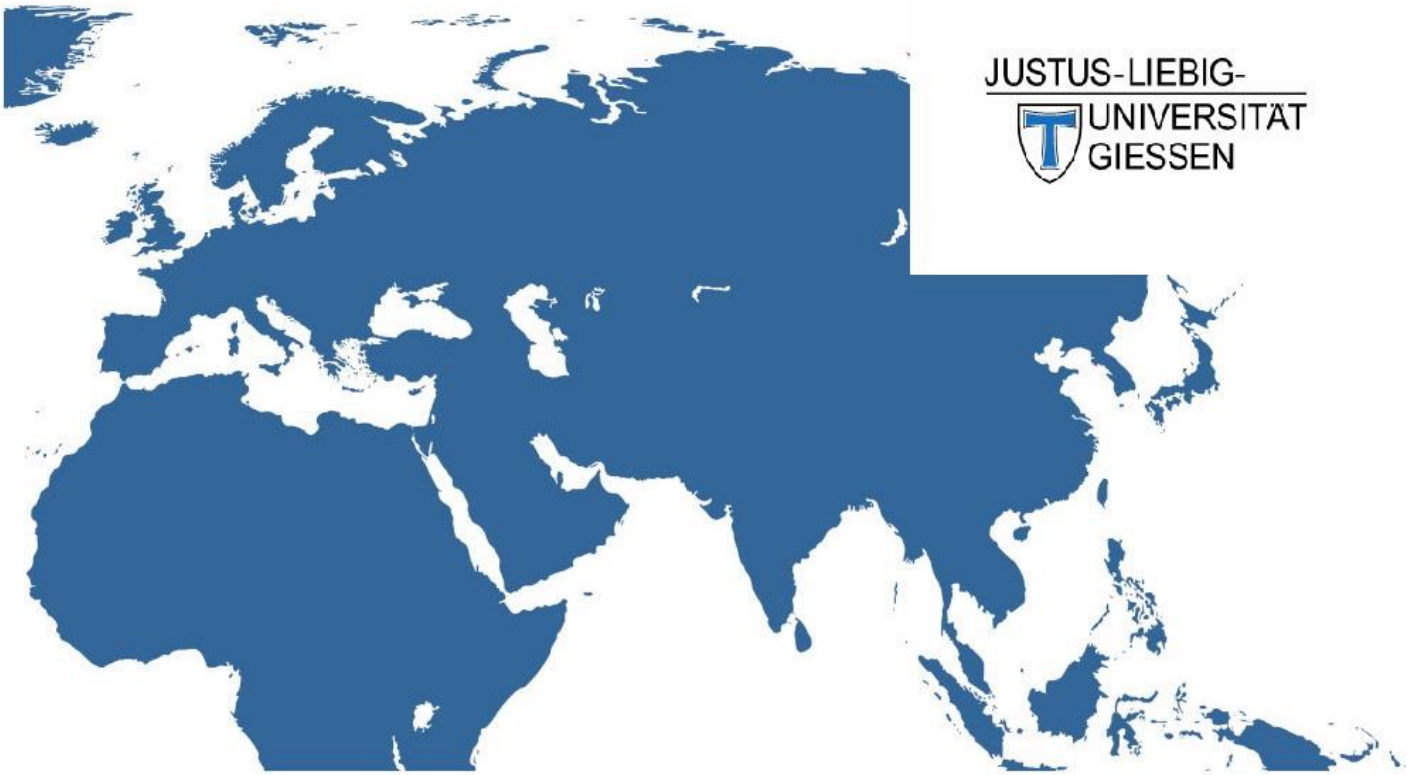

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Eurasia Global Policy Paper

Chair for International Integration with a special focus on Eastern Europe

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Russia's Invasion of Ukraine:
Reactions from IOs and other Key Regional Actors
Global and Regional Implications

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1. INTRODUCTION

What is this war about in Putin's narratives?

On 15 February, the lower chamber of the State Duma of the Russian Federation voted in favor of recognizing "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic" – two Russian-backed separatist territories in Donbas, the easternmost region of Ukraine. On 21 February, the leaders of these two puppet statelets asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to recognize the independence of their "republics". It took Putin only a day to do so and launched an unprovoked war against Ukraine on 24 February claiming to "perform peacekeeping functions". The European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and democracies worldwide condemned this act of aggression. This badly staged "show" was justified by Putin in his February 22 televised speech based on three major arguments. First, he questioned the sovereignty of Ukraine and its right to statehood referencing a pseudo-academic argument of a "historical Russia". Second, he complained about NATO's increasing proximity to Russian borders allegedly violating the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. Third, Putin constructed bizarre arguments about supposed crimes against the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine carried out since 2014 by so-called Ukrainian "fascists" and "nationalists". These arguments are not only ungrounded and built upon revisionist interpretations of history, but also fail to present a coherent position in itself.

Understanding Putin's war against the background of security regime building in Eurasia in the last 20 years

Regardless of different narratives, Russia invoked for its actions in Crimea, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and elsewhere in the region, if looked at as a whole, the past 20 years of Russian foreign policy illustrate a much clearer picture of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Since the early 2000s, the Russian president has been trying to build a Eurasian security regime bringing together at least some of the former Soviet Union (FSU) countries into new security alliances, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which also includes China. In the economic field, Russia sought to integrate the region through the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community from 2000 to 2015 and the Eurasian Economic Union since 2015. Yet, with paltry normative attractiveness and less economic leverage compared to the EU, Russia has deployed two major tools in these regional projects – backing up authoritarian regimes and leveraging conflicts that emerged with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It largely succeeded in Central Asia due to the landlocked geography and Soviet-legacy economic interdependences. However, Russia has achieved comparatively little in the South Caucasus despite actively instrumentalizing the same tools. Further west in Transnistria, Russia attempts to exert influence over Moldova through another case of separatism. The regime in Belarus has survived since 1994 largely thanks to Russia's support, particularly since the mass anti-regime demonstrations in the 2020-2021 period.

Why Ukraine?

Ukraine's strategic and symbolic importance does not allow it to be an exception from Russia's frame for the near abroad. The strategic importance of Ukraine lies not only in its location between Europe and Eurasia but also in the size of its territory and population. Symbolically, it was one of the republics that signed the treaty creating the USSR in 1922 and one that signed the treaty dissolving it in 1991. Backing up the incumbent in

return for loyalty towards Russia, however, did not work in Ukraine after 2013 as it had done before (with exception of the post-Orange Revolution phase). Large-scale demonstrations broke out against President Viktor Yanukovych's administration in Ukraine after his refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. The Russian-backed Ukrainian president was forced to concede to the opposition and subsequently, fled into exile after being removed from office by the Ukrainian parliament. Not conceding the loss of Ukraine from its control, Russia invaded Crimea in 2014 and backed separatist groups in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts of Ukraine resulting in a war between Ukraine and the separatists with the thinly veiled involvement of Russia. The Minsk Agreement signed by Ukraine, Russia, the separatist leaders, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with the mediation of Germany and France in 2015 was never fully implemented, largely due to the lack of genuine commitment by the Russian side, who avoided to recognize its involvement in the separatist regions. Yet, neither the invasion of Crimea by Russia nor the Russian-backed separatism in the Donbas region substantially curtailed Ukrainians' democratic aspirations. The 2019 Ukrainian presidential elections saw the landslide victory of Volodymyr Zelensky, who initially pursued a strong reformist agenda curbing corruption and targeting Russia-linked oligarchs and thereby disturbing Russia's last remaining leverages. Yet the progress of these reforms is now left in doubt given the scale of devastation in the country.

