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(In)securitising the Eastern Neighbourhood. The European Union Eastern Partnership's Normative Dilemma: Resilience Versus Principled Pragmatism

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1   Introduction

The European Union's (EU's) Eastern Partnership (EaP) is marked by dissonance between declaratory consensus among the member states on normative resilience on the one hand, and the principled pragmatism that characterises the EU's approach towards the neighbourhood on the other. This dilemma illustrates the persistence of the normative credibility deficit, which has affected the EU's international role and identity since the very establishment of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). More specifically, the EU's normative agenda towards the EaP seems a mission impossible, especially in the light of current (in)securitisation of the EU's eastern neighbourhood policy, expressed in the 'security-first' approach implied by 'principled pragmatism', which also places resilience as modus operandi of the EU Global Strategy. The origin and the trans-

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formation of the EaP has been a particular case of the EU international identity twist. Being caught in between the high hopes of acting as a global, ethical force for good (Aggestam 2008) and the constrained capacity of an intergovernmental soft power actor (Hill 1993, 1997; Toje 2008), the EU's EaP project has been in constant deadlock caused by the policy without politics syndrome (Korosteleva 2017; Simão and Amaro Dias 2016). This syndrome appears clearly in the very construction of the EaP in particular, and the ENP in general.

In what follows, the ongoing (in)securitisation of the EaP is explained through conceptual lens of sociological approach to securitisation theory as developed by the Political Anthropological Research for International Sociology (PARIS) school. This approach holds a particularly relevant explanatory power when examining the transformation of the EU's eastern neighbourhood policy from normative messianism to a security-first approach.

2   Farewell Ethical Power Europe. Welcome Pragmatic Empire Europe: Finding the EU's Eastern Partnership raison d'être After Euro-Maidan and Annexation of Crimea

In scholarly debate, the EU's international role and identity has been conceptualised in many contradictory ways (Hoffmann and Niemann, 2017). The recent conceptual debate on the EU's international identity was focused on the question of whether it is legitimate to apply the very term of a sui generis international actor to the essence and substance of the EU's presence within the international system. However, the concept of normative power or ethical force for good truly prevails in scholarly debate on the EU's actorness on the international stage. Clearly, Europe as a hegemonic, imperial type of international actor constitutes the boundary of an otherwise polyphonic debate on conceptualising the EU's international role and identity (Duchêne 1973; Galtung 1973; Bull 1977; Manners 2002; Sjursen 2006; Zielonka 2006, 2008; Beck and Grande 2007; Haukkala 2008; Aggestam 2008).

The debate was framed by Ian Manners' conceptualisation of the EU as a normative power by the virtue of its post-Westphalian ontological structure. In his conceptual manifesto *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?* (2002), Ian Manners justifies the need to transform Duchêne's historical leitmotiv of the European Community as civilian power into the EU as a normative power. As explained by Manners:

> the EU as a normative power has an ontological quality to it—that the EU can be conceptualised as a changer of norms in the international system; a positivist quantity to it—that the EU acts to change norms in the international system; and a normative quality to it—that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system. (Manners 2002, p. 252)

Norm diffusion constitutes *genus proximus et differentiam specificam* of Mannersian normative power Europe (Manners 2002). Normative power Europe is determined by 'contagion, informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion and the cultural filter' (Manners 2002, pp. 244–245). It diffuses its norms using non-violent means and that is why 'the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is' (Manners 2002, p. 252).

