



# **Overcoming Global Fragility**

**GLOBSEC 2023  
BRATISLAVA FORUM  
29–31 MAY**

**SUMMARY**

# Overcoming Global Fragility

The 18th edition of GLOBSEC's annual Bratislava Forum took place from 29–31 May, to which a record number of regional and international politicians as well as renowned opinion leaders, attended. The meeting convened over 1500 guests from 70 countries, including 11 heads of state and government from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and beyond.

*"The future of the West is now being decided in Central or Eastern Europe,"* GLOBSEC Founder and President Robert Vass commented in his welcome speech, adding: *"As an African proverb says: if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together. We need the cooperation of the international community to go far."*

Panel discussions addressed immediate needs in geopolitical cooperation and security issues while laying the groundwork for a more sustainable and resilient world. They also focused on working toward solutions while enhancing public-private cooperation on the interconnected issues of energy, innovation, infrastructure, and health.

The GLOBSEC Bratislava Forum is the preeminent international strategic conference on the frontlines of a newly divided world. With over 18 years of existence, the Forum has established itself as the most distinguished platform throughout the CEE region. This has been proven again in 2023 with the attendance of top political elites, including French President Emmanuel Macron; President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen; and President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, among others.

As the war in Ukraine persists and wreaks havoc, the global community remains severely fragmented, and its members are now feeling the weight of problems both at home and abroad. In parallel, democracies around the world must tackle a litany of challenges, ranging from a cost-of-living crisis to energy disruptions. As such, Europe must demonstrate te-

nacity, adaptability, and resilience while maintaining strong cohesion. This year's edition of GLOBSEC's Bratislava Forum proudly provided a platform for leaders to meet and collaboratively work toward solutions that will help overcome this global fragility. Overall, the discussion was guided by three overarching themes:

- ▶ Continuing Support for Ukraine
- ▶ The Resilience of Europe in the Face of War
- ▶ Mitigating the Global Consequences of the Conflict – such as energy, value chains, and economics – in a Global Dialogue



**Robert Vass, GLOBSEC Founder and President:**

*"Ukrainian people have demonstrated courage and have paid the highest price for peace... But the invasion of Ukraine has also galvanized and presented the unity of the West."*





# Continuing Support for Ukraine

# Political support

- ▶ Exceptional unity and European solidarity in all aspects of the war in Ukraine have strengthened awareness of its actual power within and beyond the continent.
- ▶ Solidarity and support of Ukraine are still crucial in resolving the conflict.
- ▶ Ukrainian resilience has proven that, no matter the circumstances, the country is proceeding on its reform journey to becoming an EU member.
- ▶ For long-lasting peace, the long-term security of Ukraine needs to be ensured, with military equipment and clarity provided.



**Zuzana Čaputová, President of the Slovak Republic:**  
*"We are far more resilient than we expected, and we are stronger than our opponents...To prevail, we need to stay the course, continue what we're doing and do it better."*



**Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic:**  
*"Each country should have the right to pick its allies. If a country decides on transparency and democracy, it's not a threat to its neighbours...We will stand by the Ukrainian side, always."*



**Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission:**  
*"We all knew we have embarked on a challenging journey, but we have given Ukraine candidate status... The country is under attack for its desire to be part of the European Family."*



**Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See:**  
*"Greater good cannot be achieved by one alone. We as human beings are all connected."*



**Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia:**  
*"Solidarity with Ukraine and support with Ukrainians is like a reflexive policy; we are doing what is according to our values... I cannot recall any political conflict where we have seen the momentum and the reaction of the international community like the Ukrainian conflict."*



# Military support

- ▶ Ukraine has shown leadership and military capabilities in its heroic fight for freedom.
- ▶ The Western world has provided Ukraine assistance to fight but not to win the war – more must be done.
- ▶ The military assistance to Ukraine is slowed down by several factors, such as insufficient supplies and production capabilities, problems in transport and complex procurement processes – apart from political sensitivities.



**Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic:**

*“We should be able to defend ourselves and our neighbours. We should be able to face wars today and in the future and help our neighbours if they need help today... This is the future; we cannot leave it up to others.”*



**Miroslav Wlachovský, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic:**

*“The burden we have on our shoulders was put on them by the aggressor... No one really wants to be the neighbour of some kind of Putin regime in Ukraine.”*



**Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria:**

*“We became neutral very strictly in military terms — but not on values. Austria was never neutral and never will be. [...] The war is a global matter. It’s a war but not [just] a European war.”*



**Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland:**

*“Without unity, we cannot do anything... We believe that the future of Ukraine is both in the European Union and in NATO.”*



**Kersti Kaljulaid, Former President of the Republic of Estonia:**

*“History does not support the idea of let’s have a ceasefire and then negotiate... In 2014, we had a series of processes that should have led to a peace agreement, and they didn’t.”*