At this stage, it has become clear that Russia's preparations for the invasion had commenced in the spring of 2021 when Russia claimed that this build-up was part of its regular cycle of military exercises (*Zapad* 2021). Large-scale Russian military exercises started in 2014 and continued every year in the following order: *Vostok* (East), *Tsentr* (Center), *Kavkaz* (Caucasus), and *Zapad* (West). Given this, Russian claims about the regularity of the military build-up during spring 2021 may have looked reasonable. Nevertheless, its military build-up in Crimea continued further in September and around Ukraine in the following months, finally leading to the launch of the current massive invasion. Seen from today, there is no doubt that Russia intended to cover its true aspirations under the guise of military exercises.

Why now?

The timing of this invasion is partly explained by Zelensky's large reform agenda, which reduced Russia's influence in Ukrainian society as well as the Russian military exercise *Zapad 2021*. More substantially, two further developments also provide important explanations. First, one can point to the aftermath of the failed revolution in Belarus. In the summer of 2020, more than 200,000 Belarusian citizens participated in street protests against the rigged election of incumbent President Lukashenko despite obvious risks for their own lives. This development may have been perceived by the Russian leadership as a substantial threat to the autocratic stability of its closest neighbor, even though the Belarusian security apparatus brutally kneecapped the revolutionary movement. Moreover, by supporting Lukashenko in this crisis, Putin managed to bind Lukashenko to him even tighter. The ensuing forced "refugee crisis" on the Belarusian-Polish border in the summer of 2021 also fits into this picture of creating insecurity in Europe in the run-up to the invasion of Ukraine. Second, the unrest in Kazakhstan in January 2022 may have been another "trigger" in Putin's worries about anti-regime unrest. These riots are significant to understand the overall political picture before Russia's war in Ukraine, since the CSTO troop involvement in Kazakhstan be seen as a sign of Russia's growing concern. This had certainly, provided for the strengthening of security solidarity of the CSTO states, even though, the CSTO is not involved in Russia's war in Ukraine.

Western misconception

Despite the US intelligence community's consistent warning about a possible Russian attack on Ukraine, EU and NATO countries underestimated signs of Russia's plans for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A core element of the EU's and NATO's misconception is grounded in the widely held assumption that Russia sought to implement a similar scenario in Ukraine as it had in Georgia and Moldova. There, secessionist areas have existed as "frozen conflicts" with intermittent violence (especially in Georgia) with Russian (military) support since the 1990s. Although such a scenario would have been a severe breach of international law and a serious violation of Ukrainian sovereignty anyway, it could well have enabled a (partial) implementation of the Minsk

Agreement in the long run. Moreover, the international consequences of such a move have been manageable from the Russian perspective.

In light of these background arguments, this paper offers brief analyses of the reactions of relevant international and regional organizations. In addition, it highlights the reactions of selected states, where the war against Ukraine has brought about a significant shift in traditional policies or particular activism. Section 2 discusses key turning points in the foreign policies of Germany, Poland, and the US as well as Turkish mediation efforts that emerged even prior to the full-scale invasion. We believe this section provides important background for further considerations of the reactions of the UN, the EU, NATO, the Council of Europe (CoE), and the OSCE in Sections 3-7. Section 8 discusses reactions from Eurasian regional security-political organizations and individual states in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Furthermore, each section provides implications for the organization, the individual states, or the region in question. The final section illustrates a general conclusive view on geopolitical shifts in the region and their worldwide repercussions.

2. CONTEXT: FOREIGN POLICY TURNING POINTS

In many member states of the European Union and/or NATO the Russian invasion in Ukraine has triggered significant changes in security and defense policy. Since it is beyond the limits of this report to discuss each member-state individually, four states were chosen based on significant foreign policy shifts and/or particular activism regarding the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that similar or more important changes have not been underway in other member-states.

Germany: "Zeitenwende" or impulse reaction?

The change in German Foreign and Security Policy in reaction to the Russian invasion in Ukraine has been especially drastic – framed as a "*Zeitenwende*" (historical turning point) by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in his remarks to the German parliament. On a policy level, this shift is supposed to include reaching (and surpassing) the 2% NATO defense spending target, providing weapons to Ukraine for self-defense, and establishing a 100 billion Euro special fund for the German Bundeswehr. The latter shall cover more basic equipment gaps as well as the costs for the acquisition of new equipment like armed drones in the coming years. Additionally, Germany is committed to supporting new steps to increase NATO's collective defense in the Baltics and Eastern Europe. With these announcements, Germany fast tracks *some* projects already laid out by the coalition treaty and meets long-standing demands of NATO partners as well as German security experts. The reactions of the German government to the Russian invasion also constitute a break with its traditional diplomacy- and trade-based Russia policy that is now perceived as having "failed" to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the German government has been slower and more cautious than other countries in taking decisions to support Ukraine with military devices, which does not give the impression of a coherent support strategy. The Bundestag discussion surrounding these decisions also illustrates continuity in German foreign policy, e.g. related to emphasizing humanitarian assistance and development aid.

While first opinion polls show a high level of support for these steps, there is obviously among the coalition parties on financing. Hence, this major break in German Security culture will most likely lead to profound public debates as well as coalition and inner-party conflicts. For this policy shift to become a sustainable one, this would require public debates on certain adjustments within the ministry of defense, the Bundeswehr, and defense procurement. In light of long-standing debates on Germany's principled stance on the export of weapons to conflict regions, the former government updated the German arms export guidelines only in 2019. This debate, however, will become highly dynamic inside the government parties and within the broader public. The prevalent interpretation of the underlying arguments of German historic responsibility has seemingly shifted from references to past-German militarism and atrocities to the perceived necessity of supporting self-defense against a military aggressor to preserve the territorial and political sovereignty of Ukraine. While this policy will most likely not green light similar undertakings in other conflicts and is a paradigmatic turn for German foreign policy, Germany is still criticized for doing too little and acting too late.

Poland: From Zero to Hero?

Within the EU, Poland looks back on a period in which it has suffered a significant loss of reputation since 2015. The right-wing conservative ruling party PiS, whose actions were and are still characterized by anti-democratic attacks on the Polish judicial and media systems, presents the EU with a litmus test, just as in the case of Hungary, of how to deal with such democratic defects within the EU. One core instrument at the EU's disposal in such cases is its rule of law mechanism, which would imply that funding from the EU budget can be cut. The EU Commission did not put itself under time pressure to prepare this rule of law mechanism in the recent past. Instead, it waited for the ruling of the European Court of Justice, which had to decide on the complaint of Poland and Hungary against the rule of law mechanism. However, the court decision took place a bit more than a week before the start of Russia's war against Ukraine. The Court dismissed the Polish and Hungarian cases: Hence, the implementation of the rule of law mechanism could be starting right now. However, the EU Commission had announced that it would need time for further examinations and the development of guidelines in the implementation of the rule of law mechanism. Furthermore, the EU Commission did not want to trigger anti-EU sentiments during the election campaign in Hungary until April.

