Summary

The GLOBSEC Vulnerability Index measures vulnerability towards foreign influence in eight countries: Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia on a 0-100 scale, where 0 is the most resilient and 100 the most vulnerable.

It assesses five key dimensions: public attitudes, political landscape, public administration, information landscape, and civic and academic space, with a particular focus directed towards the Kremlin’s and Beijing’s activities.

The Index is the result of a two-year project supported by the U.S. Department of State’s Global Engagement Center and led by GLOBSEC in cooperation with partnering organizations in each covered country.

The selection of countries was based on the donor’s requirements at the beginning of the project period. Covering parts of both Central Europe and the Western Balkans simultaneously allowed for a comparative perspective between countries that share a totalitarian past, aspired to become developed democracies, and whose paths diverged after 1989. This range allows the reader to compare countries that are both members and non-members of the EU, Schengen zone, NATO, etc., and to assess how societal, economic and historical developments have shaped such countries’ present vulnerabilities towards foreign influence. Nonetheless, the report does not provide an exhaustive list nor a complete picture of the phenomena and challenges affecting the countries.

The quantitative representation of vulnerabilities provides an overarching perspective on the situation in a respective country and allows for easy region-wide comparison. Yet such approach should be understood only within the context of the five studied dimensions.

The Index has been consulted with a Steering Committee that provided advice on methodological approach of conducting research on foreign malign influence in initial project stages. Measurement methods have been created in cooperation with index development experts.

Consultants on measurement methods:

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Theoretical background

The theoretical approach underpinning the Vulnerability Index works with three overarching theories: international relations theories of classical realism and liberalism, and the concept of sharp power\(^5\) to explain the external conditions in which the studied eight Central European and Western Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia) exist, and how these conditions and influences co-shape these countries’ internal domains.

When analyzing countries’ vulnerability to foreign malign influence, it is first necessary to explain how this influence occurs and why. Countries of Central Europe and the Western Balkans are regionally defined by their position between the Eastern aspiring hegemonic powers: Russia and China on one hand, and a peripheral or adjacent position to Western structures (such as NATO and the EU), on the other hand.

Looking at this context through the lens of classical realism theory helps to understand how external conditions and actors interact with states’ domestic situations, as this theory does not draw a strict line between international and domestic politics.\(^6\) This Index works with the notion that internal state factors - in this case divided into five dimensions (public attitudes, political landscape, public administration, information landscape, and civic and academic space) - and their degree of resilience, translate into higher susceptibility towards aspiring hegemonic influence from Kremlin and Beijing.

This understanding echoes Hans Morgenthau’s interpretation of “strong” (in this Index “resilient”) societies, where norms and institutions curb otherwise insatiable appetite for power.\(^7\) In the absence of such checks and balances, states are internally weak and vulnerable to foreign malign influence. It is, therefore, the responsibility of domestic actors to ensure that social polarization, corruption in politics and public administrations, assault on truth and facts, and the co-optation of civil society and academia do not expose their countries and communities to the harmful effects of hegemonic sharp power. From this perspective, the analyzed states are not merely passive pawns at the mercy of great powers in the large game of international politics, but rather actively shape and decide their own destinies.

Liberalism theory highlights how democratizing processes, economic interdependence and membership in transnational institutions promotes cooperation and reduces the risk of violent conflict.\(^8\) As democratic governance fosters accountability, elected leaders can at least be theoretically held responsible for adverse political outcomes, including a country’s participation in a conflict. Autocratic leadership in countries such as Russia and China is not held to such a high standard, and in the absence of this deterrent is more conflict and risk-prone, as well as power-hungry.

Countries covered in the Vulnerability Index are thus better protected from the Kremlin’s and Beijing’s ambitions by participating in regional economic and military structures, the European Union and NATO, which guarantee a certain level of security and resilience. Yet for this resilience to be truly efficient, the first condition - strong internal democratic governance - has to be fulfilled. Failing that, suboptimal internal conditions represent blind spots which can be exploited by foreign malign influence, not only to exercise influence in a given country, but also to undermine the strength of international institutions.

This understanding of internal and external resilience is reflected in the Vulnerability Index’s structure: each of the five dimensions covered as part of a country’s internal assessment contains factors that evaluate such country’s performance vis-à-vis the most important regional security and prosperity guarantees - the EU and NATO.

Memberships in international alliances act as a shield against foreign malign influence

Yet given the economic, geographical and military power imbalance between the states included in the Vulnerability Index on the one hand, and Russia and China on the other, it is clear that regardless of the degree of resilience of given countries’ domestic situations, this alone cannot insulate them from external security threats. Both classical realism and liberalism theories underscore the importance of international networks and alliances to balance power disparities, foster cooperation and promote prosperity.

Sharp power

The appetite for power as demonstrated by Russia and China need not necessarily be manifested through hard power (although often that is the case)*. Russia as an aspiring regional hegemon and China as an aspiring global hegemon pursue their interests through plethora of means and strategies, which are best described through the concept of sharp power.

This term is useful when striving to understand foreign malign influence, which does not easily fit into the category of either Joseph Nye’s soft power (since it refers to the ability of states to lead by attraction and persuasion)\(^9\) or strictly to the concept of hard power (the use of coercive military and economic means to achieve foreign policy objectives).

The Kremlin’s and Beijing’s activities in Central Europe and Western Balkans are instead best described as efforts to undermine the integrity of institutions in order to secure their influence by piercing “the political and information environment in targeted countries” through distraction and manipulation. While such hybrid tactics may deceptively seem less dangerous than direct military threats, such tactics can in fact lead to internal instability, erosion of democratic governance, extreme polarization, foreign policy changes, as well as internal and external conflicts.
**Vulnerability:**
In the context of a state, this represents a susceptibility to harm from malign state or non-state actors, which can be both domestic and foreign, based on the presence of single or multiple deficiencies that can be exploited.

**Resilience:**
In the context of a state, this represents the ability to manage and withstand malign state or nonstate interference efforts, or the ability to recover from such efforts relatively quickly. State resilience is not a mere adaptive capacity, but rather includes pro-active actions/policies aimed at reducing vulnerability and managing risks beyond adapting to change.

**Hegemony:**
The ability of a state with overwhelming capability to shape the international system through both coercive and non-coercive means.

**Sharp power/foreign malign influence:**
An authoritarian foreign policy approach which uses distraction and manipulation as tactics to limit free expression and distort the democratic political environment. In this research project, sharp power is understood as a synonym to foreign malign influence.

**Hard power:**
The use of coercive military and economic means to achieve foreign policy objectives.

**Soft power:**
The use of attraction and persuasion as “soft” measures to achieve foreign policy objectives.

**Kremlin/Russian influence:**
Activities conducted by the Russian government, state institutions or agencies to influence the internal affairs of a given country, including its population.

**Beijing/Chinese influence:**
Activities conducted by the Chinese government, state institutions or agencies to influence the internal affairs of a given country, including its population.

**Serving pro-Kremlin/pro-Beijing interests:**
Activities or policies which are not necessarily carried out by Kremlin or Beijing actors, but the impact of which strongly aligns or promotes Kremlin’s/Beijing’s objectives.

**Disinformation:**
Verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public.

**Misinformation:**
Information whose inaccuracy is unintentional can spread when journalists (or other actors) misinterpret or fail to independently verify a source’s claims.

**Influence operations/Information operations:**
Organized attempts to achieve a specific effect among a target audience. In such instances, a variety of actors - such as advertisers, activists, and opportunists - employ a diverse set of tactics, techniques, and procedures to affect the decision-making, beliefs, and opinions of a target audience.

**Propaganda:**
Systematic information campaigns, usually conducted through mass media, that are deliberately manipulative or deceptive.

**Problematic outlets:**
Web and social media pages which regularly produce manipulative, deceitful or propagandistic content. Outlets which often imitate legitimate news outlets and journalism visually, whilst their content does not meet the standards of quality journalism such as accuracy, using verified sources or not distorting facts and context.

**Mainstream media:**
Conventional newspapers, television and other news sources, including online outlets, which are widely consumed and operate according to widely accepted standards of journalism.

**State and government-controlled media:**
Owned by the state or the government of the day (and financed from the state budget) and directly controlled thereby. It may perform a public service function or be a propaganda instrument of the state or government. For the purpose of this research, we mean media outlets that actively participate in state/government propaganda or spread various pro-government narratives. These are not to be confused with public broadcasters which can be funded or co-funded by state institutions, but have an independent editorial board.

**Hybrid threats:**
Action conducted by state or non-state actors whose goal is to undermine or harm a target by influencing its decision-making at the local, regional, state or institutional level. Such actions are coordinated, synchronized and deliberately target democratic states’ and institutions’ vulnerabilities. Activities can take place, for example, in the political, economic, military, civil or information domains. They are conducted using a wide range of means, and designed to remain below the threshold of detection and attribution.

**GONGO:**
A government-funded and government-controlled non-governmental organization. Such governmental organizations are often used by autocratic regimes to advance their interests, and to lobby at the international level.
Index has five dimensions, with each comprising several indicators and each indicator including specific variables. The Index contains:

- 5 dimensions
- 31 indicators
- 77 variables

All indicators and dimensions were equally weighted.

The Vulnerability Index is based on seven overarching data sources:

1. **Opinion polls**
   - Representative opinion polls conducted in October 2020 on a sample of 1,000 respondents per country (8,000 respondents altogether). See the Public Attitudes dimension below for more information.