As already argued, there has been a great deal of scepticism among scholars, who questioned the consistency of the EU's postmodern, cosmopolitan essence and its normative policy-making substance. Hyde-Price has been particularly outspoken in challenging the ontology of the concept of the EU as a single foreign-policy actor and, more specifically, of the consistency of the ENP policymaking as such (Hyde-Price 2008; Hyde-Price 2017). Seen from the realist perspective of the nature of international politics, the EU as a foreign policy actor is a 'tragic actor' (Hyde-Price 2008). As Hyde-Price claims:

> in a world of rival states with competing visions of the summum bonum ('the good life'), the pursuit of an 'ethical' foreign and security policy risks two tragic outcomes: either the EU will be left as a weak and ineffective actor unable to further the shared interests of its member states, or it will indulge in quixotic moral crusades—with the attendant risk of hubris leading to nemesis. (Hyde-Price 2008, p. 29)

In his most recent realist account on the ENP, Hyde-Price emphasises the primacy of collective, interest-driven approach of the EU member states to its neighbourhood, which prevails over normative concerns. Moreover, 'as a collective instrument for pursuing the common interests of its member states in its neighbourhood, the EU's Neighbourhood Policy serves three major roles: security maximisation; milieu-shaping and the pursuit of second order normative concerns' (Hyde-Price 2017, p. 60). From yet another analytical angle, we find Sjursen, who questioned the empirical validity of the term (Sjursen 2006). The conceptual elusiveness of normative power Europe or an ethical force for good is about deficit of theoretical and methodological coherence in identifying factors, variables and assessment criteria, which would allow for the empirically grounded study of the EU as single, non-state foreign policy actor: 'existing conceptions of the EU as a "civilian"/ "normative"/"civilizing" power lack sufficient precision […] implying that the EU is a " force for goodness" they lack the necessary criteria and assessment standards to qualify or substantiate such conclusions' (Sjursen 2006, p. 1).

In order to ensure conceptual soundness and empirical verifiability of the normative/ethical power Europe as a single foreign policy actor, one would have to assume that 'the core feature of a putative normative or civilizing power would be that it acts in order to transform the parameters of power politics through a focus on strengthening the international legal system' (Sjursen 2006). At the core of Hyde-Price's and Sjursen's approach to the EU's elusive actorness and identity, there is a structural tension between interests and ethical values, which cannot be convincingly reconciled in the form of a clear and coherent conceptualisation of the EU's role in the international system. The 'interests over ethical values' approach contributes to the EU's credibility deficit in terms of an ethical force for good in the neighbourhood and explains 'security first' of the ENP as exemplified in the EaP's resilience in policymaking.

Going beyond the Mannersian orthodoxy of normative power Europe and its realist critique by Hyde-Price, we come across an alternative, a third way of conceptualising the EU as a cosmopolitan empire (Beck and Grande 2007) and a neo-mediaeval empire (Zielonka 2006, 2008). Normative

power Europe is a power of expansion, which brings this conceptualisation directly within the realm of the empire power Europe discourse as evidenced in Beck's and Zielonka's contributions. Beck's cosmopolitan empire Europe is a masterpiece of sociological reasoning in an otherwise political science–dominated discourse on the EU's identity on international arena. Beck's (Beck 2007, p. 114) epistemological credo, as expressed in *Re-Inventing Europe: A Cosmopolitan Vision*, was that 'Reality is becoming cosmopolitan. The Other whom borders can no longer keep out is everywhere'. It needs to be noted that Beck transplanted his vision of a cosmopolitan empire Europe onto the body of a wider normative power Europe discourse, in this instance, however, emphasising a substantially different source of Europe's power.

At the time when George W. Bush cherished 'unilateral' unilateralism, Beck advocated the idea of cosmopolitan realism and its embodiment of a 'cosmopolitan empire Europe' as an antidote to the US's neoconservative indispensable nation doctrine. The idea of cosmopolitan empire Europe was also meant to explain how the ENP's normative *idée fixe* was made possible

> The cosmopolitan empire of Europe is notable for its open and cooperative character at home and abroad and therein clearly contrasts with the imperial predominance of the United States. Europe's undeniably real power is not decipherable in terms of nation-states. It lies instead in its character as a model of how Europe succeeded at transforming a belligerent past into a cooperative future, how the European miracle of enemies becoming neighbours could come about. It is this special form of soft world power that is developing a special radiance and attraction that is often as underestimated in the nation-state mould of thinking about Europe as it is in the projections of power claimed by American neoconservatives. (Beck 2007, p. 115)