Since the war in Ukraine started in February 2022, Poland's role within the EU as well as on a global level has changed fundamentally. Due to its geographical position, Poland is the key EU country for humanitarian and military support to Ukraine. Poland has taken up this responsibility right away, both, its government and the Polish society. In fact, Poland went "from zero to hero in EU". It is important to stress that Poland also takes over its role as a hub explicitly for forwarding military goods, which it started to deliver from its capacities early on. Without a doubt, Poland is now in a position to gain crucial influence on any further EU strategy towards Ukraine and Russia. Its voice will be heard. Any impact on the EU's rule of law mechanisms is speculation right now.

US: "Comeback" in Europe?

The United States' reaction to Russia's invasion has presented the Biden administration with a clear opportunity to reassert America's commitment to Transatlantic relations. In particular, following the harried withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, the United States has pressed forward with much clearer intent. While the direct military intervention was never on the table, Washington quickly mobilized an additional $350 million of military aid, bolstering its total support up to $1 billion in security assistance over the last year. The final tally of the United States' commitment is not yet definitive as Biden also called on Congress to provide 10 billion dollars in response to events. However, the purpose of these funds will not be solely reserved for Ukrainian recipients as $4.8 billion may be directed to troops deployed in NATO countries among its eastern members. Congress has in fact seen fit to approve $13.6 billion however; the impact of this support remains unclear at this stage.

Given President Putin's framing of the conflict as a security response to NATO enlargement in which it sees the United States as the primary driver, the United States has little chance of asserting itself as a mediator in the conflict. All members of the Biden administration and many in the US Congress have explicitly denounced Russian aggression and called for an end to hostilities. In addition to its universal condemnation, the US has also recommitted itself to NATO guarantees, marking an unmistakable turn in transatlantic solidarity following four years of uneasiness under former president Donald Trump. However, the durability of the US commitment, in the long run, is uncertain, especially with the initial speculation on the upcoming US mid-term elections. With a presumptuous shift to Republican leadership in Congress by November 2022, a refocus on an isolationist domestic agenda or a concentration on Chinese foreign policy may be in the offing. Although several leading GOP senators have affirmed their support for Ukraine, the former President and several House representatives have seen fit to question its relevance in the US discourse. Nevertheless, the firm embeddedness of the United States in Europe's security architecture, the interwovenness of US and European defense industries as well as the histories of Russia-scepticism in foreign policy elites on both sides of the Atlantic indicate common goals in the short to medium term.

Turkey: Mediator or conflict party?

From the breakout of the international crisis around Ukraine and since the early days of Russian aggression, Turkey has continuously attempted to position itself as a mediator between Ukraine and Russia. More recently, on 6 March, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a phone call with Vladimir Putin urging him to declare a ceasefire in Ukraine, open humanitarian corridors, and sign a peace agreement. These initial steps, according to the Turkish press release, could open a way to a political solution. Nevertheless, Turkish mediation efforts have yet to bring about a significant change in Russian behavior. After the mentioned phone call, the Russian side reiterated its determination to continue the "special military operations" until the Ukrainian side surrenders and gives in to the Russian demands. However, the willingness of the Ukrainian and Russian foreign ministers to meet in Antalya on 10 February can be seen as a preliminary success, despite the sobering result. Whether this dialogue could be maintained afterward and bring about any positive outcome is therefore questionable.

The Turkish offer to mediate between Russia and Ukraine might be based on different foreign policy objectives. First and foremost, as a NATO ally, Turkey is one of the countries to suffer immediately in case the war in Ukraine escalates into a full-scale NATO-Russia confrontation. Compartmentalized into cooperative and competitive areas in different geographies, Turkey has developed a complex relationship with Russia over the last decade. Any confrontation between Russia and NATO would make Turkey drawback or de-construct this complex relationship. Secondly, Turkish interests do not allow for a larger Russian presence in the Black Sea. Therefore, helping to protect Ukraine's sovereignty also serves Turkish national interests. Thirdly, a potential Russian victory over Ukraine would lead to the strengthening of Russian influence in the former Soviet region, posing threat to Turkish foreign policy objectives in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Overall, the room for maneuver Turkey finds between the West and Russia could narrow both when Russia is too strong and too weak. Fourth, taking on a mediator role with Russia helps Turkey to distance itself from other NATO members in the eyes of the Kremlin while winning applause from the West with whom Turkey has its relations strained in last several years over both geopolitical issues and Turkish human rights records.

3. UNITED NATIONS

During the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) special debate on Russia's decision to recognize the so-called republics of Luhansk and Donetsk in eastern Ukraine, Russia put its invasion plans into action. Starting a military invasion against the principles of international law is a blatant sign of disrespect for central UN institutions, a continuity of recent Russian contempt for the UN. The Russian veto on a resolution demanding the withdrawal of its troops from Ukraine during a special UNSC meeting on the following day was expected. However, the abstentions of China, India, and the United Arab Emirates are considered diplomatic successes, even though the resolution (as well as forthcoming ones) has been blocked and an intervention by the international community has not been reached. At the Emergency Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 2 March called by the UNSC, 141 states voted for a resolution demanding an unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces and underlining Ukrainian sovereignty. It is noteworthy, that only 5 states (including the Russian Federation) voted against the resolution as 35 states abstained. However, the voting results show that most of Russia's allies in the SCO and CSTO abstained, thus including Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, China, India, and Pakistan (the exception being Belarus, which voted against, and Uzbekistan, which stayed away from the vote). So, while longstanding criticism and weaknesses of the UNSC are obvious in this case, at least the diplomatic effort in the UNGA was rewarded with a resolution of symbolic value. Even though the resolution will not have much effect on the situation on the ground, it might further impair Russia's influence and global role going forward. Beyond the perceived ineffectiveness of the UNSR, the UN's credibility could be on the line as reports of orders to avoid the terms "invasion" and "war" within the UN Staff have spread. The UN has thus far denied such claims.

As part of its "lawfare" strategy, Ukraine has begun to call into question Russia's permanent membership and veto rights in the UNSC. The 1945 UN Charter foresaw a permanent seat for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in addition to the Republic of China, France, the UK, and the United States. After the dissolution of

the USSR, its seat in the UNSC was deferred to the Russian Federation. Whereas this initial transferal was met with little contention, the legitimacy of this step has now been called into question by the Ukrainian ambassador. However, given the intensifying depth of Russian-Chinese relations over the last two decades, it is unlikely that such a resolution would be successful. Furthermore, two international courts have been called into action regarding the war in Ukraine. Firstly, Ukraine submitted a case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 7-8 March. In its case, the Ukrainian side fundamentally disputes Russian allegations of genocide in Ukraine as well as its use of force in Ukraine to prevent it. The Russian Federation, in turn, has filed a counter-suit in the ICJ reasserting its claims on genocide against Russian speakers. In the other international court in the Hague, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) launched an investigation into possible war crimes on 3 March. The size and scope of this undertaking by prosecutor Karim Khan are unclear at this stage.

