# Euro-Atlantic Resilience Forum

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This year's Euro-Atlantic Resilience Forum (EARF) was held in Bucharest, Romania, between 6 and 7 November and examined resilience from multiple perspectives. It covered civilian, political, media, and military resilience. Speakers discussed topics such as cyber resilience, women's leadership, democratic resilience, and information manipulation.

The forum brought together a diverse panel of speakers from all around the world. Experts from Brussels presented the strengths and weaknesses of NATO in terms of societal resilience. Speakers from Tokyo contributed to a panel on earthquake preparedness. Experts from Washington, including an EPIS fellow, presented their views on Euro-Atlantic business strategies. Last but not least, the participants had the chance to discuss the issue

of information manipulation with Moldovan government and civil society members just one month after the Moldovan parliamentary elections, which had been successfully protected against foreign interference. The topics of the forum can be categorised as follows.

## The role of emerging technologies

Related to resilience, technology has been described both as a strength and a weakness during the forum. The hyper-acceleration of technological evolution creates opportunities for digitalisation; however, it is also going to put a strain on our societies. Cybersecurity and artificial intelligence have been repeatedly mentioned as some of the greatest challenges to European societies, with telecommunications described as a critical security pillar and AI framed as a threat to our democracies if misused or insufficiently regulated.

Social media companies have also gained attention during the conference. Whether that be in the context of male attitudes towards women on social media and the effects that it has on young boys, or how social media is the battlefield in the context of disinformation tactics. Lastly, the responsibility of social media platform providers to filter available content has also been emphasised, especially in relation to the EU's Digital Service Act.

## Whole society approach

The topic could be crowned as the buzzword of the event. It was the focus of multiple panels and mentioned in all the discussions between experts. The whole society approach encompasses civilian and military resilience. As the Director of the Defence Enablement and Resilience Directorate at the NATO Headquarters emphasised: without a resilient society, a capable military is not enough.

Furthermore, private companies are also a cornerstone of the whole society approach. Some panellists even went as far as identifying the economy as the sixth domain of war. One great sentence caught my attention during the joint panel with the experts from Brussels. Nathan Robinson Grison, Director of the Committee on Democracy and Security of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, stated that "the outdated notion that maintaining security is the task of only the state must go; we need an agile society without creating fear among civilians". Lastly, the notion that resilience should be organised regionally instead of in silos is also worth mentioning. Especially in a region of Europe which is so close to the Russia-Ukraine war, focusing on regional resilience is crucial.

## Military resilience

Naturally, as the EARF was organised in Bucharest, the topics have focused on NATO's Eastern Flank region. As the country hosting one of the biggest NATO military bases in Europe, Romania has a special interest in transat-

lantic and NATO issues. The most impactful discussion revolved around hybrid threats and asymmetric warfare. What is usually labelled as the NATO Eastern Flank, multiple Romanian and Moldovan army officials have referred to as the Eastern Front of a hybrid war. In the ongoing asymmetric war that Europe is already engaged in, resilience is a strategic capability and advantage that needs to be enhanced. Additionally, the idea that the rapid-response structures are outdated has been floated during multiple panels. Notably, responding to threats is not going to be enough moving forward. What is needed is anticipating threats and creating a society that can respond to them with resilience.

## The role of Moldova

The conference shed light on the special relationship between the EU and its candidate country, Moldova. As a member of the Southeast European Defence Ministerium (SEDEM), Moldova already plays an important role in joint exercises with multiple NATO members. As a direct target of Russian influence tactics, it has successfully resisted information manipulation during its 2025 election. The resilience that Moldovan society has shown towards disinformation campaigns could be adapted in other European states. According to the invited experts, like Daniella Misail-Nichitin, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, these campaigns aim to undermine trust in institutions and exploit intent, opportunity, and capability, targeting people's minds rather than just social media platforms. Effective responses require not only prevention but also addressing existing false narratives and their societal impacts through strong public-private cooperation and shared goals such as EU accession.

Throughout these insightful two days spent in the Palace of Parliament of Romania, I had the opportunity to learn about different perspectives on multiple types of resilience from all around the world. EPIS can gain a real connection to the Eastern Flank of NATO through participation in the Euro-Atlantic Resilience Forum, which is essential to understanding the alliance's frontline capabilities. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise the significance of societal resilience and the role the EU and its member states can play in enhancing it. The conference had a focus on the role of society and how it connects to the role of the military in these modern times. Throughout the two days in Bucharest, it became clear that no level of military capability can protect Europe unless civilian society itself is prepared and resilient. Resilience is therefore not just a supporting concept, but a core strategic capability that must be strengthened across the continent.