**Gen (Ret.) Philip Breedlove, Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, NATO:** *"Ukrainians have overperformed in almost every case our expectations in training and using the weaponry we gave them well. The training and repairs by their technicians will be less of an issue than the West getting the logistics right."*



**LTG. (Ret.) Ben Hodges, Chairman of the Future of Security and Defence Council, GLOBSEC; Former Commanding General, US Army Europe:** *"Russians are still very good at electronic warfare, and anyone using a non-secure phone would get us killed in few seconds."*

## Delivering Peace and Justice

- ▶ Any peace that Russia suggests will not be considered by Ukraine as the conditions are of an oppressor state - terms of peace must be decided by Ukrainians and only when they are prepared to do so.
- ▶ Ukraine is hopeful for peaceful negotiations based on President Zelensky's ten points – including provisions tackling Russia's nuclear threat, trade routes and compensation for war crimes and destruction.
- ▶ The existing legal measures provided by all international organizations can and should be used in a complimentary way to proceed with the prosecution of Russia's war criminals.
- ▶ The process is already well underway. Evidence is getting summarized and can be used for trials.



**Ihor Zhovkva, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine:** *"The Global South is also affected by the war in Ukraine. We are ready to listen and to consider all suggestions. Yet what we need is peace. And any peace should respect the Ukrainian formula, as we are the ones who suffer."*



**Olha Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine:** *"Any outcome of the war that is below the Ukrainian territorial integrity, restoration of sovereignty, and acceptance to NATO would play out in accordance with the Russian playbook."*



**Matti Maasikas, Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine:** *"Peace will be installed when Ukrainians tell us they are ready. They get to decide. [...] It is not hard to understand the reasons why Ukrainians want to push the Russians out completely."*





**John R. Allen, former Commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan:** *"We have not informed our public about what is the risk here, about the larger conflict we have been in with Russia... The end state will be to push Russian conventional forces out of Ukraine. To the extent that Russia will come to the negotiation table."*



**Andriy Kostin, Prosecutor General of Ukraine:** *"The ICC has a leading role in ending impunity for international crimes. I think we all agree that Putin's arrest warrant is a historic decision, not only for Ukraine but for the global community."*

## EU and NATO accession

- ▶ The EU accession process is a key motivation for Ukraine to win the war.
- ▶ Ukraine views NATO membership as the only real security guarantee.
- ▶ There are different views in the EU and NATO over Ukraine's concrete form of integration and timing.
- ▶ NATO membership remains a matter of debate, with possible institutional alternatives on security guarantees to be debated at the NATO summit in Vilnius.



**Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic:** *"We need to build something between security guarantees to Israel and full-fledged NATO membership for Ukraine. We need to provide strong and tangible security guarantees."*



**Martin Sklenár, Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic:** *"NATO membership is Ukraine's decision, and we are here to support them along the way."*



**Olha Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine:** *"We will stand by you, and when the war ends, Ukraine will be a member of the EU. [...] There is no question on the accession of Ukraine. We are a candidate country. That's the transformative power of Ukraine."*



**Katarína Mathernová, Deputy Director-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, European Commission:** *"We are missing talks on how to equip Ukraine after the reconstruction. We need to help Ukraine with the mass of projects needed after the war."*



**Tobias Ellwood, Chair of the House of Commons Defense Select Committee of the United Kingdom:** *"We blinked when President Zelenskyy asked for our support, and now we see the consequences [...] Our world is getting more dangerous, not less. NATO needs to move to at least 2.5%."*



**Benjamin Haddad, Member of Parliament, National Assembly of the French Republic:** *"There can be no peaceful and sovereign Europe without a sovereign Ukraine."*



**Michal Šimečka, Vice-President of the European Parliament:** *"People say we shouldn't have high expectations, but for Ukraine — the expectations are already there."*



**Žygimantas Pavilionis, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania:** *"The only lifelong security guarantee is NATO membership."*



# Economic support and reconstruction

- ▶ Most tangible economic support to Ukraine is tied to its accession process and linked with reform programmes.
- ▶ Private capital should be more engaged in Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.
- ▶ More credibility required by private investors will come with reforms and EU guarantees.



**Jan Lipavský, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic:** *"We need to protect Europe from this evil idea of Russian imperialism. With every sanction package and legislation, we get closer. [...] Russia is a threat to Czechia. Russia will present a threat to Europe's security for many decades."*



**Thierry Déau, Chief Executive Officer at Meridiam:** *"Reconstruction always takes longer than we believe. [...] We need this blended finance approach. We need to focus on mobilizing private capital."*



**Pierre Heilbronn, Special Envoy of France for Ukraine's Relief and Reconstruction:** *"In fact, reconstruction is already happening in Ukraine. [...] From day one, France provided the support for Ukraine [both] on the military and the other side."*



**Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank:** *"Banking is not about running from the risk. [...] We have to consider the civilian side more and more."*



# **The Resilience of Europe in the Face of War**



# Disinformation and political unity

- ▶ Information space is the other frontline with Russia – Europe must be more vigilant.
- ▶ The rise of populism is threatening Europe's democratic values.
- ▶ Free and healthy media is key in countries with polarised societies and turbulent politics.
- ▶ The regulation of AI and social media use should be seriously considered, as disinformation doesn't cease to affect the population and even trigger a populist side.



**Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic:** *"This war is absolutely critical, especially in democracies. Because democracies have some native weaknesses in comparison to authoritarian regimes: they have public opinions. And how to frame public opinion is as important as how people will vote."*



**Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament:** *"We need to establish how to communicate and what to communicate, especially to young people, voting for the first time... It is how we communicate and how those messages are received that we can test our success and learn from each other's mistakes."*



**Zuzana Čaputová, President of the Slovak Republic:** *"Our opponents hope that with enough time and disinformation, public opinion will change in our countries... At the global level, we should increase the accountability of owners of social media platforms."*



**Ivan Korčok, former Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic:** *"Hungary is a problem. It is a problem not in tactical terms but in terms of political interpretation. There are many who refer to the Hungarian position as brave while other Central European countries like Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic are referred to as American puppets."*



**Ingrida Simonyte, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania:** *"I hate to say this, as I am a big defender of the freedom of speech. But sometimes we mix freedom of speech with the freedom to spread lies."*

**Jamie Fly, President & CEO of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:** *"We believe that healthy independent media is essential to democracy. At this point in the US and the EU, there is a decline in media, and I think that citizens take it for granted."*

# Defence

- ▶ Europe should increase its defence and technology capabilities and become self-reliant.
- ▶ Closer collaboration, proper investment and a more cohesive and coherent regulatory framework on defence are needed to reach the potential of Europe's military capabilities.
- ▶ EU member states often discuss the undersupplied ammunition, but due to a lack of political will, only a few countries have increased production.
- ▶ Europe's military support to Ukraine should be used as a means to prepare for future security-related challenges when NATO and the US will not get involved.
- ▶ Russia considers itself a naval power with capabilities to interact between Kaliningrad and the east, and also with the Arctic route, the Baltic and the Black Sea; therefore, all of these flanks should be connected.



**Martin Sklenár, Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic:** *"For Slovakia, it has been a privilege because deterrence is working through NATO. Here we are under the deterrence umbrella while other countries, like Moldova or Ukraine, are not."*



**Jiří Šedivý, Chief Executive at the European Defence Agency:** *"We should be prepared for situations when Europe will be challenged in our neighbourhood. We should have the capacity to react independently."*



**Hanno Pevkur, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Estonia:** *"Deterrence means that it must work in practical means. Regional plans must be executed. Otherwise, we don't have the deterrence."*



**Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence at the European Parliament:** *"We do not have a NATO army. We have national armies under the EU and NATO umbrella [...] It's about time that we listen and that we act for a single European pillar."*



**Thomas Kauffmann, Member of the Executive Management Board and Vice President International Business & Services, General Dynamics European Land Systems (GDELS):** *"It's all about speed. Today we are faster in the political decision process, but when it comes to action, we need to be faster."*





**Samira Braund, CEO UK Defence Solutions Centre:** *"We are having a real time learning experience from what is happening on the battlefield."*



**Gundbert Scherf, Co-Founder and Chief Executive, Helsing:** *"The procurement of new ammunition takes longer. What we need to figure out is how to use what we have in our stockpiles."*



**Siemtje Möller, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Minister of Defence of Germany:** *"It's not about different nations trying to overcome each other, but working together. If we don't stand together, we will lose."*



**Camille Grand, Distinguished Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations:** *"Between 2016 and 2022, NATO made an enormous effort to evolve, and it is the case when it comes to budget, level of investment, etc. We are in a much better position than we were five years ago. Now we need to be sustainable, continue to invest, and move around troops to make sure we are capable of acting in the right moment."*



**Anna Wieslander, Director for Northern Europe, Atlantic Council:** *"If you enter into a higher level of defence spending, you need to sustain it and understand why you do it.... If you want to make more ammunition, you need bigger facilities: but who will be willing to take the risk?"*



**Nico Lange, Senior Advisor to GLOBSEC and former Chief of Executive Staff at the German Federal Ministry:** *"I think we have to look into Ukraine to see the capabilities we will need ten years from now."*

**Gen. (Ret.) Richard Shirreff:** *"If Ukrainians fail to reach their military objectives, we in NATO need to be prepared for the worst scenario and maybe even intervene."*

# EU Path for the Western Balkans

- ▶ The new EU's Western Balkans initiative is designed with the aim to enhance the Union's involvement with the region by providing more integration before the actual membership of the candidate countries.
- ▶ The four instruments are envisaged: bringing the region closer to the EU single market; deepening regional economic integration; accelerating fundamental reforms; and boosting pre-accession funds.
- ▶ In the face of renewed tension and violence in Kosovo, stakeholders have called on the EU to provide a platform for communication and dialogue in line with European values.



**Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission:** *"We want to build on the progress achieved in recent months. But we also want to bring some of the benefits of EU Membership to the people of Western Balkans already today... We stand ready to support Western Balkans with increased pre-accession funding. There is a dire need for investment in the Western Balkans. These investments will make people's lives better. And they will also smooth the way into our Union."*



**Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria:** *"If we wait until 2040 for enlargement, we will have lost reach. We have to act now. We have to act ready. [...]Ukraine can be the rocket start for the Balkan enlargement. We have proved in the last months that if we want, we can."*



**Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania:** *"We need to be open, we need to be frank, we need to debate the real issues, without hiding behind the mirrors"*



**Dimitar Kovachevski, Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia:** *"I think that the EU understood, after Ukraine, the strategic mistake was made years ago when a veto was imposed on North Macedonia. When you make a strategic mistake, you cannot solve it in five minutes because it has effects lasting from 5 to 10 years."*



**Elmedin Konaković, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina:** *"Our countries belong to Europe, and we are in the heart of Europe. We need reforms; we need it fast and [...] then you will see how far the Western Balkans can go with the European Union."*





**Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo:**  
*"We consider NATO indispensable for our security and defence."*



**Bujar Osmani, Chairman-in-Office, OSCE and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia:**  
*"It's important that all sides [Albania, Kosovo, Serbia] continue to deescalate and keep the flow of the interactions.[...] You cannot leave a region of the heart of Europe unattended."*

**Milo Đukanovic, former President of Montenegro:**  
*"Russia developed its presence in the region in a very strategic way, through the media, security, and intelligence influence. However, people are not born with EU values, and it's easy for the people to get attracted to Russia."*

## EU and Russia

- ▶ Although the sanctions are functioning in limiting Russia's economic and political influence, there are still weaknesses to consider, mainly the Western energy resources and vulnerability to Russian propaganda.
- ▶ There are indications of rising unemployment, inflation, and decreasing private foreign investment and living standards in Russia.
- ▶ The military defeat of Russia in Ukraine is a precondition for the regime change in Russia.
- ▶ One of the possible scenarios of Russia's regime change is state failure. But it would not be in the EU's interest to have a failed state on its borders.
- ▶ After the regime change, sanctions should be dropped, and those who contributed to the war damage should be punished and forced to compensate.



**Ingrid Brocková, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic:**  
*"Of course, the sanctions are painful to Russia in the short and long term but also painful to the members of the EU, so we have to find ways to compensate the vulnerable member states... Fighting the Russian narrative in the Global South remains one of our main weaknesses."*



**Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, Fourth President of the Republic of Croatia:** *"Sanctions do not work like bombs but more like acid. It is not an explosion but corrosion. They work long term in cooperation, in combination with other measures."*



**Vladimir Milov, Former Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation:** *"Patience is needed, and sanctions are progressing over time. Russia is entering a budget crisis that Putin did avoid last year."*



**Rosa Balfour, Director of Carnegie Europe:** *"It is important for the West to engage with the Russian opposition because they are the building block of the Russian future."*



**Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia:** *"This is the most challenging time after the Second World War... We are doing everything according to Georgia's National Interest."*



**Nicolas Tenzer, Chairman of the Center for Study and Research on Political Decision:** *"There must be a full strategy of Russian defeat. There is no such strategy. In Paris or Washington, there are still black holes that are misleading."*



**Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Founder of Open Russia:** *"The regime will change when Putin dies, and it is obvious, for many, that until he dies, the regime wouldn't change... What is really important is that the Russian opposition that met together in Berlin managed to agree to some points for the future, and that includes the fact that Ukraine should rebuild its independence and that war criminals should be brought to justice, that Ukraine should receive compensation as a consequence for war-caused destructions."*



**Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Leader of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus:** *"We actively engage through media to change people's mindset about Russia and the situation in Ukraine."*





# **Mitigating the Global Consequences of the Conflict in a Global Dialogue**

# Climate and Green Energy

- ▶ The Green Transition was going to happen – Russia’s blackmailing of energy sources has only sped it up.
- ▶ Demand for new climate-friendly products like electric cars and solar panels is rising, but enormous differences in green innovation among the EU member states remain.
- ▶ The return to the energy business with Russia is undesirable – Europe needs to continue diversifying and seeking alternative energy sources.