4. EUROPEAN UNION

At this point, it is safe to say that the horrific war against Ukraine, one of the European Union's immediate eastern neighbors and partners, will influence most policy fields of the EU in one way or the other. This paper will focus on the implications for the EU's migration, security, and enlargement policies. Up until now, the EU has adopted four packages of restrictive measures against Russia, including a partial expulsion from the SWIFT banking system, severe sanctions against banks, specific economic sectors, politicians, and other influential individuals. The EU also banned the state-owned media channels Russia Today and Sputnik, heavily used for disinformation purposes, and prohibited access to its airspace. The latest packages also targeted Belarus for its active involvement. To compensate for Russian oil and gas imports the EU has recently announced its "REPowerEU" plan to decrease energy dependence. While many observers greet most of the EU's actions as "rising to the occasion," others view the comments of Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, who announced that Ukraine "belongs" to the European Union, or the premature announcement of the High Representative Joseph Borell on EU coordinated fighter jet donations to Ukraine with great concern.

Implications for the Future of EU Migration policy

Many EU member states have effectively opened their borders to refugees from Ukraine soon after the Russian invasion started. Accordingly, the interior ministers of the European Union have voted to apply the temporary protection mechanism to Ukrainian citizens, people from third countries, or stateless people without a secure country of origin fleeing the Russian aggression. This measure allows member states to grant them asylum for one up to three years without visa requirement in a drastic departure from the Dublin mechanism as well as the usual asylum process. However, it seems unlikely that this refugee crisis will change longstanding conflicts between and within EU member states. Debates on the establishment of a new distribution mechanism will likely be on the agenda for upcoming summits and the probability of respective reforms has increased since the countries most affected are the ones that usually block such steps. However, the same countries could support the establishment of an *exceptional* mechanism confined to Ukrainian refugees while blocking more general reforms. Such an undertaking could still set a precedent for the future EU migration policy. Especially reports on the discrimination of people of color and non-Ukrainian citizens at the EU's external border and the visible mismatch between the willingness to accept refugees from Ukraine in contrast to refugees from the Middle East and Northern Africa suggest that this situation is merely an exception. Countries like Poland and Hungary might be even less willing to take in refugees from other regions in the future, citing their current burden. They will probably press for greater commitment from other EU members and push back against the procedure of law mechanism on similar grounds.

Which consequences for the CSDP?

Based on public statements by leading politicians from various EU member states in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, a strengthening of European security and defense cooperation, for example within the framework of PESCO, could be expected. The Russian war against Ukraine might represent a new "moment of awakening" in this regard. Whether the window of opportunity offered by public support in

many EU member states for investments in security and defense and a strategic repositioning is *seized* will be crucial. The rupture of transatlantic relations during the Trump presidency (and beyond) as well as the chaotic withdrawal of NATO allies from Afghanistan has recently been invoked as a warning sign supporting the need to invest more in the EU's common security and defense policy (CSDP). However, there are few signs so far that these impulses have been fully harnessed. In addition to French President Emmanuel Macron's commitment to highlighting this issue at the EU crisis summit in Versailles, the Danish announcement of a referendum on its CSDP opt-out could be another positive sign. While this crisis could also lead to a strengthening of EU-United Kingdom defense cooperation, it remains a big unknown at this point. Even if the EU emerges from this crisis as a stronger foreign policy actor, the problematic role of China and the visibly strong European dependence on U.S. security guarantees continue to challenge debates on "European strategic sovereignty" or a "geopolitical Europe". Moreover, the EU's future relationship with China – a key puzzle piece in this concept – will fundamentally hinge on China's decision between mediating or tolerating the Russian war efforts going forward.

Membership Perspectives and Future of EU Enlargement

President Zelensky has officially applied for Ukrainian EU membership on 28 February and addressed the European Parliament (EP) the following day. During the session, the EP issued a resolution calling on the EU institutions to consider and work towards membership while supporting Ukraine along the lines of existing agreements in the meantime. Moreover, many Eastern European states have signaled their support for granting candidate status to Ukraine and the EU Commission is discussing possible pathways along with the recent bids by Moldova and Georgia. While it is almost certain that the actual membership process and harmonization of laws and policies would take multiple years, granting this status would be an important step to provide the Ukrainian people with a post-war perspective and signal support against Russia. However, much will depend on how the situation in Ukraine develops - whether and under what conditions a withdrawal of Russian troops can be achieved. The EU must carefully weigh their next step in this regard and either commit to it fully, prepared for all consequences like increased tensions with Russia and reconstruction aid, or openly communicate that this step is ruled out for the near future. With regards to Georgia, the granting of candidacy status seems less likely, considering an even higher probability of rising tensions with Russia, less geographic proximity as well as the balancing act that the Georgian government is trying to manage towards Russia (see section seven).

The war against Ukraine also presents challenges to the EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) Program. If candidacy status would be granted to Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova – and we assume that Belarus is excluded from the program for now – this would leave only Azerbaijan and Armenia. The EaP countries anyway failed to establish a joint position on the Russian invasion. The EU itself will probably be more careful going forward. This poses the more fundamental question of what the EU's policy towards its eastern parts will look like in the future.

5. NATO

Point of departure

The perception among NATO members is unanimous: The Russian invasion in Ukraine on 24 February will be a turning point for the Euro-Atlantic Security Order. Exceptional movements of Russian troops near the Ukrainian border, as well as military maneuvers in the region, have been a source of renewed concern among NATO allies and partners at least since early 2021. However, diverging threat assessments and policies regarding possible military aggression by Russia and different positions on arms deliveries seemed to have persisted until the beginning of the recent war, despite the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Additionally, the unity among allies was strained by a general debate on NATO's long-term strategic posture ("brain death"), burden sharing, diverging concepts of "European strategic autonomy" and fears of eventual US abandonment in the context of increasing US-China conflict and repercussions of the Afghanistan withdrawal.

Initial Reactions

In a press conference following the invasion, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called NATO's Article 5 commitment of collective defense "ironclad". The North Atlantic Council (NAC) met virtually on the following day with the participation of EU representatives and with NATO partners Finland and Sweden. The resulting statement condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine (as well as the involvement of Belarus) as "an act of aggression against an independent peaceful country", breaching international law as well as multiple international agreements. NATO allies furthermore called for a Russian ceasefire, immediate withdrawal of troops, and humanitarian access. NATO has assisted the Ukrainian armed forces for several years including support of reforms, capability development, capacity-building, and training on grounds of the Partnership for Peace program and the 2016 Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine. NATO is currently supporting the coordination of Ukrainian requests for humanitarian and non-lethal assistance and most NATO allies are providing military equipment, financial assistance, humanitarian aid, and likely also intelligence to Ukraine. The Alliance has thus far declined demands by the Ukrainian government to impose a No Fly Zone over (parts of) Ukraine to protect civilians with reference to the high risk of escalation. While the delivery of Polish MiG-29 fighter jets was considered, the US ultimately shelved these undertakings highlighting logistical challenges as well as a lack of strategic rationale compared to the probability of escalation.