2. **Expert surveys**
   - Online survey distributed to experts selected in a non-biased, transparent process:
     - Each partner organization created a list of foreign malign influence experts in the following focus areas: political landscape, state resilience, information environment, and civic and academic space. The list had to include at least 30 experts per area, and one person could have expertise in more than one area.
     - Experts had to have different backgrounds, with at least 10% representation of the following sectors: civic space, media, academia, private sector, and public sector. To prevent strong political bias, no experts from political parties or those actively involved in politics could be surveyed.
     - The expert surveys were composed by GLOBSEC in consultation with partners, translated into local languages, and distributed to experts in each country. The number of responses for questions varies, as the expertise of respondents varied. The number of experts responding in each country:
       - Bulgaria: 33
       - Czechia: 86
       - Hungary: 54
       - Montenegro: 31
       - North Macedonia: 50
       - Romania: 25
       - Serbia: 36
       - Slovakia: 40
     - Survey respondents in different countries, including experts, also often vary systematically in their responses to survey questions in which they rate cases using ordinal scales. A simple adjustment for such bias was used for this Index. Specifically, expert survey data was supplemented with data from a smaller set of experts (from partner organizations) who were most qualified to answer questions from all countries. These “anchoring” experts answered survey questions for all countries, providing cross-regionally comparable estimates for each country. Then our methodology consultants leveraged these data by using a bootstrapping procedure, thereby adjusting for country-level differences in how experts apply the question scales. For each country-question they repeatedly (500 draws) sampled, with replacement, from both country expert and anchor expert responses, taking the median of each group of resampled ratings. For each draw they then calculated the difference between the resampled country expert median and anchor expert median. This difference was then used to adjust the country expert median for each of the 500 draws, and to calculate the average adjusted country expert median score, and 95% confidence intervals, across all draws. This procedure assumes that the anchoring experts are unbiased, on average, but allows country experts to exhibit identical (to other experts from their country) systematic biases in how “difficult” they are in assigning ratings to countries.

3. **Desk research conducted by partnering organizations to analyze:**
   - key security strategies and documents which are or should focus on foreign influence in the past six years (see the Public Administration dimension below for more information)
   - legislative and structural resilience addressing electoral interference (see the Public Administration dimension for more information)
   - actions and rhetoric of key political actors in each country within the past six years (see the Political Landscape dimension for more information)

4. **V-Dem Index:**
   - Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a research project conceptualizing and measuring democracy, based at the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. It aims to provide a multidimensional and disaggregated dataset that reflects the complexity of the concept of democracy as a system of rule that goes beyond the simple presence of elections. The V-Dem project distinguishes between five high-level principles of democracy: electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian, and collects data to measure these principles. It is one of the largest social science data collection projects on democracy. For more information visit the project’s website. Information on all indices and V-Dem questions is also available in the V-Dem Codebook. While the V-Dem codebook uses the term “indicator” for specific questions, for the purpose of this research the V-Dem indicators are addressed as variables/questions. Selected variables and specific indices were tailor-made for Vulnerability Index purposes by consultants - experts working on the V-Dem Index.

5. **Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index**

6. **World Press Freedom Index developed by Reporters Without Borders**

7. **Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index developed by FHI 360**
### D1: Public attitudes

Source: GLOBSEC Trends 2020 opinion polling

- **i1**: Orientation towards the EU
  - 1.1: Willingness to stay/leave (join) the EU
  - 1.2: EU perceived as dictatorial

- **i2**: Orientation towards NATO
  - 1.3: Willingness to stay/leave (join) NATO
  - 1.4: NATO perceived as aggressive
  - 1.5: NATO perceived as a security guarantee

- **i3**: Perception of democracy
  - 1.6: Democracy does not exist
  - 1.7: Liberal democracy perceived as a threat
  - 1.8: The West perceived as corrupt
  - 1.9: Strong authoritarian leader preference
  - 1.10: Democracy perceived as good for

- **i4**: Perception of Russia
  - 1.11: Western democracies perceived better
  - 1.12: NATO bases mean provocation
  - 1.13: Russian military perceived superior
  - 1.14: Russia perceived provocative
  - 1.15: Russia as aggressive
  - 1.16: Russia as a threat

- **i5**: Perception of China as a threat
  - 1.17: China as a threat
  - 1.18: COVID is fake
  - 1.19: USA deliberately created COVID-19
  - 1.20: COVID is a nano-chip tool to control people

- **i6**: Trust in conspiracy theories and disinformation
  - 1.21: Distrust in the media
  - 1.22: Distrust in government
  - 1.23: Distrust in president
  - 1.24: Distrust in court & judiciary

- **i7**: Distrust
  - 1.25: Distrust in media

### D2: Political Landscape

Source: GLOBSEC-developed assessment of political parties, expert surveys

- **i8**: Political attitudes towards the EU
  - 2.1: EU orientation assessment of political actors

- **i9**: Political attitudes towards NATO
  - 2.2: NATO orientation assessment of political actors

- **i10**: Political attitudes towards Russia
  - 2.3: Russia orientation assessment of political actors
  - 2.4: Influence of pro-Kremlin actors

- **i11**: Political attitudes towards China
  - 2.5: China orientation assessment of political actors
  - 2.6: Influence of pro-Beijing actors

- **i12**: NATO bases mean provocation
- **i13**: Russian military perceived superior
- **i14**: Russia perceived provocative
- **i15**: Russia as aggressive
- **i16**: Russia as a threat

- **i17**: China as a threat
- **i18**: COVID is fake
- **i19**: USA deliberately created COVID-19
- **i20**: COVID is a nano-chip tool to control people

- **i21**: Distrust in the media
- **i22**: Distrust in government
- **i23**: Distrust in president
- **i24**: Distrust in court & judiciary
## D3: Public administration

Source: Expert surveys, desk research and V-Dem index, Corruption Perception Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i12: Checks and balances</th>
<th>i13: Election integrity</th>
<th>i14: Legislative and structural resilience</th>
<th>i15: Civil liberties and non-discrimination</th>
<th>i16: Foreign malign influence</th>
<th>i17 Corruption perception</th>
<th>i18 Basic freedoms</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.1: Horizontal accountability index (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.5: Clean elections index (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.9: Assessment of key security documents, (desk research)</td>
<td>3.12: Deliberative Democracy (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.18: Awareness &amp; responses to Russian influence (expert surveys)</td>
<td>3.20: Corruption Perception Index</td>
<td>3.21: Physical violence index (V-Dem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2: Executive (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.6: Fair competition (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.10: Whole-of-society approach (expert surveys)</td>
<td>3.13: Equal distribution of resources index (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.19: Awareness &amp; responses to Chinese influence (expert surveys)</td>
<td>3.21:</td>
<td>3.21:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3: Judiciary (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.7: Fair structures and processes (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.11: Foreign policy alliance with EU (WB only), expert surveys</td>
<td>3.14: Exclusion by socio-economic group index (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.15: Exclusion by social group index (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.20:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4: Legislature (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.8: Electoral interference (desk research)</td>
<td>3.16: Inclusiveness (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.17: Exclusion by political group index (V-Dem)</td>
<td>3.16:</td>
<td>3.20:</td>
<td>3.21:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## D4: Information Landscape

Source: World Press Freedom Index, Digital Society Survey (V-Dem), expert surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i19: Media freedom</th>
<th>i20: Presence of information manipulation &amp; disinformation</th>
<th>i21: Government control over digital space (V-Dem)</th>
<th>i22: Capacity to protect digital space (V-Dem)</th>
<th>i23: Access to diversity (V-Dem)</th>
<th>i24: Digital rule of law index (V-Dem)</th>
<th>i25: Russian media influence (Expert surveys)</th>
<th>i26: Chinese media influence (Expert surveys)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1: World Press Freedom Index</td>
<td>4.2: Government dissemination of manipulative information (V-Dem)</td>
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<td>4.9: Government capacity to regulate online content (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.11: Defamation protection (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.15: Russian narratives in the media</td>
<td>4.17: Chinese narratives in the media</td>
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<tr>
<td>i20: Presence of information manipulation &amp; disinformation</td>
<td>4.3: Party dissemination of manipulative information (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.10: Online media fractionalization (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.12: Government control over digital space (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.13: System abuse (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.14: Privacy protection (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.16: Russian control of the media</td>
<td>4.18: Chinese control of the media</td>
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<td>i21: Government control over digital space (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.4: Foreign governments dissemination of manipulative information (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.15: Russian narratives in the media</td>
<td>4.17: Chinese narratives in the media</td>
<td>4.16: Russian control of the media</td>
<td>4.14: Privacy protection (V-Dem)</td>
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<td>4.5: Foreign governments ads (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.12: Government capacity to regulate online content (V-Dem)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i23: Access to diversity (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.6: Information manipulation in media (expert surveys)</td>
<td>4.9: Government capacity to regulate online content (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.13: System abuse (V-Dem)</td>
<td>4.16: Russian control of the media</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**D5: Civic & academic space**

Source: Civil Society Sustainability Index, V-Dem, expert surveys, desk research

- **5.1: Civil society sustainability index**
- **5.2: Political polarization**
- **5.3: Non-state political violence**
- **5.4: Freedom of peaceful assembly**
- **5.5: Mobilization for authoritarian leaders**
- **5.6: Academic Freedom Index (V-Dem)**
- **5.7: Russian influence on civil society**
- **5.8: Chinese influence on civil society**

**Public attitudes dimension**

First dimension in the Vulnerability Index addresses the proneness of the public to become a target of Russian and/or Chinese sharp power. Within the theoretical framework underpinning this research, vulnerable society is represented by:

- distrust and/or scepticism towards key Western structures and values, democracy and its institutions, and media,
- proneness to believe disinformation and conspiracy theories,
- pro-Russian and/or pro-Chinese attitudes
- and inclination to authoritarian leaders.