**Peter Dovhun, Minister of Economy of the Slovak Republic:** *“It’s not only about the finances available. It’s also about the structure available for the new electricity investments.”*



**Ditte Juul Jørgensen, Director-General for Energy, European Commission:** *“We have managed to address the challenge together and managed to reduce the dependency on Russian gas.”*



**Davor Filipovic, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia:** *“When it comes to European independence of energy supplies, we need to build infrastructure. By building the infrastructure, we are building security for the country and the European Union.”*



**Ingrid Brocková, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic:** *“For many years, we haven’t accelerated the green transition as it has been wished, but this situation is also a good opportunity to move quicker, especially in Slovakia.”*



# Economic challenges

- ▶ Energy price inflation must be tackled long-term to prevent budgetary constraints and social tension.
- ▶ Institutional frameworks may need to be adapted to the current challenges to better address protectionism, as trade liberalization allows for long-term prosperity in the regions.
- ▶ We cannot create separate policies and apply them to every state – there must be interlinked policies, such as Climate Change and Food policies.
- ▶ There needs to be more discussion with developing nations to avoid resource dependencies and diversify trade opportunities.
- ▶ Financial instruments such as the Ventura Capital and Resilience Fund allowed for overcoming crises.



**Ludovít Ódor, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic:** *“Either conditionally freeze the prices of energy or put the burden on households because otherwise, we won’t be able to do that transition.”*



**Peter Svec, Deputy Minister of Economy of the Slovak Republic:** *“The World Trade Organization is not working as we expected, and states are not showing signals of liberalization, which makes trade difficult.”*



**Šime Erlić, Minister of Regional Development and European Funds of the Republic of Croatia:** *“Cohesion policy gave us good support, and we believe it is good for young countries with fragile economies. Financial instruments play a key role in the development stage. It allowed mature institutions to mature even more. Therefore, the use of financial instruments is healthier.”*



**James Waterworth, Director of EU Public Policy, Amazon:** *“We are very keen to see classic perennial measures, such as inside the European Union, the single market working in a non-fragmented way.”*

# Global security

- ▶ The cooperation in defence between the EU and NATO has been enhanced and will go further with the NATO accession of Finland and Sweden.
- ▶ Russia has constantly proved that they don't respect the status quo with the invasion of Crimea and the war against Georgia. It's the EU's role to prove to the country that they are not up for it.
- ▶ China is using its military to constantly intimidate Taiwan. Yet, they understand that an invasion will not easily go without notice, especially because of the opposition of the neighbouring countries.
- ▶ Deterrence may be effective in avoiding invasion but not intimidation, and it depends on the defenders' determination.



**Zygis Pavilionis, Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee, Lithuanian Parliament:** *"We have to have a global plan in how to rescue democracy... Kill the beast before it sends its tanks like Russia."*



**Ivo Daalder, President of Chicago Council on Global Affairs:** *"Taiwan is living in 2013-2014 Ukraine... What happens in Taipei gets decided in Beijing. Intimidation politically, economically and militarily to give them one choice: do what we say."*



**Charles Powell, Director, Elcano Royal Institute:** *"We need two transatlantic burden-sharing conversations right now: one is about Ukraine, the other about the geopolitical connection between Europe and the Indo-Pacific."*



# Defence

- ▶ NATO's threat-based plan starts with a regional plan and should be built upon two key elements: quality equipment and strategy.
- ▶ Investment in the defence sector is needed - NATO's 2 per cent rule is the bare minimum, and nations will need to go beyond that
- ▶ Longer-term goals are needed in order to establish effective defence planning.
- ▶ Generational changes are underway to drive the new force model with heavier equipment and more readiness as the key aspects.
- ▶ AI is being incorporated into NATO capabilities, especially in warfare; innovative technology also includes drones for precise strategic targeting.
- ▶ To make the procurement process faster, multi-year contracts and advancement payments help.
- ▶ Joint procurement needs operational effectiveness, affordability and a more cohesive and coherent regulatory framework.
- ▶ Rather than building new systems, the priority is ammunition and software.



**Martin Sklenár, Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic:** *"We have the forces, we have the mobility, and we can show the world what we are capable of, but we need to have a plan... It's not just the equipment, and how it should be developed, it's an industry to be able to deliver the necessary capabilities and what is necessary to change the situation."*



**Thomas Goffus, Assistant Secretary-General for Operations, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation:** *"Nations will quickly realize that the 2% is not enough, and the war in Ukraine is already showing it... As always, integration is an issue, and the new NATO plan is to integrate national and NATO plans along."*



**Siemtje Möller, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Defence of Germany:** *"I don't think we are financing a war; we are financing self-defence and freedom. We are financing self-defence through material power."*



**Gen (Ret.) Denis Mercier, Deputy General Manager, Fives Group:** *"We are able to invest in new ways to think of our supply chains."*



**John S. Clark, Jr., Vice President, Capture Excellence and International Business Development, Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control:** *"We have 70,000 suppliers around the world, and we need advance payments to help speed the procurement process. The procurement system is not a light switch to restart."*



**Jiří Šedivý, Chief Executive, European Defence Agency:** *"We should be prepared for situations when Europe will be challenged in our neighbourhood where we should have the capacity to react independently. We are not ready to give any of our power because we have none."*



**Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, European Parliament:** *"We are all facing the same challenges when it comes to manufacturing ammunition... We do not have a NATO army; we have national armies under the EU and NATO umbrella."*



**Marcel Grisnigt, Chief Corporate Development and Integration Officer, KNDS:** *"It's time to align the arms industries of Ukraine and the European Union; exploit existing initiatives, not add more."*

## AI

- ▶ AI can be an opportunity for democracies in Europe and beyond to be more transparent, but it all depends on how it is used.
- ▶ AI is already being used in daily life; politicians may use machine learning algorithms to spread messages to people that may be untrue.
- ▶ Stakeholders should consider five principles when considering AI regulation: regulate certain areas carefully, share content for education, and public and private partnerships.
- ▶ Better cooperation between governments and Big Tech is needed to face the current technology challenges and digital threats at different levels.