Especially considering Putin's revisionist speech three days before the actual invasion, threat perceptions have increased severely in (but not limited to) the Baltic States, assuming Russian ambitions that go beyond Ukraine. The NAC meeting, therefore, included consultations on Article 4 of the Washington treaty, invoked by the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. As a result, NATO has activated its defense plans and officially agreed to deploy parts of the NATO Response Force (NRF) for the first time in the alliance's history, including the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) established after the illegal annexation of Crimea. While there seems to be unity among NATO allies not to intervene militarily in Ukraine, risks for inadvertent escalation persist especially when it comes to arms deliveries, the use of NATO airfields for military aid, the tense situation between Turkey and Russia in the black sea or possible incidents in cyberspace. In the cyber realm**,** such unintended consequences *could* result from Russia-linked attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure with repercussions for NATO states or reckless actions of hacktivist groups. Stoltenberg has again confirmed that cyber incidents *could* qualify for an Article 5 armed attack as NATO has publicly agreed on in its 2016 Warsaw summit declaration. The Secretary-General however purposefully preserved ambiguity on possible thresholds. He furthermore confirmed that the alliance is assisting Ukraine in cyber defense, probably in terms of network and infrastructure protection. However, we have mostly seen lower-scale incidents like Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks thus far and there is no officially confirmed reporting about NATO allies considering offensive cyber operations.

What options going forward?

While Stoltenberg has not officially declared a formal withdrawal from the NATO-Russia Founding Act, he has underlined that Russia violated and "walked away" from the shared agreement. Even a very conservative reading of the chosen wording and announced actions suggests that agreed-upon limitations on troop-deployments in the Eastern European member states are obsolete (for now) as NATO currently does not feel bound to the Act. The future of formal NATO-Russia relations is therefore very much up in the air. NATO will likely suspend meetings of the NATO-Russia-Council for the foreseeable future. Allies should nevertheless evaluate possible channels of communication (as Stoltenberg has now confirmed) and signal both the firmness of their demands that Russia must end its war against Ukraine and simultaneously signal, as the US did by postponing their intercontinental ballistic missile tests, that NATO does not intend to intervene militarily or mirror nuclear threats. However, any messaging and bilateral contact should be coordinated to avoid undermining alliance cohesion.

Due to the dynamic nature of the situation and likely outcomes, we can only observe *possible* implications for the future of NATO. These include the strengthening of unity, changes in (collective) threat perception, increase of collective defense measures, and the shattering of institutionalized NATO-Russia relations as pointed out above. It will most likely have consequences for future NATO expansion and partnerships. Many partner countries perceive NATO's open-door policy as a question of national sovereignty in correspondence

with international law and credible deterrent against external threats. NATO should therefore firmly hold on to this policy. While the admission of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova will most likely not be a realistic topic of discussion as long as the armed conflicts are going on, prospects are different for Finland and Sweden. Thus far, both countries have been very close, assumingly the closest, NATO partners with high interoperability levels, special partnership agreements in various, areas, and participation in NATO missions and exercises. In light of the Russian invasion, NATO Secretary-General has underlined that neither Finland nor Sweden has requested accession at this point a drastic change in favor of NATO membership in recent public opinion polls for Finland and Sweden might increase the *probability* of accession of both countries. However, public opinion might be volatile and other factors like the centrality of formal non-alignment in Finland's and Sweden's security policy and strategic cultures, history of cooperation with Russia and political party landscape might outweigh these changes. However, we have already seen significant, yet diverging, changes in policy and public discourse in both countries after the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea, in 2014, and the announcement of arms deliveries of the non-allied countries indicates further shifts. While the leaders of Finish parliament parties have scheduled an internal debate on the topic in light of a petition, this step will also crucially depend on Sweden's decision as highlighted in the past and Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson has just announced that her country will not seek NATO membership at this moment. Joining the alliance would constitute a *historic* shift in both country's foreign policies and will likely lead to increasing tensions with Russia, as it has already voiced respective threats. However, these circumstances should not preclude membership perspectives if Finland and Sweden choose to move along that road.

Closer cooperation as well as the participation of Finish and Swedish Ministers and heads of state in NAC meetings is the new normal during this crisis and might continue in the immediate future. As for other NATO-Partnerships, the impact seems too early to tell. While increasing support for partners in proximity like Moldova, Georgia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is being discussed, extremely tense NATO-Russia relations will also prompt NATO to focus more on its core task of collective defense. Allies will have to commit most of their attention to signaling unity, readiness, and resolve, which will be essential to hold up credibility considering possible Russian attacks against allies. Rhetorically, the NAC statements and speeches on the national level have been a good start. However, debates about the future strategic orientation of NATO might not be sidelined for long, especially regarding the alliance's role vis-a-vis China. Yet again, the global dynamic of this crisis is unforeseeable and might change relations with China for better or worse. Importantly, the alliance should anticipate possible inner-alliance conflicts and tackle them early on in non-public settings. Beyond the activation of defense plans and announcement of NRF and VJTF deployment, many allies have stepped by in material terms by announcing increases in their defense spending to fill equipment gaps and to acquire new technologies rapidly. On a more positive note, the participation of EU representatives in high-level meetings, as well as the efficient coordination between NATO and EU since the aggravation of the Russia crisis, could serve as a steady basis for increased NATO-EU cooperation in the future. If this momentum is harnessed, it could outweigh *some* of the existing roadblocks and foster sustainable burden-sharing going forward.

6. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In the prelude to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, its recognition of the so-called people's republics was broadly denounced with Secretary Buric quickly issuing a statement to call on "member states to solve their disagreement through dialogue based on respect of the principles enshrined in the Statute of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Convention on Human Rights." Given Russia's history of recognizing separatist entities or annexing territories, this rhetoric does not represent a departure from previous responses. Critically, Russia's membership in the Council was not yet directly called into question.

In many ways, the CoE's initial response does not indicate a clear break with previous patterns of interaction between CoE bodies and Russia. Russia has faced stark criticism from Strasbourg before: its 2008 war with Georgia was met with condemnation, however, was never explicitly attributed to Russian aggression. Since the hostilities in August of that year, the Council of Europe has designated it as a "conflict" between Russia and Georgia. Despite stressing the "territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia", then-Chairman Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt urged Georgia and Russia to settle the conflict via peaceful means in a visit

together with Secretary-General Davis. The regular annual reports on the so-called conflict have not rephrased the Council's vocabulary despite the European Court of Human Rights clearly stating Russia's role in the separatist regions in several individual cases. The 2014 annexation in Crimea and war in Donbas did escalate within the CoE's bodies, however, Russia's membership was never threatened concretely. The Committee of Ministers Chairman, Secretary-General Jagland, and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly were quick to condemn the annexation of Crimea as "illegal". Nevertheless, this condemnation did not result in any direct consequences for Russia's place in the CoE. In fact, it was over five years later in 2019 that the European Court of Human Rights heard an inter-state case on the matter. The hotly contested suspension of the Russian delegation's participation rights in PACE was in fact only due to the downing of MH17 over the Donbas the delegation's subsequent departure from the Assembly was a self-imposed exile and the cessation of budgetary contributions to the CoE budget from 2017-2019 were indeed an extension of this form of protest. Although many member states sharply criticized Russia in the CoE, few concrete steps were taken to formally exclude.