Beck's vision of cosmopolitan empire Europe was a revolutionary one in the sense that it reoriented the European integration *finalité* paradigm towards cosmopolitan integration, based on the accommodation of diversity as an advantage and a stimulus for deeper societal and political integration. As Beck claimed:

Europe's further integration must not be oriented to the traditional notions of uniformity inherent in a European "federal state". Integration must instead take Europe's irrevocable diversity as its starting point. That is the only way for Europeanisation to link two demands that at first glance seem mutually exclusive: the call for the recognition of difference and the call for the integration of divergences. (Beck 2007, p. 116)

In a similar vein, we find Zielonka (2008), who came up with another alternative vision of the EU's international imperial actorness. Consistent with Beck's concept of the EU as a cosmopolitan imperial power, Zielonka (2008) went on arguing that after 2004, the

Union increasingly resembles an empire and this has profound implications for understanding its internal and external politics. However, the Union is not an empire like contemporary America or nineteenth century Britain. Its polycentric governance, fuzzy borders and soft forms of external power projection resemble the system we knew in the Middle Ages, before the rise of nation-states, democracy, and capitalism. (Zielonka 2008, p. 2)

Interestingly, Beck (2007) rejects any neo-mediaeval analogies with his concept of cosmopolitan empire Europe. 'For all the similarities with the complex confederation or empire that emerged from the Middle Ages, the European empire of the early 21st century is built upon the existing nation-states. To that extent, the analogy with the Middle Ages does not hold' (Beck 2007, p. 115). Zielonka went beyond Beck's line of thought on the distinctive character of cosmopolitan empire Europe. Unlike Beck, who denied the legitimate character to any analogy between contemporary cosmopolitan empire Europe and mediaeval empire, Zielonka (2008) establishes a clear *iunctim* between the two. 'The new Europe may well be neo-medieval, but is it also imperial' (Zielonka 2008, p. 3), considering that:

enlargement with its comprehensive and strict policy of conditionality suggests the Union's external policy is truly imperial. Through enlargement the Union was able to assert its control over unstable and poor neighbours. True, the post-communist countries were not "conquered" but invited to join the EU, and they did so quite eagerly. Moreover, at the end of the accession process they were offered access to the EU's decision-making instruments and resources. (Zielonka 2008)

Scholarly debate about the EU's presence and actorness in its eastern neighbourhood changed its tone and conceptual vocabulary after the war in Georgia in 2008 and, more profoundly, after Euro-Maidan and the start of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014. The ENP's normative presence in the 'shared neighbourhood' gave way to 'security-first' pragmatism (Koenig 2016). In this regard, Blockmans (2017) had been particularly outspoken in diagnosing this transformation:

> By putting security first, the EU is trying to balance its interests and principles. But this pragmatic approach raises questions about the perceived demotion of fundamental rights in the external action of a Union that appears ill-equipped in matters of security. Moreover, the policy framework of the ENP does not offer the scope to seek concrete solutions to the daunting security challenges emanating from the EU's outer periphery. (Blockmans 2017, p. 9)

Originally, the Polish-Swedish diplomatic joint venture, promoted by Radosław Sikorski and Carl Bildt, envisaged the EU's EaP as a project meant to both normatively contain Russia's aggressive policy on Georgia and other post-USSR countries aspiring to the EU membership, as well as to encourage these countries to enter the path of deeper Europeanisation, which would become a vehicle to fulfil their European aspirations. The hope was to boost economic and social modernisation as well as democratisation, in order to gear these countries towards Europe and, by the same token, to help them to emancipate from Kremlin's sphere of influence. The Sikorski-Bildt plan took the form of a Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague, 7 May 2009 (Council of the European Union 2009, 8435/09, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague). It heralded a 'more ambitious partnership between the EU and the partner countries' as compared with the initial ENP agenda of 2004 (Council of the European Union 2009, 8435/09, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague). The Prague Declaration assumed among others that:

> the Eastern Partnership will be based on commitments to the principles of international law and fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to, market economy, sustainable development and good governance' and that [the] main goal of the Eastern Partnership is to create the necessary

conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and interested partner countries. (Council of the European Union 2009 8435/09, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague, pp. 5–6)

The key difference and a major incentive of the EaP, as compared with the ENP 2004 agenda, was a *positive conditionality modus operandi. The More for more* policy was meant to inspire especially those eastern neighbours who have been the most determined in their efforts to democratise and modernise themselves along the European normative model. As the years went by, however, predominantly technocratic *positive conditionality policy* was not followed by *politics of debate*. This explains, to a large extent, a limited success of the policy of Europeanisation in the eastern neighbourhood (Korosteleva 2017).

3   Towards an Ever Greater (In)securitisation of the European Union Eastern Partnership. Understanding Resilience Through Principled Pragmatism

Security is central again. This holds true for post-9/11 international security discourse in general, but also for the War in Donbass and annexation of Crimea in particular. This made EU decision-makers fixed on security in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. EU norms diffusion through *positive conditionality* gave way to the *security-first* approach in the EaP policy-making. Subsequently, Russia is central again, as well. Kremlin's *Machtpolitik* fundamentally changed the EaP agenda. As Simão and Amaro Dias (2016) admit:

Russian foreign policy towards this common neighbourhood has reinforced the need for the on-going securitisation of the EU's vicinity […] There are several security issues on the common agenda, including political stability, energy security and conflict resolution, particularly in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus—and towards which Russia has developed its own neighbourhood policies. (Simão and Amaro Dias 2016, p. 97)

Sociological incarnation of the securitisation theory (Balzacq et al. 2015, p. 494) as applied to the EU's eastern neighbourhood policymaking seems both an underestimated and promising explanatory perspective. Its major advantage and 'the distinctiveness lies in its capacity to articulate a specific approach to security—influenced by the speech act—with an "analytics of government", which emphasises practices and processes' (Balzacq et al. 2015). More specifically, I refer here to the PARIS theory of (in)securitisation and its explanatory power as applied to an ongoing (in)securitisation of the EU's eastern borderlands (Bigo and McCluskey 2018):

> conceptualising the relation between security and insecurity as a mobius strip; a metaphor which demonstrates how one can never be certain what constitutes the content of security and not insecurity. A PARIS approach [thus] calls for the study of everyday (in)securitization processes and practices. (Bigo and McCluskey 2018, p. 1)

The credo of the PARIS school is grounded in the Copenhagen school's security-identity nexus orthodoxy (Buzan et al. 1998), which transcends the conceptual boundaries of 'viewing security solely as an answer to threats and insecurity, as if the world of security agencies was just reacting to external events and was not constructing the boundaries between security and insecurity' (Bigo and McCluskey 2018, p. 2). The alternative is to 'explain the conditions under which the social and political construction that enacts a process of securitization occurs' (Bigo and McCluskey 2018).

Explaining the political construction of the EaP's resilience to securitisation requires an insight into the content and dynamics of the agenda-setting policy. Of crucial importance in this context are questions regarding the ontological status of the EU Global Strategy. The very idea of this strategy represents a clinical example of an ambiguous and elusive character of security-insecurity conceptual relationship. Unlike Solana's *European Security Strategy* (ESS): *A Secure Europe in a Better World* (Council of the European Union 2003), Mogherini's *EU Global Strategy Shared Vision, Common Action: a Stronger Europe* (European External Action Service, EUGS) does not explicitly refer to the term of 'security strategy'. However, both strategies

emphasise the EU's moral imperative to deliver security, globally and internally. The blurring of the nature of security-insecurity nexus of both strategies is clearly noticeable in the definition of the referent object. Whereas Solana's strategy calls for a 'Europe (which) should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world' (Council of the European Union, ESS, p. 2), Mogherini's strategy focuses on 'making Europe stronger: an even more united and influential actor on the world stage that keeps citizens safe, preserves our interests, and upholds our values' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 1). The foreign and security policy agenda setting has been redirected; effective multilateralism has been counterbalanced with internal and external resilience-building.