**Robert Ivanschitz, Associate General Counsel, Corporate External Legal Affairs, Central Europe, Middle East & Africa at Microsoft:** *"If we really create coalitions between companies, specialized NGOs and elected representatives, then we can act faster against cyberattacks."*





**Michael Chertoff, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman of The Chertoff Group:** *“AI can be an offensive and defensive tool... Something that scares me is that somebody will let AI take life-death decisions.”*



**Richard Marko, Chief Executive Officer at ESET:** *“We need to see the fundamental problems and then the impact of using AI. We need to get rid of myths and get back to their roots, and be researched at universities properly. That would help democracy, and the inverse would hurt it.”*

## Cyberspace, social media and data protection

- ▶ New rules and norms are needed to be elaborated jointly by states in order to tackle all the dangers exposed by cyber security.
- ▶ Data is held by private companies and not by the military – in such conditions, cooperation and willingness are needed in the long term if the commercial profit is minimized.
- ▶ The collection of (private) data is constant while safeguards are insufficient: one of the Metaverse’s major threats is people impersonating or taking false identities.
- ▶ Technology may help underrepresented communities, but it may also provide the opportunity for harassment.
- ▶ Governments are now using the data collected by private companies to filter and select security threats.
- ▶ There needs to be regulation and a refocus on AI; instead of reacting, we must detect and then act.



**Věra Jourová, Vice President of the European Commission:** *“We want the platforms to focus on disinformation intentionally produced in order to harm society. We want to see measures against that...We are interested in having the facts right – that’s why we speak of fact-checking, never of correct opinions. Limit the measures only to the facts.”*



**Annette Kroeber-Riel, Vice President of Google Germany:** *“The Digital Services Act is a step forward... but we need to get the details right. We recognize the risks posed by misinformation and take our responsibility seriously to provide access to content that is high quality, trustworthy, and credible.”*



**Andrzej Horoch, Founder, Connected Realities:** *"The Metaverse exists in evolution... If we are touchy with technology right now, it's already too late. The problem is right here, right now."*



**Melissa Hathaway, President, Hathaway Global Strategies:** *"There are no consequences right now for cyberspace... We will have to adapt to the speed and scale of AI as a possible weapon."*



**Mehwish Ansari, Head of Digital, Article 19:** *"We are talking about this system as being a proxy for private and public places..” Consent is a cornerstone of the Metaverse. But can you consent when you don't know how that data is going to generate content about you?"*



**Andrew Lee, Vice President of Government Affairs and Global CTI Strategist, ESET:** *"The Data is held by private companies in the military sector. We are able to provide real-time data for the companies who are looking for actors."*



**Sorin Ducaru, Director, European Union Satellite Centre:** *"We need to develop new norms about responsible behaviours, rules, and predictability in communities or rule-abiding nations. This is the effort governments have to do in conjunction with academia and the private sector."*



**Clint Watts, General Manager at Digital Threat Analysis Center, Microsoft:** *"It's not enough to react and patch; we need to detect and patch... Maybe the government just needs to understand data rather than more data."*



# Side Events

On the sidelines of the GLOBSEC 2023 Bratislava Forum, closed-door discussions and roundtables brought together policymakers, institutional representatives and the private sector to shed light on some of the most pressing issues of the present world and discuss solutions and best practices to tackle the challenges in the areas of defence, energy, sustainability, resilience, gender equality and healthcare.