The source for calculating the dimension is the representative public opinion poll conducted in October 2020 on a sample of 1,000 respondents in each country, i.e. 8,000 respondents overall. The polls were conducted on a sample of 1,000 respondents using stratified multistage random sampling in the form of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In all countries, the profiles of the respondents were representative of the country according to gender, age, education, place of residence and size of settlement.

The public attitudes dimension is structured deductively into 7 indicators. Each indicator is composed of a specific number of individual variables. Variables have been assigned to subdimensions deductively, i.e., based on the theoretical definitions used in the questionnaire used in the poll. The specific questions, individual variables and indicators are described in Table 1 (below).

The original questions use 2 point (yes/no) or 4-point (strongly agree - rather agree - rather disagree – strongly disagree) “forced” scales (no middle point). These have been recoded to fit into a range of 0 to 100, using respectively 0 and 100 for the yes/no scale and 0, 33, 66, and 100 for the agree-disagree scales. The “don’t know” options have been recoded into missing values as they do not represent any specific opinion and cannot be interpreted as mid-points of the scales. Another specificity of the recoding procedure is that all scales have been modified to fit the rule that 100 represents maximum vulnerability, while 0 represents lack of vulnerability or resilience thereof.

The following questions from the survey were used as Index variables:

**Q2**
Now, please, imagine, that the following weekend, there will be a referendum in [your country] on its membership in NATO. How would you vote – for [your country] to stay [ALT: join] in NATO or leave [ALT: not join] NATO?

1. Stay in NATO
2. Leave NATO
9. Do not know (do not offer)

**Q3**
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the European Union and NATO?

- Definitely agree/ Rather agree / Rather disagree/ Strongly disagree / Do not know (do not read)

D) EU dictates [our country] what to do without [our country] having a chance to influence it. / [Non-EU members] Joining the EU would cause [my country] losing its sovereignty and ability to adopt independent decisions.

E) NATO is an aggressive organization and a tool for the US to control other countries.

F) [Our country] membership in NATO means we are living in a safer environment. / would mean to live in a safer environment.

G) NATO deliberately provokes Russia by encircling it with military bases.

H) Russia deliberately provokes NATO by initiating conflicts in Eastern Europe.

15 GLOBSEC Vulnerability Index
Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about values?

Definitely agree/ Rather agree / Rather disagree/ Strongly disagree / Do not know (do not read)

A) Democracy does not exist, because in reality, hidden elites rule the world.

B) Democracy as a system based on equality, human rights and freedoms, rule of law is good for our country.

C) Liberal democracy threatens our traditional values and national identity.

D) Western countries promote a morally corrupt and decadent lifestyle which hides behind "civil identity.

E) Democracies in Western countries such as Germany and France are better off when it comes to adhering to key democracy principles and securing rights and freedoms and equality before the law for their citizens, than democracy in our country is.

Q16 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the COVID-19 pandemic?

Definitely agree/ Rather agree / Rather disagree/ Strongly disagree / Do not know (do not read)

C) COVID-19 is fake to manipulate the population.

Q17 I would like to ask you, how much trust you personally trust or distrust the following institutions in [your country]?

completely trust / rather trust / rather distrust / completely distrust / do not know (do not read)

a) Government

b) President

c) Courts and judiciary in [my country]

d) Standard mainstream media

e) The West

Q18 Do you think the following countries present a danger (significant threat) to [your country]?

1. Yes

2. No

9. Do not know (do not read)

A. Russia

B. China

Q19 Below are descriptions of two types of political systems. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing your country?

Very good / Fairly good / Fairly bad / Very bad / Do not know

A) Having a strong leader who does not need to bother with any parliament and elections.

B) Democracy does not exist, because in reality, hidden elites rule the world.

Q20 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the COVID-19 virus?

Definitely agree/ Rather agree / Rather disagree/ Strongly disagree / Do not know (do not read)

C) USA deliberately created COVID-19 virus.

H) COVID-19 vaccine is a tool to implant nano-chips and control people.

Q21 I would like to ask you, how much trust you personally trust or distrust the following institutions in [your country]?

completely trust / rather trust / rather distrust / completely distrust / do not know (do not read)

a) Government

b) President

c) Courts and judiciary in [my country]

d) Standard mainstream media

e) The West

Table 1: Public attitudes indicators and variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Questions /variables</th>
<th>Scale/recode: 100=vulnerable, (66, 33), 0=resilient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Orientation towards the EU</td>
<td>v1 Willingness to stay/leave (join) EU</td>
<td>Q2, Q2-alt Stay/(not)0, Leave/Not join=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v2 EU as a security guarantee (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4D Dictatorial = 100, Not dictatorial=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orientation towards NATO</td>
<td>v3 Willingness to stay/leave (join) NATO</td>
<td>Q2, Q2-alt Stay=0, Leave/Not join=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v4 NATO is aggressive (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4E Aggressive=100, Not aggressive=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v5 NATO is a security guarantee (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4F Guarantee=0, Not guarantee=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perception of democracy</td>
<td>v6 Democracy does not exist (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1SA Exists=0, Does not exist=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v7 Liberal democracy is a threat (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1SC Threat=0, Is not a threat=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v8 The West is corrupt (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1SG Corrupt=100, Not corrupt=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v9 Dictatorship (strong leader) preference (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1TH Preference=0, No preference=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v50 Democracy is good for the country (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1SB Democracy good=0, Not good=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v11 Western democracies are better (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1SH West is better=0, Our country better=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perception of Russia</td>
<td>v12 NATO bases are provocative (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4H NATO provocative=0, Not provocative=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v13 Russian military better (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4C Russia better=100, Russia not better=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v14 Russia provokes conflicts (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4H Russia provocative=0, Not provocative=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v15 Russia is aggressive (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4B Russia aggressive=0, Not aggressive=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v16 Russia is a threat (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q3A Russia threat=0, Russia not a threat=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perception of China as a threat</td>
<td>v17 China is a threat (1-2, 3=SM)</td>
<td>Q5B China threat=0, China not a threat=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Critical thinking</td>
<td>v18 Covid is fake (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4C Fake=0, Not fake=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v19 USA deliberately created COVID (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4G US created=100, US did not create=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v20 Covid is a nano-chip tool (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q4H Is a tool=100, Is not a tool=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Trust</td>
<td>v21 Trust in the media (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1RD Trust (1) = 0, Distrust (4) = 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v22 Trust in government (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1SA Trust (1) = 0, Distrust (4) = 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v23 Trust in president (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1BB Trust (1) = 0, Distrust (4) = 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v24 Trust in court and judiciary (1-4, 9=SM)</td>
<td>Q1RC Trust (1) = 0, Distrust (4) = 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SPSS syntax used for the recording procedure is as follows:

**Methodology**

**GLOBSEC Vulnerability Index Methodology**

- **Orientation towards EU.**
  - RECODE q2 (9=SYSMIS) (1=0) (2=100) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i1.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i1 'Stay-leave in EU'.
  - RECODE q4d (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i2.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i2 'EU dictatorial'.

- **Orientation towards NATO.**
  - RECODE q3 (9=SYSMIS) (1=0) (2=100) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i3.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i3 'Stay-leave in NATO'.
  - RECODE q4e (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i4.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i4 'NATO aggressive'.

- **Orientation towards China.**
  - RECODE q14g (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i18.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i18 'China is a threat'.

- **Orientation towards Russia.**
  - RECODE q14h (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i19.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i19 'USA deliberately created COVID'.

- **Orientation towards NATO in the last six years.**
  - RECODE q16a (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i20.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i20 '2021 Trust in government'.

- **Trust in institutions.**
  - RECODE q16b (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i21.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i21 'Trust in media'.

- **Critical thinking.**
  - RECODE q16c (9=SYSMIS) (1=100) (2=66) (3=33) (4=0) (ELSE=Copy) INTO i22.
  - VARIABLE LABELS i22 'Trust in courts and judiciary'.

**Calculation**

The summary value for each indicator is calculated as an average of the variables included in this respective indicator. For example, the value for the "Orientation towards the EU" indicator equals (i1 + i2)/2. Respectively, the value of the "Orientation towards NATO" indicator equals (i3 + i4)/3.

The summary value of the dimension is calculated as an average of the values of all indicators. Second of the five dimensions addresses is the extent to which political actors and general political atmosphere in a country influences and facilitates its vulnerability towards foreign malign influence. The theoretical framework underpinning this research understands increased vulnerability as uncritical openness to pro-Kremlin and to pro-Beijing’s influence, while increased resilience is associated with active engagement with/ in NATO and the EU, while such engagement can at times be constructively critical.

Based on this theoretical approach underpinning the Vulnerability Index, a methodology monitoring political landscape of the eight studied countries within the last six years (January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021) has been developed to reflect the level of influence exerted by the most important elected institutions in these countries as well as attitudes towards Euro Atlantic structures, the Kremlin and Beijing’s administrations held by their occupants during the monitoring period. The result is a combination of the two elements a) influence and b) geopolitical orientation which approximates the extent to which major political actors and parties have been able to sway a country in a pro-democratic or anti-democratic direction.