In 2003, it was George W. Bush's 'unilateral' unilateralism that constituted a major point of reference for constructing the EU's international role and identity in terms of a global promoter of effective multilateralism. As the ESS concludes, 'the end of the Cold War has left the United States in a dominant position as a military actor. However, no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own' (Council of the European Union, ESS, p. 1). The interplay of domestic and external risks and threats in 2016 has determined the EU security agenda setting to orient towards the lines of resilience-building. The EUGS was expected to help 'make our Union more effective in confronting energy security, migration, climate change, violent extremism, and hybrid warfare' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 1).

Nathalie Tocci, the EUGS's lead penholder, explains the EU's security strategy paradigm change in terms of the profound transformation of the EU's security environment that took place since 2003 (Tocci 2017, pp. 488–489). Preventing the unpredictable and to cope effectively with permanent uncertainty affecting both the internal and external EU policymaking became the challenge that the new security strategy was meant to find a convincing remedy or at least a sense of direction (Tocci 2017). The increasing mood of 'our house [being] put on fire' affected the EUGS' conceptual focus on complex resilience-building (Tocci 2017).

Enhancing resilience in a turbulent and violent neighbourhood illustrates a wider tendency of (in)securitisation of the EU's neighbourhood agenda setting. This is particularly evident in the case of the EUGS' eastern neighbourhood agenda. The EU's belief in its 'enduring power of attraction' is expected to 'spur transformation' in the neighbouring coun-

tries' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 9). The blurring of the distinction between security and insecurity of the EUGS is exemplified in mutual interdependence between state and societal resilience. Resilience-building is a key operational strategy to transform the 'ring of fire' back into a 'ring of friends', in the light of a resurrection of Russia's imperial policy and its implications for the EU's eastern neighbours. In doing so, 'the EU will support different paths to resilience, targeting the most acute cases of governmental, economic, societal and climate/energy fragility, as well as develop more effective migration policies for Europe and its partners' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016). The EUGS makes it clear that effective resilience-building is impossible without the Union's credibility as a security provider. Here, we find, however, an overemphasis given to the EU's collective defence at the expense of virtually non-reference of the EU's normative credibility in its neighbourhood. As expressed explicitly in the EUGS:

> A stronger Union also requires investing in all dimensions of foreign policy. In particular, investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency. Full spectrum defence European Union Global Strategy capabilities are necessary to respond to external crises, build our partners' capacities, and to guarantee Europe's safety. (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, pp. 10–11)

Consequently, as it may seem, principled pragmatism is heralded as an implementation mechanism of the otherwise normatively defined raison d'être of the EU's external action. Getting the balance right is about 'charting the way between the Scylla of isolationism and the Charybdis of rash interventionism (thus) the EU will engage the world manifesting responsibility towards others and sensitivity to contingency. Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 16).

The normative imperative of 'responsibility towards others' is accentuated by a call for 'co-responsibility as [the EU's] guiding principle in advancing a rules-based global order' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 18). The normative credibility deficit in the form of the *policy without politics* approach seems evident in the overall ambition of the EU to 'invest in the resilience of states and societies to the east stretching into Central Asia, and south down to Central Africa' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 23), to be achieved through a

promise that 'together (emphasis added) with its partners, the EU will (therefore) promote resilience in its surrounding regions' (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016).