The invasion of Ukraine in 2022, however, has initiated an institutional response not seen in the CoE in over a generation. Both Secretary Buric and the currently Italian-chaired Committee of Ministers (CM) Luigi Di Maio identified violations of the Statute of the CoE. This reference made no disguise of the Council's intention to potentially invoke Article 8, whereby a member state will be asked to withdraw from the Strasbourg body. Following an exchange of views with the Parliamentary Assembly in the Joint Committee, the CM as composed of Ministers' deputies, agreed to suspend Russia's membership with "immediate effect in respect of the rights of representation of the Russian Federation in the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe". 42 members out of the 47 total represented states voted in favor of the Polish/Ukrainian proposal with Russia and Armenia being the only two states to come out in opposition. A decision on expulsion will be taken in an extraordinary PACE meeting on 14-15 March. The consequences of this move will be dramatic for the functioning of the Parliamentary Assembly. With 18 seats in the Assembly, Russia sent one of the six largest delegations to Strasbourg. By leaving the Strasbourg organization, a considerable shift in the political groupings and regional balances is imminent. Moreover, as Russia will no longer have a voice in CoE accession negotiations, Kosovo's path to joining the Council appears more open than ever since gaining independence.

Importantly, while this expulsion will remove Russia from the Convention system, the ECHR will apply for 6 months following the state's presumed departure. In this case, individuals may still be able to submit applications, and compliance with the European Courts' judgments will still be expected. What the consequences of this interim period are for the recent case of Netherlands and Ukraine v. Russia regarding the MH17 downing remain to be clarified at this stage. The CoE's overall ability to impose punitive measures on a state for continued violations of the ECHR remains open at this stage. The Article 46 § 4 infringement proceedings regarding ECHR violations have only been activated twice, with Azerbaijan relatively quickly ameliorating the issue of Ilgar Mammadov's imprisonment. Turkey's wrongful incarceration of Osman Kavala has not yet been dealt with, leaving a possible further divide open within the CoE. In the meantime, the ECHR received a request from the Ukrainian government on 28 February to issue interim measures regarding Russia's war. This mechanism allows the Court to issue judgments against a member state when there is a risk of irreparable harm. The request was granted on the very next day in a show of remarkable urgency. Despite the lack of progress in other instances of interim measures related to Russia (Ukraine and Netherlands v. Russia in particular), this step demonstrates a clear and united response within the Court. For now, Russia has indicated they will withdraw from the Council of Europe, however, this step is preliminary and rhetorical at this stage and lacks the formal procedural aspects. Still, Russia's departure from the Council of Europe appears to be merely a matter of time rather than a something to be negotiated.

Given the ill-defined parameters for punitive measures regarding systematic non-compliance with ECHR judgments as well as certain member state's longstanding contradictions with the CoE's founding statutes, there are certain steps the Council needs to take to ensure the future functioning of the Strasbourg system of human rights, democracy, and rule of law protections. First, it ought to draft clear and tangible consequences for states who are reluctant to implement judgments on good faith. These punitive measures should be based on a scale of intensity so that suspension and exclusion are not the only tools at the Council's

disposal. The presumable budgetary hole left by Russia's departure, while being covered by individual member states in the long term, poses an operational threat to the Council's activities. One possible avenue to explore would entail ECHR violations by states necessitating a contribution to the budget in addition to individual remedies to victims. Second, the CoE needs to hasten the EU's accession to the European Convention. Support for the European Union's accession has been broad and sustained over the last decade of work on the matter and in fact, even included Russian approval. However, the affected institutions in Brussels have been reluctant to grant the ECtHR supremacy in determining human rights, democracy, and rule of law violations. This perceived impunity despite the EU's active involvement in the CoE's daily functioning is particularly glaring given the EU's expansion in the defense and security sectors. These dynamics cast a shadow over the CoE's role in European law and need to be addressed quickly to ensure an assumption of good faith on Brussels' part. Finally, the Council of Europe can host an event similar to the EU's Conference on the Future of Europe. The perception of the CoE in the European landscape remains somewhat invisible. Moreover, its functioning is frequently undercut by member states' divergent expectations of what the CoE and ECtHR can and should provide citizens. This conference ought to address disparities in the involvement of civil society organizations in the CoE's work, define more clearly the CoE's priorities to ensure consistency across CM Chairmanships, and foster new cooperation frameworks between states as the coalitions within the CoE can be counter-productive or even prejudiced.

7. OSCE

The OSCE as an international security organization has already been declared useless or even dead several times after 1990. There have been repeated phases, especially after the end of the war in Georgia, in which the OSCE was seen as powerless, toothless, and superfluous, all the more so because its consensus principle can quickly induce political blockades. However, the OSCE has also repeatedly looked back on periods in which it has played a key role in conflict management, first and foremost during the Balkan wars. Especially since the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Eastern Ukraine, it played a key role in conflict management between Russia and Ukraine. It had the patronage of the negotiations of the Minsk Agreements and for years, helped to ensure that the conflict remained contained e.g., through its comparably large Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine.

In the days since Russia invaded Ukraine, we are again faced with the OSCE being seen as politically useless and shaken to its foundations. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a violation not only of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris but also of the OSCE Security Charter of 1999. Furthermore, in the immediate run-up to the war, Russia had not shown any interest in using the OSCE mechanism, dialogue platform, or exchange format towards Ukraine. Moreover, Russia refused to provide information on its troop deployments in the framework of the Vienna Document and claimed that its military drills do not fall under the Vienna Documents requirements of transparency. In the context of the OSCE parliamentary assembly winter meeting on 24 February, parliamentarians condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a violation of OSCE principles and international law. Secretary-General Helga Schmid furthermore stressed that Russia had previously rejected various diplomatic overtures. While most members called for diplomatic solutions and highlighted the OSCE's role in fostering peace, others additionally emphasized a need for sanctions and described the Russian aggression as a clear threat to European Security.

However, since the outbreak of the war, the OSCE has not gained any relevance yet. It is not part of political discourses on any political solutions, even though it is fortunate that Poland currently holds the OSCE chairmanship. The OSCE SMM still exists formally but has now evacuated all of its international staff from Ukraine. While the SMM has announced that national members of the mission will uphold administrative tasks; it has suspended official reporting on 7 March. Simultaneously, there are reports of damage to OSCE property in Mariupol through shelling as well as the killing of a national member of the OSCE SMM on 1 March through the Russian shelling of Kharkiv. Nevertheless, in the early days of March, 45 OSCE countries invoked the OSCE "Moscow Mechanism". While this is a misleading term with regard to this very conflict, this mechanism, as part of the OSCE's human dimension, allows the OSCE to send a fact-finding mission into any country (upon invitation) to collect information on the violations of OSCE commitments and especially

war crimes. If such an initiative might become realized this at least would mean that the OSCE's fact-finding is allowed entry and safe travel throughout Ukraine, which would be a success, but not easy to imagine. Furthermore, Ukrainian officials have reportedly appealed to the OSCE to monitor nuclear facilities and support the establishment of a humanitarian corridor. So far there is no official response to either demand and an active role of the OSCE in these undertakings does not seem likely at this point. However, there has been speculation and calls for a more active role of the OSCE in possible peace talks.