The data supplying this dimension has been sourced through desk research analysis and expert survey insights on political attitudes towards Russia and China. The composition of research in this dimension is structured in the following way:

**Monitoring period**

The monitoring period for this aspect of the research has been determined to six years (January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021) so as to enable long-enough time to capture at least two election periods in each country and allow to observe trends and changes which would not become apparent in a shorter monitoring period.

**Ranking scheme**

Given the fact that geopolitical affiliation and foreign policy orientation of a country is to a great extent decided by governmental entities followed by representatives in national parliaments or assemblies, rather than through regional political representatives or multinational ones (such as, for example, the Members of the European Parliament), the design of political entities’ assessment scheme reflects this notion. Within each electoral period that occurred within the monitoring period, all political parties that managed to enter the parliament at least once and all successful presidential candidates are assessed. See the example below.
Calculation of Influence
Based on the criteria above, each political party or individual active on national political landscape within the last 6 years in a given country receives an average influence ranking. For example, for Party Y this would be \((33+33+100+66+0+0+0+0)/10 = 23.2\). The average influences for all parties are summed into the “Total influence”.

The influence of each party is subsequently turned into a relative weight:

\[
\text{Weighted party influence} = \frac{\text{Party’s influence score}}{100}
\]

In a result, the sum of the relative weight of all parties and figures analyzed is 100 in all analyzed countries.

2nd step: Assessment of political parties’ foreign policy orientation

Each entity meeting the conditions to be included into the political party/ entity assessment is subject to foreign policy orientation assessment. This is defined through party’s/ entity’s attitudes towards the EU, NATO, Russia and China within the monitoring period.

**EU/ NATO**
These attitudes are assessed against pre-defined criteria, whereby attitudes towards EU and NATO are measured on a scale 0-33-66-100, with 0 being equated with resilience, while 100 representing vulnerability.

Resilience in this case is defined as (0) constructive strategic communication about the EU/ NATO towards constituents, particularly by leading state representatives and party leaders. This includes communicating the advantages of EU/ NATO membership consistently, informing them about given state’s role in these structures and how their membership in NATO / EU is being shaped by a given party.

Partial vulnerability (33) is defined as neutral communication about the EU/ NATO, or a lack of communication of these topics by leading representatives of state or political parties. This includes not explaining the advantages of EU/ NATO membership to constituents, not being sufficiently involved in EU/ NATO activities or failing to inform constituents about these, and their states’ role in them. As insufficient strategic communication poses a vulnerability in that it creates information vacuum which can be filled in by malignant actors, scoring of partial vulnerability also applies to political party manifestos which fail to address EU/ NATO topics.

Substantial vulnerability (66) is defined as somewhat antagonistic attitude towards the EU/NATO by a given political entity such as any action/ rhetoric that differs from constructive criticism of shortcomings in that is does not aspire to improve EU/NATO or initiate improvements, instead it portrays the EU/ NATO as dysfunctional / problematic or meaningless. It differs from fully antagonistic attitude in a degree and is somewhat less pronounced than fully antagonistic action / rhetoric.

Significant vulnerability (100) is defined as fully antagonistic such as any action/ rhetoric that strives to undermine the integrity and goals of the EU / NATO. Antagonistic action differs from constructive criticism of shortcomings in that is does not aspire to improve EU/NATO or initiate improvements, it deems the very existence of these structures as problems. Clear example would be advocating for exit from the EU or NATO or communication that strives to demonize any and all actions taken by these entities.

**China/ Russia**
These attitudes are assessed against pre-defined criteria, whereby attitudes towards Russia and China are measured on a scale 0-33-66-100, with 0 being equated with resilience, while 100 represents vulnerability.

Resilience in this case is defined as (0), whereby leading state representatives or political party leaders do not shy away from explaining to constituents activities which pose a danger or particular challenges to a given state and how their policies challenge democratic values, such as human rights. This differs from unfounded antagonism.

Partial vulnerability (33) is defined as leading state representatives or political party leaders failing to address challenges which political leadership in China and Russia pose to their countries, and also as a failure to communicate any of these concerns to their constituents. Also, the score is given to party manifestos which fail to address Russia or China whatsoever.

Substantial vulnerability (66) is defined as leading state representatives or political party leaders presenting Russia / China from positive perspective only, as countries with whom cooperation in economic and other areas is desired, while security challenges these countries pose are not addressed.

Significant vulnerability (100) is defined as leading state representatives or political party leaders actively promoting interests of Chinese and Russian regimes in their countries by either a) always portraying these states as examples worth following, b) demonstrating subserviency towards leadership of these states or c) defending actions of Russian / Chinese political leadership despite clear evidence proving Russian / Chinese malign activities or at the expense of national interest.

Calculation of political parties’ foreign policy assessment
The overall attitudes of a given political party are assessed based on a dataset with relevant datapoints. First, for each political party, relevant representatives are identified. Party leaders, Prime Ministers, Presidents, Speakers of the Parliament, Foreign Affairs Ministers or Defense Ministers are considered relevant representatives, whereas other actors deemed relevant could be added by researchers in each country. In case a party leader is also holding other relevant post, he or she is assessed primarily during the period of his or her ministerial/presidential post and as a party leader during the period when not holding any other relevant posts. Also, for each political party, a party manifesto for each election period covered was assessed separately, if available.

If a relevant representative did not communicate with the public at all during a given year, he or she was not assessed. If he or she communicated on the EU or NATO but failed to communicate on Russia or China within a given year, he or she received 33 score for both Russia and China within the given year.

For each relevant representative, two data points are assessed per year. Assessed data points can represent action, speech or a social media post of a given person within a given year. The choice of the data points for each year was left upon researchers in each country. The number of entries per political entity depended on the number of years given entity remained present in the parliament or in the government (or as an independent president) between 2016 and 2021, and the number of relevant political representatives of that party. Each party manifesto received only one score.

Each piece of content has been assessed independently by at least two researchers and borderline cases were discussed across research teams to arrive at an appropriate ranking consensus. The full datasets were subsequently reviewed again by GLOBSEC team. Whereas we acknowledge that the selection of speeches, social media posts and actions by the researchers was rather arbitrary, the assessment for each party in general included between 50-200 data points, which significantly limits the potential bias.

The output of the assessment is an average consisting of all data entries’ rankings within the monitoring period per geopolitical entity per given party. This average is subsequently used in a calculation to arrive at party’s weighted average score reflecting its attitude toward four geopolitical entities, using the party’s influence score from the 1st step:
The general attitude of an analyzed country towards a given geopolitical entity is subsequently calculated as a sum of political entities’ weighted average scores in order to reflect the accumulative nature of individual political entities influence on a given country’s foreign policy orientation within the monitoring period.

3rd step: Foreign policy assessment per country

Overall foreign policy assessment of a given country is calculated based on six variables combined into four indicators, each reflecting country’s attitudes towards the EU, NATO, Russia and China:

1. Indicators reflecting country’s attitudes towards the EU and NATO are solely based on the calculations described in the 2nd step.

2. Indicator reflecting country’s attitudes towards Russia is based on the calculations described in the 2nd step and data obtained through a question from expert surveys adjusted for bias (How successful have the parliamentary actors been in promoting the pro-Kremlin interests in [your country] in the past 2 years?). The overall indicator is calculated in the following way:

   Political attitudes towards Russia indicator = average (country’s orientation towards Russia; expert survey response result)

3. Indicator reflecting country’s attitudes towards China is based on the calculations described in the 2nd step and data obtained through a question from expert surveys adjusted for bias (How successful have the parliamentary actors been in promoting the pro-Beijing interests in [your country] in the past 2 years?). The overall indicator is calculated in the following way:

   Indicator reflecting country’s attitudes towards China is based on the calculations described in the 2nd step and data obtained through a question from expert surveys adjusted for bias (How successful have the parliamentary actors been in promoting the pro-Beijing interests in [your country] in the past 2 years?). The overall indicator is calculated in the following way:

   Political attitudes towards China indicator = average (country’s orientation towards China; expert survey response result)

The final assessment of country’s vulnerability or resilience in the political landscape dimension is then calculated as an average of the four indicators:

Country’s political landscape ranking = average (Political attitudes towards the EU; Political attitudes towards NATO; Political attitudes towards Russia; Political attitudes towards China)

Table 2: Overview of political landscape’s indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator no.</th>
<th>Indicator name</th>
<th>Variable no.</th>
<th>Variable /Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.8</td>
<td>Political attitudes towards the EU</td>
<td>v2.1</td>
<td>Political landscape assessment of the EU</td>
<td>0 = pro-EU; 100 = anti-EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.9</td>
<td>Political attitudes towards NATO</td>
<td>v2.2</td>
<td>Political landscape assessment of NATO</td>
<td>0 = pro-NATO; 100 = anti-NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.10</td>
<td>Political attitudes towards Russia</td>
<td>v2.3</td>
<td>Political landscape assessment of Russia</td>
<td>0 = not pro-Russian; 100 = pro-Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.11</td>
<td>Political attitudes towards China</td>
<td>v2.5</td>
<td>How successful have the parliamentary actors been in promoting the pro-Beijing interests in [your country] in the past 2 years?</td>
<td>0 = not successful; 100 = extremely successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political attitudes towards China</td>
<td>v2.6</td>
<td>Political landscape assessment to China</td>
<td>0 = not pro-Chinese; 100 = pro-Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Public administration dimension**

Efficient and functioning public administration, working checks and balances up to date legislation, which is effectively enforced and reflects the latest societal and technological developments, are a backbone of a functioning state. In the context of the theoretical framework outlined above, public administration and democratic processes are only as good as are the set policies and developed institutional structures. In case of foreign malign influence, these include, among others, situational awareness, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches in response to both domestic and foreign, and diminishing the identified gaps.