Declaratory normative rhetoric of resilience-building takes the form of selective partnerships with those who are willing and capable to do *more for more*. As reassured in the EUGS:

> We will partner selectively with players whose cooperation is necessary to deliver global public goods and address common challenges. We will deepen our partnerships with civil society and the private sector as key actors in a networked world. We will do so through dialogue and support, but also through more innovative forms of engagement. (European External Action Service, EUGS 2016, p. 18)

The normative credibility deficit surrounding the EaP in light of the EUGS' resilience-building conceptualisation is, thus, present in the patchwork of the EU's eastern neighbourhood policy surrounding the very definition of the referent object of resilience-building (Gstöhl and Schunz 2017; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2017). More precisely, as Lavrelashvili (2018, pp. 1–2), Prior and Hagmann (2015, pp. 281–98) put it adequately, we need to be able to answer the questions of 'resilience to what?' and 'resilience of whom?' (Manoli 2017, pp. 124–140), as:

> Some analysts have expressed doubt as to whether resilience as conceptualised in the EU's Global Strategy can serve as a guiding principle—that is, whether it is operationalisable in the political context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as a way to add value to the existing approach that promotes stability, prosperity and democracy. (Lavrelashvili 2018, p. 2)

Most recent empirical illustration of an ongoing (in)securitisation of the EU's eastern neighbourhood resilience-building is to be found in the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24 November 2017. Resilience-building is expected to be achieved through interlocking cooperation between civil society and state, aiming at 'strengthening resilience and reducing societal vulnerabilities' (European Commission 2017, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24th of November 2017, p. 6). Thus, good governance is a critical

condition to societal resilience. The EU commits itself to foster both 'human security' and 'security sector reform' in the neighbourhood. The implementation strategy assumes among others: 'development of effective, accountable, transparent and democratic institutions' as well as the 'implementation of integrated border management, disrupting organised crime, human trafficking and smuggling, addressing irregular migration, tackling hybrid threats, countering terrorism and violent extremism, including through inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, preventing radicalisation, enhancing cybersecurity and fighting cybercrime, strengthening disaster prevention, response and crisis management' (European Commission 2017, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24 November 2017).

To operationalise such security cooperation agenda, a tool-box of '20 deliverables for 2020' was created. (In)securitisation is implicitly and explicitly present here in 'supporting the partners to be better prepared to respond to crises and disasters' (European Commission 2017, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24 November 2017, Annex to Annex I – 20 Deliverables for 2020, p. 16). More specifically, enhancing security capacity building will make the EaP countries 'more resilient to hybrid threats, including cyber security and mitigation of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear risks or of criminal, accidental or natural origin'. To complete the picture, an external dimension of the (in)securitisation of the EU's working tool-box is: 'strengthening of security dialogue and practical CSDP cooperation, including enhancement of training opportunities and capacity building in the Common Security and Defence Policy/Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSDP/CFSP) area will support contributions by the partner countries to the European civilian and military missions and operations' (European Commission 2017, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24th of November 2017).

Based on the above, it seems pretty obvious that the evolution of the EU's operational strategy towards societal resilience-building drives the eastern neighbourhood's agenda-setting. Consequently, European society is itself in the realm of world risk society, according to Beck's terminology. Since managing daily risks through resilience-building in the neighbourhood becomes a key concern in the general EU security strategy, it

seems fair to argue that contemporary European society bears all crucial features of Beck's world risk society; moreover, this type of society is one of daily catastrophes. Reflexive modernity as a key feature of second modernity is manifested in daily manufacturing of risks. This, in turn, leads to the emergence of a society within which non-standard situations become standard ones (2008). When risk becomes a threat, the risk society becomes a security society:

> Risk and security, [therefore], feed from one another in the sense that keeping up the demand for security requires maintaining a heightened sense of risk. Attraction of such circularity has led to the recasting of many social and environmental problems as security measures. Furthermore, security is not just a means to an end (i.e. protection from risk), but is an end in itself. (i.e. a positive good) (Davoudi 2015, p. 465)

As risk and security are socially manufactured, it is essential to define the causality between the two: 'whereas risk threatens, security promises' (Zedner 2003, p. 176 cited in: Davoudi 2015). This, in turn, justifies a reference to PARIS' (in)securitisation research paradigm as promising, although still vanguard, and offering an explanatory perspective in the EU's neighbourhood studies.