# Future of Security

## GLOBSEC 2023 Annual Defence Roundtable

- ▶ The defence industry should be included earlier in defence planning in collaboration with governments to allow the industry to continue advancing across sectors.
- ▶ Ukraine is not only an example of conventional warfare but also digital. It has continuously demonstrated its ability to adapt and utilise constantly evolving technology in war while also exhibiting the need for innovation.
- ▶ Producing a long-term view for the defence industry rather than focusing on short-term procurement is crucial. A long-term view allows for more innovation but also comes with a necessary focus on sustainability.
- ▶ There have been substantial increases in the demand for key industrial aspects, such as ammunition and shortening delivery times. However, this also comes with tensions over supplies and demonstrates a need to reduce dependencies.
- ▶ Reinforcing interoperability and standardisation across states is crucial as it allows for better response abilities and ensures a common doctrine is followed.
- ▶ Speakers: **Marian Majer**, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic; **Barre R Seguin, Maj Gen (ret)**, Director, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies; **Samira Braund**, CEO, UKDSC; **Jonathan Hoyle**, Chief Executive Europe, Lockheed Martin; **Kostiantyn Vashchenko**, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence of Ukraine; **Nicolas Chamussy**, CEO, Nexter; **Žilvinas Tomkus**, Vice Minister, Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania; **Krasimira Stoyanova**, Vice President SAAB.
- ▶ GLOBSEC FSDC members: **Gen (Ret.) Denis Mercier**, **Gen (Ret.) Pavel Macko**, **Gen (Ret.) Philip Breedlove**, **Gen (Ret.) Sir Richard Shirreff**, **Gen (Ret.) Mirko Šundov**, **Marcel Grisnigt**, Senior Vice President, KNDS, **Thomas Kauffmann**, Vice President, GDELS.



## Transatlantic Cybersecurity: Identifying the Path to Enhanced Cyber Resilience

- ▶ With Russia continuing its destructive cyber campaign against Ukraine, Transatlantic partners need to prioritise working on sharing best practices and cyber threat intelligence, joint planning with the private sector, and cyber defence, including deterrence strategies.
- ▶ While Russia presents a persistent threat to the stability of cyberspace, Transatlantic partners cannot afford to ignore malicious activities being carried out by Chinese state-sponsored cybercrime and hacker groups, including advanced espionage campaigns.
- ▶ Given the sizeable contributions by private tech companies to Ukraine's cyber defence efforts, questions around the role of the private sector in cyber conflict - whether they will be classified as combatants, how will they be protected if attacked by hostile nation-states - necessitate a much deeper understanding.
- ▶ There needs to be more clarity concerning the threshold for cyber-attacks by hostile actors that would invoke a response by nation-states, especially in the context of NATO. Despite the debilitating cyber-attacks on Albania and Montenegro in the second half of 2022, Article 5 was not invoked.





## Future of Digital Deterrence: What are the Lessons Learned from Ukraine for European Defence?

- ▶ AI is the most critical technological development of the 21st century, but should it be regulated? And if so, what regulations can be put in place?
- ▶ There is an increasing and enormous reliance on commercial technology. This is partly because innovation often comes from the private sector.
- ▶ The needs of software and hardware must be balanced. Militaries should constantly update the software that goes into their military hardware as it is cheaper and faster than replacing entire hardware pieces. This is being done in Ukraine and has given them a competitive edge.
- ▶ Industries must be able to work with other industries. There is a need for defence and technology collaboration and cooperation.



## Bolstering Predictable AI Regulatory Framework - How Could We All Be Winners?

- ▶ Just as society adapted to the invention of telephones, AI represents another transformative change in the market. While new challenges will emerge, it is crucial to learn how to harness the potential of AI effectively.
- ▶ Differentiated AI legislation or frameworks based on different risk categories must be developed. However, this is a challenge considering there is currently no internationally defined concept of AI in policy.
- ▶ There is a knowledge gap regarding AI, which is compounded by a lack of transparency from AI companies regarding the sources and nature of the data sets they use. Therefore, data privacy regulation should be a priority.
- ▶ A stronger sense of responsibility must be fostered to ensure greater accountability, akin to the measures employed against disinformation on social media platforms. Service providers should be held accountable for the information generated by their AI tools.
- ▶ Due to widespread concern about the potential impact of AI on employment, protective measures should be put in place to safeguard workers, as a failure to do so could erode trust in the government among the populace.





# Democracy and Resilience

## Strengthening Societal Resilience: Best Practices in Countering Disinformation and Malign Influence

- ▶ There is recognition of the need to support Ukraine and view Russia as a threat. Maintaining a transatlantic vision and unity is important, as Europe has shown a tendency to become fatigued. China should also remain a focus.
- ▶ Public opinion reflects dominant narratives influenced by political order. Pro-Russian actors have a significant presence on social media, and right-wing parties have tended to win elections since the start of the war in Ukraine.
- ▶ Efforts to regulate and introduce legislation have been blocked due to political disunity. Collaboration with tech companies is crucial, and the Digital Services Act is awaited. Society tends to normalise and get used to disinformation.
- ▶ While countries face specific challenges, international solidarity and cross-country networks are important. Understanding Russian propaganda, humanising the conflict, and centring democratic resilience are emphasised.



## Convergence of Authoritarian Influencing Methods

- ▶ The “no-limit” partnership declared between China and Russia does have its limits, as China has not given up on engaging with the EU.
- ▶ China and Russia are both interested in disrupting the rules-based international order that they claim to be US-dominated, which outlines their common interests.
- ▶ China has repeated several disinformation narratives concerning the war in Ukraine, such as allegations about US chemical factories on Ukrainian territory. Yet, China is playing to both sides of the conflict in Ukraine to ensure it does not end up on the losing side.
- ▶ With Russia’s disinformation infrastructure being cut back in the EU, Chinese media have taken its place in some countries.