The public administration dimension is composed of seven indicators comprising data from other existing indices, desk research conducted by project partners and expert surveys. These sources of data analyze and measure the resilience of the democratic system of governance from the perspective of guaranteeing basic freedoms, non-discrimination, electoral integrity, fight against corruption, strength of checks and balances, legislative and structural resilience, and a willingness to address and counter foreign influence. The vulnerability score for public administration dimension represents the average of the scores of these seven indicators. Specifically, it contains the following indicators:

### 1. Checks and balances

This indicator is comprised of Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) checks and balances index, which was created for the purpose of this research by the above-mentioned V-Dem researchers from the V-Dem’s Horizontal accountability index and nine selected V-Dem questions/variables focusing on the control and oversight of executive, judiciary and legislation.

Horizontal accountability index

- Concerns the power of state institutions to oversee the government by demanding information, questioning officials and punishing improper behavior. This form of accountability ensures checks between institutions and prevents the abuse of power.
- The selected V-Dem variables/questions support the horizontal accountability by adding an analysis of existing checks and balances. The following V-Dem indicators/questions were included:
  - "If the head of state took actions to dissolve the legislature, would he/she be likely to succeed?"
  - "If the legislature, or either chamber of the legislature, took actions to remove the head of state from office, would it be likely to succeed even without having to level accusations of unlawful activity and without the involvement of any other agency?"
  - "Judges are sometimes removed from their posts for cause, as when there is strong evidence of corruption; however, some judges are removed arbitrarily, typically for political reasons. With this distinction in mind, please describe the removal of judges that occurred this calendar year."
  - "The size of the judiciary is sometimes increased for very good reasons, as when judges are added to manage an increasing caseload, however, sometimes judges are added purely for political reasons. With this distinction in mind, please describe any increases in the size of the judiciary that occurred this calendar year."
  - "When judges are found responsible for serious misconduct, how often are they removed from their posts or otherwise disciplined?"
  - "Does any court in the judiciary have the legal authority to invalidate governmental policies (e.g. statutes, regulations, decrees, administrative actions) on the grounds that they violate a constitutional provision?"

The Checks and Balances Indicator was computed from the above-mentioned V-Dem data using Bayesian Factor Analyses model. The indicator uses V-Dem data for years 2016-2020, which were averaged and then converted into 0-100 scale of the Vulnerability Index. For more information, please, see Annex I.

### 2. Election integrity

Another indicator of resilience of democratic processes of a country is its ability to ensure fair election free of interference from both domestic and foreign actors. This indicator is composed of two data sources – desk research evaluating existing legislation on financing of political parties and elections, which was conducted by project researchers in each of the analyzed countries, and V-Dem data on electoral integrity, fair structures and processes. The V-Dem data/questions used were the following:

- Are there disclosure requirements for donations to national election campaigns?
- In this national election, did any registered opposition candidates or parties boycott?
- Did losing parties and candidates accept the result of this national election within three months?
- Following this national election, did winners assume office according to prescribed constitutional rules and norms?
- Taking all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process into account, would you consider subnational elections (regional and local, as previously identified) to be free and fair on average?

The V-Dem data on election integrity are computed by Bayesian factor analysis model. Researchers used the average for years 2016-2020. The original 0-1 interval scale was converted to 0-100 scale.

The desk research on electoral integrity consisted of following “yes” or “no” questions:

- "Does your country have a legal regulation on financing of political parties and election campaigns?"
- "Does your country have a legal regulation on third parties in election campaigns?"
- "Is foreign funding of political parties and election campaigns prohibited in your country?"
- "Is online environment covered (including spending limits in online environment) in election and campaign legislation?"
- "Are electoral and campaign regulations effectively applied and enforced in offline environment?"
- "Are electoral and campaign regulations effectively applied and enforced in online environment?"

The affirmative answers to these questions received equalled a score of 0, while negative answers scored 100. The more yes answers were indicated in this desk research, the more vulnerable the electoral system of a particular country was. The vulnerability score of this desk research equals the percentage of affirmative answers.

The expert survey findings on the capability of national election oversight bodies to monitor and prevent attempts of foreign interference and/or indications of illicit foreign interference have been incorporated in the country chapters.

The vulnerability score of the Election Integrity Indicator was computed as the average of two scores – one from V-Dem data and one from desk research.
The indicator of legislative and structural resilience is comprised of desk research assessment conducted by project partners analyzing security documents from the perspective of foreign influence and expert survey assessment of the whole-of-society approach in building societal resilience and alignment of security and defense strategies with EU policies (Western Balkans countries only).

### Analysis of security documents

Project partners compiled a list of publicly available reports, strategies or doctrines produced by public institutions in their country since January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021 and/or included also those strategies still being valid no matter when they were adopted. For each document researchers provided: a name of the report/document, public institutions that produced or adopted it, year of its publishing/adoptions; an online link to the document/report/strategy, and indicated what type of document it is. Categorization of a report/document/strategy helped researchers understand the level of importance of provided documents and it was a necessary step enabling a comparative analysis of documents of similar relevance.

Security and defense documents were divided into 5 categories:

a) **Main national security/defense strategies** — as national security/defense strategies that are the most important long-term security documents/strategies of a country, which set policies and geopolitical orientation of a country for citizens as well as public institutions. These national strategies are usually developed collaboratively by several public institutions and are approved by a government and have to be approved by a parliament in order to be valid.

b) **Other** — as any other reports produced by public institutions or public representatives that do not fit the previous category and have an element of security and resilience building. These can include specialized, long-term frameworks and annual or bi-annual reports produced by security/intelligence services or other public institutions that provide evaluation of specific policies and/or security environment of a country. Such reports can have both public and classified versions.

Security document/report/strategies were then divided into two groups - the main and most important strategies present in all analyzed countries and thus available for comparative analysis and the “other” documents, with cyber security doctrines being included in the “other” category. According to these rules, the following number of documents were identified per each analyzed country:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of documents/reports identified</th>
<th>Number of identified comparable main/most important security strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analysis of the content/detail of main security and defense strategies

Since only national security or defense strategies were produced in all analyzed countries and thus allowed for comparative assessment, such strategies produced/adopted since January 2016 until the end of June 2021 were further analyzed from the perspective of foreign influence and resilience building. Project partners analyzed and scored to what detail national defense and security strategies address following topics:

- Is foreign interference/foreign influence mentioned and elaborated in the studied document? Please bear in mind that this term may be framed differently, we are not looking at verbatim definitions but nuances. Please follow this score:
- 100: Foreign interference terminology is misused to demonize civil society actors or democratic allies or other purposes undermining democracy or state resilience.
- 66: Foreign interference or its synonym is not addressed in the document at all.
- 33: Foreign interference is mentioned but is not clearly defined or is mentioned in vague terms.
- 0: Foreign interference is clearly defined as a serious security challenge.
- Is Russia and its influence mentioned/perceived in this document? Please follow this score:
- 100: Russia occurs only in positive terms both in strategic/political and economic terms.
- 66: Russia occurs in terms of sectoral cooperation (economic/energy/culture/etc.).
- 33: Russia is mentioned but only superficially / very neutral terms or not mentioned at all.
- 0: Russian influence is rightfully recognized as an security issue or challenge in relevant areas (does not mean hysterical bashing).
- Are hybrid threats mentioned and elaborated in the studied document? Please bear in mind that this term may be framed differently, we are not looking at verbatim definitions but nuances. Please follow this score:
- 100: Hybrid threats terminology is misused to demonize civil society actors or democratic allies or other purposes undermining democracy or state resilience.
- 66: Hybrid threats or its synonym is not addressed in the document at all.
- 33: Hybrid threats are mentioned but are not clearly defined or are mentioned in vague terms.
- 0: Hybrid threats are clearly recognized as a serious security challenge.
- Are disinformation/information operations mentioned and elaborated in the studied document? Please follow this score:
- 100: The terms are misused to demonize civil society actors, democratic allies or other purposes undermining democracy or state resilience.
- 66: They are not addressed in the document at all.
- 33: It is mentioned but is not clearly defined or is mentioned in vague terms.
- 0: They are clearly recognized as a serious security challenge.
- Is resilience and/or resilience-building in relation to foreign interference in political/social/informational terms, such as strategic communication, whole-of-society approach, etc. mentioned and perceived in this particular document? Please follow this score:
- 100: The terms are misused to demonize civil society actors, democratic allies or other purposes undermining democracy or state resilience or the topic is not addressed at all.
- 66: Resilience-building is briefly mentioned without any specific plans and/or proposals.
- 33: Need for resilience building is recognized as crucial but the notion if not sufficiently developed.
- Areas of vulnerability towards foreign influence are clearly identified, together with remedies/resilience-building strategy with key actors identified.
- Was this strategic doctrine regularly (at least once in 5 years) updated? “yes” or “no” answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of documents/reports identified</th>
<th>Number of identified comparable main/most important security strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis conducted by project partners included identification of specific sections of strategies addressing these issues and provision of their English translation as well as reasoning for their score. Such evaluation was conducted for all national and security strategies produced/adopted within the set time period. A principle that every issue does not have to be addressed in the same level of detail in all documents was established, which means, that a final score for the main strategies for each country was computed by following these conditions:

1. If the scores for the strategies addressing the issue rank the same, the overall score stays the same.
2. If the scores for the strategies addressing the issue differ by 33 points, the overall score corresponds to the lower score.
3. If any of the scores for the strategies addressing the issue differ by 66 points, the overall score corresponds to the average score.
4. If any of the scores for the strategies addressing the issue differ by 100 points, the overall score corresponds to the average score.

b) Analysis of regular updates of main security and national strategies
Since national security and defense strategies are the backbone of state security, regular updates of these documents are necessary to reflect the changes in security environment. Therefore, an overview of updates of each strategy since 2000 in analyzed countries was compiled and each update was scored based on the following principles:

1. Updated within 5 years or less years, which received score 0
2. Updated within 6-10 years, which received score 33
3. Updated within 11-15 years, which received score 66
4. Updated after more than 15 years, which received score 100

The country score for the regular update of national and defense strategies was then computed as the average of these “update” scores.