4   In Lieu of a Conclusion: No Eastern Partnership Summit this Year

The year 2019 is one of commemorations, which include looking back and recalling the 1989 annus mirabilis, NATO's enlargement of 1999 or the EU's enlargement of 2004. All these key events have changed the lives of millions of Europeans beyond recognition, over the past 30 years. Relatively less attention is centred towards commemorating the EU's Eastern Partnership, a project that was meant to expand the normative power of the EU eastwards in the light of Russia's rising neo-imperialism in the post-Soviet space. As such, it has been ten years since the launch of the EaP, during the European Council Summit, in Prague. Unlike the commemoration of 1989 annus mirabilis or the 1999 NATO enlarge-

ment, as well as the 2004 EU enlargement, the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the EaP seems somehow overshadowed and underestimated. The question is why? Part of the answer resides in the (in)securitisation deadlock caused by the asymmetry of capacities and expectations expressed by the EU's member states and their eastern neighbours. More importantly, it is the 'Russia first' approach which seems to frame the current EU agenda towards the EaP, as it is explicitly expressed by EaP's founding fathers:

> A little of five years ago both of us […] stressed that the Eastern Partnership should be seen as part of a policy for a "continent without dividing lines". This was certainly how we saw it then. But in the summer 2013 Kremlin had altered its policy […] This shift indicated that Putin was prepared to do whatever it took to bring the member states of the Eastern Partnership back into Russia's fold. (Bildt and Sikorski 2019, p. 8)

On the one hand, the EU's preoccupation with societal resilience in the form of policy without politics cannot result in nothing more than a 'security promise'. On the other hand, Europeanisation of governance does not seem to attract the eastern neighbours enough to break through confines of oligarchic state organisation; additionally, it does not contribute significantly to the reinvigoration of civil society, either.

The neighbourhood *fatigue* clearly undermines the EU's international actorness and identity in the sense that it can no longer claim to be an ethical force for good or a normative power setting the rules of 'normal' conduct for others to follow. It is quite difficult to expect others would be following a power that undergoes major normative twists back at home. Democratic backsliding in some of the EU member states, the migration policy crisis, terrorist threats and Brexit have eroded belief in the EU as an everlasting 'pole of attraction'. The consequences add up to a growing feeling of the EaP's obsolescence. Furthermore, the tenth anniversary of the EaP takes place in an overwhelming *fatigue* and *malaise* ambience, to the extent that there is no EaP summit this year.

As such, the future of the EaP seems pretty uncertain. The dominant mood when projecting the future of the EU-EaP relationship is that of a dead-end, that of an impossibility to safely go through the juncture of

resilience, security and, ultimately, a membership perspective. Similar to the Western Balkans Europeanisation dilemma (Lavrelashvili 2018; Kmezić and Bieber 2017, pp. 2–10), we could get some consistent insight whether acknowledging the possibility of membership prospects for the EaP states could increase their resilience? The answer is not clear; such a move could both strengthen the motivation for reform and also trigger more aggressive actions on the part of Russia. The experience of the Western Balkans shows that even an explicitly offered prospect of EU membership can yield somewhat mixed results. At the same time, automatically assuming that the same would happen to the three EaP countries is not fully justified, since these states have followed a fundamentally different development path and are experiencing different geopolitical pressures. To conclude, it goes beyond doubt that just as the EU itself needs a new opening, a kind of Schuman Plan 2.0, same goes for the EaP, which needs 'bringing the political back in' (Korosteleva 2017).

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