# Economic Growth and Sustainability

## Europe's Economic Lessons From Russia's War in Ukraine

- ▶ Europe faces multifaceted challenges as a direct consequence of Russia's war on Ukraine. To navigate these challenges, Europe needs to address the issue of bifurcation and seek a competitive third way, leveraging economic collaboration with the US while becoming a security provider.
- ▶ Managing domestic difficulties, consistent business regulations, and defining security measures for raw materials are key to European resilience. Sustainability and adaptation efforts, investment in Ukraine, and addressing political challenges are crucial for long-term stability.
- ▶ Europe's strengths and areas of autonomy require attention, with the need to bolster energy, security, and economic capabilities while maintaining European values.



## Transform Europe Initiative workshop on European energy security and climate challenge (organised in cooperation with Atlantic Council)

- ▶ EU member states must collaborate and establish a European platform to aggregate power demand through joint purchasing.
- ▶ The EU should establish a competitive and sustainable supply chain to support its energy transition.
- ▶ The role of nuclear power in achieving carbon neutrality is crucial, alongside the commitment to affordability and social considerations in the pursuit of green energy.
- ▶ Diversifying partnerships while avoiding competition with EU partners and third countries, aligning global efforts, and considering the spillover effects of investments in developing countries are instrumental in achieving results.



## World Economy in Crisis: Exploring the EU's Role Amidst the War in Ukraine and Economic Challenges Ahead

- ▶ Despite geopolitical turmoil, it is crucial to achieve consensus among politicians to further transatlantic co-operation and diversification of global markets.
- ▶ The EU's management of energy crises and the long-term process of decoupling from Russia must be prioritised.
- ▶ The importance of the green transition and the need to balance administrative burdens with positive effects were acknowledged, although EURO 7 was criticised as a cumbersome rule.



## The “Danube Tech Valley Growth Fund” Meets the Challenge of Scaling in the Danube Region

- ▶ The discussion highlighted the funding gap in the Danube region and stressed the need for more important investment from various stakeholders to foster a cohesive and innovative ecosystem.
- ▶ Public investments have a critical role in activating funds and supporting innovation in the region.
- ▶ Building a robust ecosystem through public-private collaboration is essential for driving economic growth in the Danube region.





# Centre for Global Europe

## CEE Her Breakfast: Women as Champions through Education, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

- ▶ There is still a considerable gap between the percentage of women working in lower positions/middle management and those in the leadership of ICT companies. Similarly, women are a stark minority in venture capital entities.
- ▶ Simple checks of boxes, such as increase of number of women in the room, cannot measure the inclusion of women. Their inclusion must be meaningful, with their voices being part of the debate and decision-making.
- ▶ Women as role models are one of the most efficient means to support other women's empowerment. A woman can be a role model from any position, not only once she reaches management.
- ▶ Due to cultural and systematic challenges, risks and learning from failure tend to be less comfortable for women. Conscious personal strive towards risk-taking can make a difference in women's success, as well as continuous changes of policies and removal of cultural stereotypes.
- ▶ Having more jobs in the military opened to women is not a zero-sum game, and men, who still hold most top positions, must grasp this idea to ensure modern and representative militaries.



## Breaking Taboos: A New Dawn for the European Defence and Security Policy?

- ▶ The Strategic Compass is a good start for the EU to show how the Union sees the world, what the EU wants to do next in defence and security, and it carries political ownership from member states.
- ▶ The EU needs to focus on the implementation of the Compass, with emphasis on the Rapid deployment force and other practical operationalisation.
- ▶ More and better spending is essential for the EU's defence and security, paying particular attention to the defence industry.
- ▶ What the EU has done to support Ukraine through its defence and security mechanisms creates expectations in other regions. Thus, it is evermore essential to implement the Strategic Compass.



## The European Political Community as an Inclusive Forum for Dialogue: Is this Enough?

- ▶ The EPC should not be EU-centric and should not be framed through EU-centric thinking regarding, for example, concrete deliverables and institutionalisation.
- ▶ The EPC's potential lies in being a non-formal coordination arrangement where multiple bi-lateral, mini-lateral and multi-lateral formats can be combined for overarching discussions.
- ▶ The EPC should be about a 'community of destiny' with open space to discuss broader challenges, topics, and opportunities.
- ▶ More clarity is needed to understand the ultimate added value of the EPC to be a successful and more permanent format. If the EPC is not an alternative holding place for EU-accession-ambitious countries and it is not to stall the enlargement process, then it needs to be better communicated to various audiences.



## STRATEGIC PARTNERS



## MAIN INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



## GENERAL PARTNERS



## EXCLUSIVE AUTOMOTIVE PARTNER



## MAIN PARTNERS



## PARTNERS



## CONTENT PARTNERS



## MEDIA PARTNERS



## VENUE PROVIDED BY



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