Table 4: Example for how score for regular updates was calculated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country XY</th>
<th>Name of strategy</th>
<th>Year of publishing</th>
<th>No. of years between the updates</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy A</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy A</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy B</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy B</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total score calculated as an average of points received for regular updates: 23

c) Analysis of other security documents/reports
The amount of other security frameworks, documents or annual intelligence reports produced and publicly available varied significantly among the analyzed countries. This report is based on the assumption that the more information is provided by public institutions or intelligence agencies, the greater situational awareness the society has. Therefore, the assessment of “other” documents/reports on whether they address foreign influence and resilience building was considered as additional “bonus” resilience points.

The overall vulnerability score of security documents was computed as an average of the following scores:

1. Score for all analyzed documents (score for main strategies minus bonus points for “other” documents) from the point of addressing foreign interference, hybrid threats, disinformation and resilience-building.
2. Score for addressing Russia in national security and defense strategies
3. Score for addressing China in national security and defense strategies
4. Score for updates of national strategies

The overall vulnerability score of security documents = Average (score for all analyzed documents; score for addressing Russia in national and defense strategies; score for addressing China in national and defense strategies; score for updates of national strategies since 2000)

Table 5: Number of “other” (security) reports/documents identified and analyzed by project partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of “other” documents/reports analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structural resilience indicator also encompasses the findings from expert survey. The implementation of a whole-of-government approach was evaluated by responses on following question: “Is “whole-of-society” approach implemented sufficiently in building state resilience?”. The results of expert survey were adjusted for bias. The expert survey of the Western Balkan countries also contained an additional question: “Are security and defense strategies of your country in line with EU policies?”. The overall vulnerability score for structural resilience indicator was then computed as an average of scores of overall vulnerability of security documents and above-mentioned questions from expert survey.
**4 Civil liberties and non-discrimination**

This indicator was computed from seven V-Dem indices/questions using Bayesian Factor Analysis model specifically for the Vulnerability Index. The indicator uses V-Dem data for years 2016-2020, which were averaged and then converted into 0-100 scale. For more information, please, see Annex 1. The indicator covers topics of public deliberation, exclusion of various groups, distribution or accumulation of power among particular social groups. These factors can be important drivers of social polarization, tensions and civil unrests with a potential to be utilized by foreign malign actors. This indicator consists of following V-Dem indices and questions:

- **Equal distribution of resources index**
  The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the variables for particularistic or public goods, means tested vs. universalistic welfare policies, educational equality and health equality.

- **Index of (political) exclusion by socio-economic group**
  This index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the variables/questions political group equality in respect for civil liberties, access to public services by political group, access to state jobs by political group, and access to state business opportunities by political group.

- **Civil liberties and non-discrimination**
  The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the variables/questions political group equality in respect for civil liberties, access to public services by political group, access to state jobs by political group, and access to state business opportunities by political group.

- **Exclusion by Social Group index**
  The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the variables power distributed by social group, social group equality in respect for civil liberties, access to public services by social group, access to state jobs by social group, and access to state business opportunities by social group.

- **Exclusion by Political Group index**
  The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the variables/questions political group equality in respect for civil liberties, access to public services by political group, access to state jobs by political group, and access to state business opportunities by political group.

- **“Is political power distributed according to gender?”**
  “To what extent is political power distributed according to sexual orientation?”
  “The deliberative principle is an important, perhaps even essential, element of democracy. Do you agree or disagree?”

**6 Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International**

Corruption undermines the trust in public institutions and democracy as such and can be an important tool of foreign malign actors. Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is therefore an important indicator of vulnerability of public administration. It analyzes corrupt behavior in the areas such as bribery, diversion of public funds, use of public office for private gain, nepotism in civil service or state capture. Since the CPI score has a scale of 0-100 where a 0 represents the highest level of perceived corruption, and 100 the lowest level of perceived corruption, for the purpose of the this research the CPI scores were reversed, so that a 0 represents lowest level of perceived corruption and 100 the highest. The CPI scores of analyzed countries for the past 5 years were analyzed and the score of this public administration’s indicator represents their average.

For more information about the Corruption Perception Index, please, visit its website.24

**7 Physical violence index**

Protection against physical violence, freedom from torture or political killings are basic universal human rights. Their violations indicate grave violation of democratic principles and indicate a breach of a social contract. V-Dem’s Physical violence index indicated to what extent physical integrity is respected. It is based on two indicators that reflect violence committed by government agents, in particular freedom from political killings and torture. The original scale 0-1 interval scale of the index was converted to 0-100 scale with 0 equating the highest resilience and 100 representing the highest vulnerability.

---

**Table 6: Overview of public administration’s indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator no.</th>
<th>Indicator name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i12</td>
<td>Checks and balances</td>
<td>V-Dem</td>
<td>0 = strong checks and balances, 100 = no checks and balances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i13</td>
<td>Electoral integrity</td>
<td>V-Dem, partners’ assessment</td>
<td>0 = elections are resilient to foreign influence, 100 = elections are not resilient to foreign influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i14</td>
<td>Legislative and structural resilience</td>
<td>V-Dem, partners’ assessment</td>
<td>0 = legislation and structures resilient, 100 = legislation and structures vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i15</td>
<td>Checks and balances</td>
<td>V-Dem</td>
<td>0 = checks and balances, 100 = no checks and balances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i16</td>
<td>Corruption Perception</td>
<td>V-Dem, Partners’ assessment, V-Dem</td>
<td>0 = corruption perceived as low, 100 = corruption perceived as high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i17</td>
<td>Corruption Perception</td>
<td>V-Dem</td>
<td>0 = no corruption, 100 = high corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i18</td>
<td>Basic freedoms</td>
<td>V-Dem</td>
<td>0 = complete freedom from physical violence, 100 = physical violence part of the political process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information landscape

The fourth dimension, information landscape, is key in the assessment of country’s vulnerability to sharp power as the information environment can provide a key gateway for the manipulation of state affairs and manipulate the public perceptions. It combines three sources of data – World Press Freedom Index, which covers traditional media, V-Dem Digital Society Survey, covering the online information space, and the expert survey questions covering the Russian and Chinese influence.

The composition of the dimension consists of eighteen variables combined into eight indicators, average results of which together form a final country score for this dimension. These indicators are:

- **Media freedom** measured by World Press Freedom Index results, calculated as an average for years 2016 – 2021 to capture the developments over six years. The index evaluates the “degree of freedom available to journalists”, pluralism, media independence, media environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information, combining quantitative data and a questionnaire with 87 questions, filled-in by selected experts. It rates countries on a scale of 1-100 whereby higher score represents less media freedom. The average scores of 2016-2021 were directly inserted into the indicator.

- **Presence of information manipulation and disinformation** is made of 5 variables combining data from V-Dem index and expert surveys. The variables from V-Dem data (v4.2-v4.5) were based on the results from the following questions from V-Dem Digital Society Survey:
  - How often do the government and its agents use social media to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence its own population? (V-Dem code v2smparadom)
  - How often do the government and its agents use social media to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence citizens of other countries abroad? (V-Dem code v2smparab)
  - How routinely do foreign governments and their agents use social media to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence domestic politics in this country? (V-Dem code v2sfmfordom)
- **How frequently does the government censor political content (i.e., deleting or filtering specific posts for political reasons) on social media in practice?** (v2smpovfor)
- **Do the major domestic online media outlets represent a wide range of political perspectives?** (v2smmefra)

The values were combined into one value using the same method as described in the previous indicator.

- **Access to diversity online** is made of two V-Dem Digital Society Survey variables assessing the following questions addressing online media diversity, which is an important component of a healthy online information space:
  - Do the major domestic online media outlets represent a wide range of political perspectives? (v2smmefra)
  - Do the major domestic online media outlets give a similar presentation of major (political) news? (v2sminfra)

The values were combined into one value on a scale of 0-1 by averaging over period of three years, from their component V-Dem indicators for years 2016-2021, then averaged and converted into 0-100 scale using the inversion calculation x = (1- average value per country) *100.

- **Russian media influence** combined the expert survey questions assessing the amount of pro-Kremlin and Russian influence in both traditional and online information space via following questions:
  - How much space is given to pro-Kremlin actors and/or narratives in the state-owned media / public broadcaster? (v2smnemra)
  - How much space is given to pro-Kremlin actors and/or narratives in the mainstream media? (v2smnemra)
  - To what extent does Russia directly/indirectly influence the mainstream media in the country? (v2smnemra)
  - To what extent does Russia directly/indirectly influence the state-owned media/public broadcaster in the country? (v2smnemra)
  - How widespread is Russian influence on social media in your country? (v2smnemra)

- **Digital rule of law index** is made of four V-Dem Digital Society Survey variables assessing the following questions addressing the rule of law in the online space:
  - Does a legal framework to protect Internet users’ privacy and their data stipulate? (v2smpriv)
The responses to questions were adjusted via anchoring described in the expert surveys section to eliminate the bias and averaged.