8. EURASIAN SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBER-STATES

The CIS and the CSTO

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – two major political-security regional organizations led by Russia in the post-Soviet Eurasia have been almost fully silent on the war in Ukraine. As awkward as it is, no single piece of information on Russia's intrusion into Ukraine has been posted on the website of any of these organizations. So far, the only official reaction came from Stanislav Zas, the Secretary-General of the CSTO, before the military operations launched, in which he conditioned the deployment of the CSTO (peacekeeping) forces to Ukraine upon three prerequisites - Ukraine's request, a UN mandate and the vote of CSTO member states. Maria Zakharova, the spokesperson of the Russian MFA avoided commenting on the possible role of the CSTO in the early days of the war. This can be read as a Kremlin plan to potentially re-dress its own forces in CSTO peacekeeper uniforms if they would "win" the war in whatever concrete scenario. It might be for this reason that CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas put Ukraine's consent and a UN mandate as a prerequisite for the involvement of the CSTO in Ukraine. The foreign minister of Kazakhstan also did not exclude the possibility for Kazakhstan to contribute to a possible peacekeeper mission to Ukraine under a UN mandate. The amendment made to the treaty on CSTO peacekeeping forces in Dushanbe in September 2021 allows CSTO peacekeeping forces to be deployed not only on behalf of its member states but also the UN. On 3 March, Vladimir Putin sent it to the State Duma for ratification. Clearly, this is a mechanism that Russia wants to use in order to legitimize the dislocation of its forces in Ukraine but also has a prospect to be deployed elsewhere in the region or outside it. Such a mechanism did not exist when Russian forces were deployed to Nagorno-Karabakh in November 2020.

Russia's decision not to involve CSTO forces in Ukraine from the very beginning could be based on several deliberations. First, it might not be willing to risk disclosing cracks within the CSTO. Secondly, Russia's decision to attack Ukraine without involving CSTO forces may have been calculated to avoid any coordination problem among the forces of its allies. Finally, as already said, CSTO involvement could be reserved for a long-term scenario. potential post-regime change period as an option for legitimizing the presence of Russian forces for a longer period. The CIS's inaction on the matter remains very transparent. Although providing a platform for high-level multilateral political dialogues in the post-Soviet region has been one of the major functions of the CIS, its absence in the process costs its relevance as a component of Eurasian regionalism and can be explained by Russia's unwillingness to subject central questions of Russian foreign policy to the consent of other regional actors.

Individual reactions from Central Asia and South Caucasus countries

Central Asia

As a key country in the region, Kazakhstan's position is decisive for others in the region. Already, the Kazakh foreign minister and the speaker of the Senate excluded the possibility for the involvement of the CSTO in Ukraine under current conditions, justifying it with the legal limits to the deployments of forces outside of CSTO member-states. On 2 March – only once it was clear that the Russian military operation was not going to achieve its initial goal (easily), Kazakh president Tokayev made a statement calling on "both sides…to pursue a dialogue and work on a peaceful settlement". In the regional context, this statement can be read as directed towards Russia rather than Ukraine. The same message, according to the Kazakh side, was also reiterated by the Kazakh president on a phone call held with Vladimir Putin on 2 March. It must have reflected Kazakhstan's reluctance to support the aggression of its ally against Ukraine that triggered the Russian

media's attack on Kazakhstan either softly in the form of disappointment from a close ally or toughly accusing it of "Ukrainization" and following "de-russification" or nationalist policies towards minorities. Tokayev's emphasis on "security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity" in his statement at his party's congress on 1 March can be read as a subtle hint to the risks of Russia's possible intervention in its Russian populated northern regions. Another line referenced the "indivisibility of Eurasian security" - a concept that indicates not only support to Russia but also connectedness. Whether this reflects Kazakhstan's demand from Eurasian security actors, and in this particular context from Russia, of not acting unilaterally in issues with consequences for the entire alliance and thus, echoes Kazakhstan's disappointment with Russia's move independent from its allies in the region, can hardly be unequivocally interpreted. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan seems to be willing to take a mediator role between Ukraine and Russia. Kazakh president Tokayev had a phone call with both Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian president Vladimir Putin, the details of which other than calling on the sides to find a resolution to the conflict through negotiations are not known to the public.

Other Central Asian states were not as consistent as Kazakhstan in their reactions to the Russian recognition of the two puppet regimes in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine and the war against Ukraine. On 22 February, a statement posted on the official Facebook account of Kyrgyz president Sadyr Japarov provided a narrative similar to the Russian narrative for the recognition of "DNR" and "LNR" calling it "a forced measure to protect the civilian population of the territories of Donbas". The statement followed by the Kyrgyz ministry of foreign affairs was comparatively more restrained. Confusing statements also came from Uzbekistan. On a phone call held with Putin on 25 February, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, according to Kremlin's version, expressed "understanding of Russian activities in Ukraine", while the press release of the Uzbek side made no similar mention. Ukraine reacted immediately by recalling its ambassador to Uzbekistan. Given the confusion and resulting pressure, Uzbekistan, a country which, unlike Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, only has an observer status the EAEU and no CSTO membership since 2012, declared officially its neutral position on the war in Ukraine. Unlike the major three countries of the region, Tajikistan – a country that hosts Russian military bases – has not shared any official position on Ukraine.

Nevertheless, given their own regional insecurities (especially Russian populated regions of Kazakhstan sharing a large border with Russia, Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan, Gorno Badakhshan in Tajikistan), no Central Asian country risks to recognize "DNR" and "LNR" so far. However, equally, they avoid open condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's condemnations of the Russian invasion in the virtual meeting held with foreign ministers of Central Asian governments on 28 February were not echoed by Russia's allies. No Central Asian allies of Russia voted in favor of the UN General Assembly's resolution condemning Russia on 2 March. Clearly, fear weighs heavier than disappointment with Russia's decision to invade Ukraine which has already delivered economic and financial costs for Central Asian countries.

South Caucasus

In the South Caucasus, reactions to Russia's invasion of Ukraine have been no less complex, if not more so, than in Central Asia. Armenia, the closest ally of Russia in the region a as member of all major political, security, and economic regional organizations led by Russia – the CIS, the CSTO, and the EAEU – has so far taken a wait-and-see position on Ukraine. This can partly be explained by its incumbent prime minister's pro-western orientation conflicting with the country's dense economic and security ties to Russia. On the other hand, and perhaps related to this, the ruling party of the prime minister has no unified position on the issue. Moreover, the Armenian public was also angered when a CSTO mission was sent to Kazakhstan to quell unrest in January 2022 while it was chaired by Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan. This came in contrast to the inaction of the CSTO during the Karabakh War in the autumn of 2020, although Stanislav Zas, Secretary-General of the CSTO informed previously that no similar request was made by Armenia during the Karabakh war. Nevertheless, Armenia abstained from the UN GA vote on a resolution demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces.

Azerbaijan's position on the war is determined by its relations with Russia and Ukraine which are usually depicted as of strategic importance as well as by the general contours of its multi-vectoral foreign policy.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev was paying an official visit to Moscow on the day following the recognition by Russia of the "DNR" and "LNR" and signed a declaration called "allied cooperation" with Russia. The ill-timed visit was subsequently said to be chosen by Russia 20 days in advance. Aliyev's and following Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan's visit to Moscow were, obviously, pre-planned by Russia to stage support to Russia at the beginning of the invasion, putting both in an awkward situation. This picture sharply contrasts Aliyev's visit to Kyiv in mid-January, amid the crisis and ongoing negotiations between Western nations and Russia, in which a declaration emphasizing the mutual recognition of territorial integrities and extending bilateral cooperation between the two countries was signed. The importance of Ukraine for Azerbaijan also lies in its support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its role in GUAM – a regional organization established in 1997 by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova as a path alternative to the Russian-led regionalism under the CIS. Despite the declaration on "allied cooperation", upon Aliyev's return from Moscow, Azerbaijan started providing humanitarian support to Ukraine. Furthermore, the demonstration held in support of Ukraine in front of the Ukrainian embassy in Baku was not interfered with by the police, as usual, signaling the government's implicit consent to it. Nevertheless, the statement of Azerbaijani MFA does not exceed calls for dialogue. Azerbaijan also avoided voting on the UN General Assembly's resolution condemning Russia.