**Chinese media influence** combined the expert survey questions assessing the amount of pro-Beijing and Chinese influence in both traditional and online information space via following questions:
- How much space is given to pro-Beijing actors and/or narratives in the mainstream media?
- How widespread is Chinese influence on social media in your country?

The responses to questions were adjusted via anchoring described in the expert surveys section to eliminate the bias and averaged.

**Table 7: Overview of information landscape indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator no.</th>
<th>Indicator name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Media Freedom</td>
<td>World Press Freedom Index</td>
<td>0 = media completely free; 100 = media completely unfree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Presence of information manipulation &amp; disinformation</td>
<td>V-Dem Index, expert survey</td>
<td>0 = information manipulation almost non-existent; 100 = information manipulation spread across all major media outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Government control over digital space</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = government guarantees freedoms in digital space; 100 = government controls digital space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Capacity to protect digital space</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = information space protected against cyber threats; 100 = information space not protected against cyber threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Access to diversity online</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = media space diversified; 100 = media space not at all diversified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Digital rule of law index</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = rule of law in digital space enforced; 100 = rule of law in digital space not enforced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Russian media influence</td>
<td>Expert survey</td>
<td>0 = free of Russian influence; 100 = full of Russian influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Chinese media influence</td>
<td>Expert survey</td>
<td>0 = free of Chinese influence; 100 = full of Chinese influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment of the resilience of civic space, civil society and academia constitutes one of the essential dimensions of the Index, as it represents one of the most important pillars of functioning democracies.** Without vibrant civil society and free academic research, a society cannot be considered a fully developed democracy. The Vulnerability Index evaluates this area in each analyzed country through a robust combination of sources from already existing indices and expert survey data adjusted for bias which provide an insight into foreign malign influence on civic and academic space in each country.

The composition of the Civic & Academic Space dimension consists of eight variables combined into five indicators, average results of which together form a final country score for this dimension. These indicators are:

- **Sustainability of civil society** measured by Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index, results, calculated as an average for years 2016 – 2020 in order to capture developments over five years. The index evaluates sustainability by looking at seven essential elements: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, sectoral infrastructure and public image. It rates countries on a scale 1-7 whereby higher score represents decreased sustainability. For inclusion into the Vulnerability Index, the country rankings were converted to 0-100 scale whereby higher score indicates higher vulnerability using this formula:

\[
\text{Vulnerability Index \_ sustainability of civil society ranking = \left(\frac{100}{7}\right) \times \text{country's Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index average ranking 2016 – 2020.}}
\]

- **Academic freedom** is assessed by looking at a 5-year average of the Academic Freedom Index derived from V-Dem Index, which answers the question ‘To what extent is academic freedom respected?’ It provides the results in an interval scale 0 – 1. The results were subsequently converted to 0 – 100 scale whereby higher score indicates higher vulnerability using this formula:

\[
\text{Vulnerability Index \_ academic freedom ranking = \left(1 - \text{country's Academic Freedom Index average ranking 2016 – 2020}\right) \times 100.}
\]

- **Civic space** is assessed by looking at a 5-year average of four variables derived from V-Dem Index. These are freedom of assembly, mobilization for autocracy, non-state political violence and political polarization.

Combining these variables offers a picture of civic space conditions defining the state of civil society in each country analyzed. The original V-Dem data results are inverted from a -3,3 scale to 0,1 scale using the normal distribution Excel function using this formula for each variable’s 5-year data points (2016 – 2020).

\[
\text{Vulnerability Index Civic space variable ranking = NORM.DIST(original V-Dem value, 0, 1, TRUE).}
\]

An average of these years in then converted into 0-100 scale whereby higher score indicates higher vulnerability. In case the original variable was on a reverse scale (i.e. 0 would mean vulnerability and 1 resilience, the following conversion is used:

\[
\text{Conversion to 0-100 scale = (1 - 2016-2020 average of Vulnerability Index Civic space variable ranking) } \times 100.
\]

If the scale is not reverse, the average is multiplied by 100.
To arrive to a final civic space indicator country ranking, the 5-year long results of the four variables are averaged to one data point:

- **Beijing’s influence** is assessed through an average result of expert survey response to question “How strong is Beijing’s influence within your country’s civil society?” with results adjusted for bias (see section expert surveys).

- **Kremlin’s influence** is assessed through an average result of expert survey response to question “How strong is Kremlin’s influence within your country’s civil society?” with results adjusted for bias (see section expert surveys).

As in all the dimensions covered in this Vulnerability Index, the final country score for the civic & academic space dimension is then calculated as an average of the above mentioned five indicators:

Vulnerability Index Civic space country ranking = Average (2016-2020 freedom of assembly; 2016-2020 mobilization for autocracy; 2016-2020 non-state political violence; 2016-2020 political polarization)

Vulnerability Index Civic & Academic Space country ranking = average (Sustainability of civil society; Academic freedom; Civic space; Beijing’s influence; Kremlin’s influence)

**Table 8: Overview of civic and academic space structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator no.</th>
<th>Indicator name</th>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sustainability of Civil society</td>
<td>Civil Society Sustainability Index</td>
<td>Civil Society Sustainability Index</td>
<td>0 = sustainable; 100 = not sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Beijing’s influence</td>
<td>ES5.6 CSOs</td>
<td>Expert survey</td>
<td>0 = no influence; 100 = decisive influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Kremlin’s influence</td>
<td>ES5.5 CSOs</td>
<td>Expert survey</td>
<td>0 = no influence; 100 = decisive influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Academic Freedom</td>
<td>Academic Freedom Index</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = full academic freedom; 100 = academic freedom strictly limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Civic space</td>
<td>Freedom of peaceful assembly</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = protests almost always allowed; 100 = protests never allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Civic space</td>
<td>Mobilization for autocracy</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = almost no events; 100 = many large-scale and small-scale events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Civic space</td>
<td>Non-state political violence</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = non-state actors do not use political violence; 100 = non-state actors often use political violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Civic space</td>
<td>Political polarization</td>
<td>V-Dem Index</td>
<td>0 = not at all polarized; 100 = very polarized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative assessment: Country chapters**

The country chapters also contain findings and quotes from focus group discussions. In each country, a professional polling agency organized eight focus groups discussions encompassing five different participants each. The sessions were held for approximately two hours and facilitated by an experienced professional moderator/researcher. Some of the findings or quotes in this report consequently, reflect qualitative data collected from 40 focus group participants in each country or 320 participants altogether across eight countries.

Discussions were based on a standard set of questions used across all eight countries. Participants were selected based on the findings of public opinion polls and were further pre-screened based on their pro-Kremlin, anti-Western and anti-democratic attitudes and were divided into vulnerable and resilient groups to scrutinize differences in public attitudes. Six focus group discussions in each country were held with the vulnerable socio-demographic groups and two with the more resilient ones. Any quotes cited in the publication are the direct statements of focus group participants. Focus group discussions were conducted in February 2021 in all countries and were convened online using the ZOOM platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions were held in local languages and recorded with the consent of all participants.
While this Index focuses on these 5 areas, the report The Landscape of Hybrid Threats: A conceptual model of the Joint Research Centre and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE) has identified 13 domains in which national power and consequently hybrid threats and foreign malign influence can be exercised.

When we have two expert coded variables matched to one anchoring variable, we calculate the average of the adjusted expert medians, producing one adjusted variable corresponding to the single anchoring variable.

For detailed information see V-Dem Codebook.
Globsec Bayesian Factor Analyses

Kyle Marquardt, Daniel Pemstein and Johannes von Römer

September 30, 2021

We have collaboratively used V–Dem data to create four sub-indices for the State Administration and Policies Index and Digital Society Project data to create five sub-indices for the Information Environment Index. Two of these sub-indices (“Capacity to Protect” and “Access to Diversity”) were created by averaging over posterior draws from their component V–Dem indicators; a third, “Basic Freedoms” is available as the V–Dem physical violence index (“v2x_clphy”). We created the remaining six indices using Bayesian Factor Analyses (BFAs) using the standard V–Dem approach:

\[
\begin{align*}
y_{ij} & \sim N(\mu_{ij}, \tau_j) \\
\mu_{ij} & = \alpha_j + \beta_j \xi_i \\
\alpha_j & \sim N(0, 10) \\
\beta_j & \sim N(0, 10) \\
\tau_j & \sim U(0, 10)
\end{align*}
\] (1)

Where \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\) are intercept and slope parameters for V–Dem indicator \(j\), and \(\tau\) its measurement standard error. Note that \(\beta\) is restricted to positive values for identification purposes. In essence, this restriction assumes that all manifest variables (V–Dem indicators) are positively correlated with the concept being measured.

To fully incorporate measurement error from the estimation of V–Dem indicators, we start by taking multiple random draws from each of the input V–Dem indicators’ posterior distributions, and then estimate the factor analysis model repeatedly using each set of random draws. In doing so, we propagate the uncertainty from the V-Dem indicators into each given index. (For more details, please refer to the V–Dem Measurement Model Working Paper). Based on our diagnostics, all models have converged. That said, one index presented specific problems for the measurement process: “checks and balances.” The root of this problem is that two V–Dem indicators (“v2exdfshs” and “v2exdjshg”) may not actually have a positive relationship with the underlying concept. We resolved this problem by rescaling “v2exdfshs” from negative to positive (i.e. flipping the direction of the indicator) and rerunning the analyses. The version in the dataset reflects this alteration.