Compared to Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia had a clearer stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine but little support. Despite its ties to the West and no membership at Russian-led regional organizations, the Georgian government chose to keep its reactions to the crisis low-profile even before the war. In January, the Georgian foreign minister expressed support to Ukraine's territorial integrity but no more. Following the launch of invasion by Russia of Ukraine, Georgia made a clear statement in support of Ukraine yet avoided joining Western sanctions on Russia with a justification of "considering national interests" which reflected the fear of Russia's reciprocating and even further extending its intrusion into Georgian territories given the already going "borderization" between the main part of Georgia and its Russian invaded regions in the north. Upon this decision, Ukraine recalled its ambassador to Georgia, calling the decision of the Georgian government an "immoral position" and according to it in obstructing aid to Ukraine coming from Georgian society. This marks the further failure of Eastern Partnership countries, particularly, its most progressive group – Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova – as well as GUAM member states to establish a unified position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Overall, no post-Soviet countries, including Moldova, whose position on the issue is not discussed in this report, joined Western sanctions on Russia. This indicates a continuity of strong influence that Russia sways over the region through both political-security and economic leverages.

Implications for the Eurasian region

The implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and in general, the resulting international crisis render substantial consequences for the post-Soviet Eurasia region. Russia has by this invasion sent a strong message to all other former Soviet Union members in the region in terms of how Russia sees these countries located in its immediate neighborhood and on what terms is willing to establish good relations with them. In his televised speech on the recognition of "DNR" and "LNR", Putin has made a clear point on the acceptance of and respect for the independence of FSU members only if they do not follow policies of closer integration with the security-political institutions of West, above all the NATO and the EU. In contrast, Russia's invasion of Ukraine may result in the opposite – skepticism towards Russia both within societies as well as governments. Moreover, this war, as it is now, will still have for a long time heavy political, economic as well as societal costs for Russia. It is not proceeding as wished by Russia. Nevertheless, Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine has also augmented the sense of fear and perhaps further inculcated a sense of helplessness in the region. Despite the strong and united reaction of the West and its allies from elsewhere in the world, the simple fact that direct military engagement by the West is absent today will further augment the sense of fear and helplessness in the region.

No doubt, these sanctions will result in diverging interests in cooperation between Russia and its neighbors. This is, while Russia will seek closer economic cooperation with its neighbors not joining the sanctions to compensate at least partially for economic and financial losses, its neighbors may not be as passionate as Russia gave unpredictability to arise in the Russian market under the Western sanctions. It is also no less

reasonable to expect that EAEU member states in Central Asia will halt any further economic integration initiatives. Instead, to compensate for their own losses under the spread-over effect of the sanctions on Russia, its economic allies will most likely seek to develop their economic cooperation with countries outside the Union and seek coordination among themselves as already was indicated on the phone call between Kazakh and Uzbek presidents on 2 March. India, China, Pakistan, and Turkey are more likely to benefit from this situation.

In the security field, skepticism towards Russian unilateralism within the alliance can be expected to grow. The already emerging discourse "indivisibility of Eurasian security" is a framework within which both solidarity within the alliance is emphasized and demands for accountability from Russia can be made. Nevertheless, national security questions vis-a-vis Russia will also keep concerning the states in the region. Kazakhstan with its Russian population on the border regions with Russia has naturally heightened concerns. The in-activeness of the CIS during all these developments is a further blow to its relevance as a regional organization playing a role of platform for high-level political consultation, even though its role in the harmonization of procedures and standards in a wide range of fields among its member states could still continue. The resulting slowdown of economic integration under the EAEU will also negatively relate to the CIS as recent years saw harmonization under the CIS to be subordinated to the EAEU standards.

9. CONCLUSION

The invasion of Ukraine marks a "*Zeitenwende*" not only for Germany but for the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions as a whole with global implications. We can already observe substantial policy implications for European organizations as well as individual states. Presently, there is considerable solidarity among "the West" with Ukraine. However, Ukrainians are still suffering amidst massive Russian artillery shelling, countless deaths, and large refugee waves. The war has also disclosed the strengths and weaknesses of central European institutions. The initial impetus, however, does not imply that all European organizations will grow in importance or be reformed. While criticism of the effectiveness of the UNSC, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE in preventing and mediating armed conflicts and mitigating human suffering seems to be hardening, the EU and NATO appear to be most willing and able to adapt to the changed circumstances.

While fundamental debates on the EU's migration, security and defense, and enlargement policies could foster institutional reforms, NATO has pledged to increase its military readiness significantly by deploying its response force for the first time. However, the task of balancing collective defense and supporting its partners in the region while managing the risks of escalation between NATO and Russia will be a litmus test for the Alliance. Present support for EU and NATO responses and reform projects will have to be measured against the actual willingness of member states to make political and financial commitments or to increase their engagement. Steps that seem necessary and important at this moment of crisis could still fall victim to the political daily routine or fail due to national reservations. However, the momentum caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine seems to be greater than after the chaotic Afghanistan withdrawal or during the Trump presidency. Nevertheless, the political will and willingness to take risks and make compromises to increase NATOs defense capabilities or enhance European defense cooperation should not be underestimated, as they come with enormous domestic challenges and costs.

The Russian invasion has furthermore opened a door to the transformation of the post-Soviet Eurasia region, including Russia itself, in the long run. As for the FSU countries, Russia's war against Ukraine has raised the level of alarm concerning Russian aggressiveness towards its neighbors. Russia's military allies now have to come to terms with a Russia acting unilaterally. Combined, these will cause increased skepticism about Russian-led regionalism in Eurasia and particularly, disincentivize further economic integration initiatives. Nevertheless, it may encourage the search for military and economic cooperation with external actors, especially China, in the hopes of balancing against Russia. In contrast, Russia's motivations for further

tightening the strings of FSU countries will become more evident, ultimately leading to increased tension between Russia and FSU countries.

Globally, the Russian war on Ukraine will intensify geopolitical confrontations. The sanctions imposed by the West and its allies on Russia – a model state of authoritarianism - have sent shockwaves through the global economy and conveyed a clear message to emerging authoritarian leaders regarding the consequences for military incursions. Whether this will push back the global trend of authoritarianism on the rise since the 2000s or cause them further to consolidate their power and develop new defense mechanisms against possible Western sanctions remains to be seen. By the time of closing this policy paper - on day 15 of the Russian war in Ukraine, we can so far only observe the first indicators of the "*Zeitenwende"* at the European and global level. While first and foremost, hoping to avert a larger humanitarian catastrophe, all those indicators, manifesting intensified geopolitical confrontations, would require more detailed discussion and thorough scrutiny of whether they impact other world regions as well.