To provide a sense of how the BFA output relates to the underlying V–Dem indicators, we have produced the tables that follow the text, showing posterior estimates of \(\alpha\) (intercepts), \(\beta\) (slopes) and \(\tau\) (errors). In general, we would expect intercept estimates to be relatively close to zero. Exceptions to this rule are evidence that the V–Dem indicator may be somewhat
skewed, and should not be a cause for concern. In contrast, we would expect slope estimates to be relatively far from zero, indicating a positive relationship with the concept being measured. In general, the rule of thumb is that the higher the value of the slopes, the greater the relationship between the V–Dem indicator and the concept being measured. The worst performing indices by this metric are “v2exdfdshs” and “v2exdjdsgh” in both v1 and v2 of the “Checks and Balances” index, which is how we diagnosed the aforementioned problems with the index.

Finally, the error indicates the degree to which a given indicator—after accounting for the intercept and slope—diverges from the latent concept estimates. As follows, lower values indicate lower divergence. In this context, the main focus should be on relative divergences within an index. For example, in the index “Information manipulation by political actors,” “v2sforags” and “v2sfordom” have greater error than “v2sgovab” and “v2sgovdom,” which indicates that they have lower weight in the estimation of the underlying concept. The figures that follow each table illustrate the relationship between the sub-index and the V–Dem indicator with the lowest error.

Finally, we have also looked at correlations between the sub-indices we have created. In general, the state administration index sub-indices appear to be relatively cohesive. However, for the information environment index, “Government capacity to protect” has a very weak and sometimes negative correlation with the other sub-indices, indicating that it may not be wise to include it in the estimation of the index.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Information environment correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: State administration index correlations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;B</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL &amp; ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic freedoms</td>
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</table>
Table 3: Information manipulation by political actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v2smforads</td>
<td>0.13 (0.09, 0.17)</td>
<td>0.43 (0.40, 0.47)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.85, 0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smfordom</td>
<td>0.09 (0.04, 0.13)</td>
<td>0.41 (0.38, 0.44)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.85, 0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smgovab</td>
<td>0.15 (0.12, 0.19)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.84, 0.91)</td>
<td>0.50 (0.47, 0.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smgovdom</td>
<td>0.08 (0.05, 0.12)</td>
<td>0.92 (0.88, 0.95)</td>
<td>0.50 (0.47, 0.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smparab</td>
<td>0.10 (0.07, 0.14)</td>
<td>0.84 (0.80, 0.87)</td>
<td>0.57 (0.54, 0.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smpardom</td>
<td>-0.03 (-0.07, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.77, 0.84)</td>
<td>0.60 (0.58, 0.63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posterior median and 68% credible regions

![Graph showing the relationship between government domestic dissemination of false information and information manipulation by political actors.](image-url)
Table 4: Government control over digital space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v2smgovfilprc</td>
<td>-0.03 (-0.09, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.84, 0.91)</td>
<td>0.51 (0.48, 0.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smgovsm</td>
<td>0.24 (0.18, 0.29)</td>
<td>0.84 (0.80, 0.88)</td>
<td>0.53 (0.50, 0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smgovsmalt</td>
<td>0.04 (-0.01, 0.10)</td>
<td>0.75 (0.71, 0.79)</td>
<td>0.66 (0.62, 0.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smgovsmcenprc</td>
<td>0.02 (-0.03, 0.08)</td>
<td>0.83 (0.79, 0.86)</td>
<td>0.54 (0.50, 0.56)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posterior median and 68% credible regions

![Graph showing the relationship between Government internet filtering in practice and Government control over digital space.](image-url)
Table 5: Digital rule of law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v2smdefabu</td>
<td>0.12 (0.08, 0.17)</td>
<td>0.81 (0.77, 0.85)</td>
<td>0.62 (0.58, 0.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smlawpr</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.04, 0.06)</td>
<td>0.36 (0.31, 0.40)</td>
<td>0.90 (0.86, 0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smprivcon</td>
<td>-0.04 (-0.09, 0.03)</td>
<td>0.69 (0.64, 0.73)</td>
<td>0.71 (0.66, 0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smprivex</td>
<td>0.06 (0.01, 0.12)</td>
<td>0.56 (0.51, 0.60)</td>
<td>0.87 (0.83, 0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2smregcon</td>
<td>0.17 (0.12, 0.22)</td>
<td>0.89 (0.85, 0.93)</td>
<td>0.47 (0.42, 0.51)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posterior median and 68% credible regions
### Table 6: Civil liberties and non-discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v2pepwrgen</td>
<td>-0.45 (-0.48, -0.43)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.78, 0.83)</td>
<td>0.76 (0.74, 0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2pepwrotr</td>
<td>-0.57 (-0.60, -0.54)</td>
<td>0.52 (0.50, 0.54)</td>
<td>0.82 (0.80, 0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2xdl_delib</td>
<td>0.004 (-0.01, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.75 (0.73, 0.76)</td>
<td>0.66 (0.65, 0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2xeg_eqdr</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.001, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.79, 0.82)</td>
<td>0.60 (0.58, 0.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2xpe_exlecon</td>
<td>0.004 (-0.01, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.87, 0.89)</td>
<td>0.47 (0.45, 0.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2xpe_exlpol</td>
<td>0.005 (-0.01, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.79, 0.82)</td>
<td>0.60 (0.58, 0.61)</td>
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<tr>
<td>v2xpe_exlsocgr</td>
<td>0.005 (-0.005, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.89 (0.88, 0.90)</td>
<td>0.44 (0.43, 0.46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posterior median and 68% credible regions

![Exclusion by social group](image.png)

Civil liberties and non-discrimination vs. Exclusion by social group
Table 7: Free and fair elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v2elaccept</td>
<td>-0.005 (-0.02, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.74 (0.72, 0.75)</td>
<td>0.69 (0.68, 0.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2elasmooff</td>
<td>-0.002 (-0.01, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.34 (0.32, 0.35)</td>
<td>0.94 (0.93, 0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2elboycot</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.004, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.61 (0.59, 0.62)</td>
<td>0.79 (0.78, 0.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2eldonate</td>
<td>-0.32 (-0.34, -0.29)</td>
<td>0.44 (0.42, 0.47)</td>
<td>0.85 (0.83, 0.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2elffelr</td>
<td>0.25 (0.22, 0.28)</td>
<td>0.96 (0.93, 0.98)</td>
<td>0.65 (0.63, 0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2xel_frefair</td>
<td>0 (-0.01, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.91 (0.90, 0.92)</td>
<td>0.42 (0.40, 0.43)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Posterior median and 68% credible regions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>v1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exdfdshs</td>
<td>-0.01 (-0.03, 0.01)</td>
<td>0 (0, 0)</td>
<td>1.10 (1.08, 1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exdjdsdg</td>
<td>-0.07 (-0.11, -0.04)</td>
<td>0.12 (0.09, 0.15)</td>
<td>0.97 (0.94, 1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exremhmg</td>
<td>-0.07 (-0.11, -0.04)</td>
<td>0.77 (0.74, 0.80)</td>
<td>0.74 (0.72, 0.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exremhsp</td>
<td>-0.32 (-0.35, -0.29)</td>
<td>0.38 (0.36, 0.41)</td>
<td>0.90 (0.87, 0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2juaccnt</td>
<td>0.09 (0.06, 0.12)</td>
<td>0.48 (0.46, 0.50)</td>
<td>0.93 (0.90, 0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2jupack</td>
<td>0.34 (0.32, 0.37)</td>
<td>0.45 (0.42, 0.48)</td>
<td>0.89 (0.87, 0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2jupocateck</td>
<td>0.39 (0.36, 0.41)</td>
<td>0.21 (0.18, 0.24)</td>
<td>1.00 (0.97, 1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2jupurge</td>
<td>0.26 (0.24, 0.28)</td>
<td>0.58 (0.56, 0.61)</td>
<td>0.82 (0.80, 0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2jureview</td>
<td>-0.01 (-0.04, 0.02)</td>
<td>0.58 (0.56, 0.61)</td>
<td>0.90 (0.87, 0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2psbars</td>
<td>-0.06 (-0.08, -0.04)</td>
<td>1.05 (1.03, 1.08)</td>
<td>0.73 (0.70, 0.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2psoppaut</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.01, 0.03)</td>
<td>1.08 (1.05, 1.10)</td>
<td>0.65 (0.62, 0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2x_horacc</td>
<td>-0.002 (-0.01, 0.005)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.79, 0.81)</td>
<td>0.59 (0.58, 0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>v2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exdfdshs</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.01, 0.03)</td>
<td>0.55 (0.52, 0.57)</td>
<td>0.96 (0.93, 0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exdjdsdg</td>
<td>0.05 (0.01, 0.08)</td>
<td>0.001 (0, 0.001)</td>
<td>0.98 (0.95, 1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exremhmg</td>
<td>-0.07 (-0.10, -0.04)</td>
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<td>0.74 (0.72, 0.76)</td>
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<td>v2exremhsp</td>
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<td>v2jupocateck</td>
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<td>v2jureview</td>
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<td>0.58 (0.56, 0.61)</td>
<td>0.90 (0.87, 0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2psbars</td>
<td>-0.06 (-0.08, -0.03)</td>
<td>1.06 (1.04, 1.09)</td>
<td>0.72 (0.70, 0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2psoppaut</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.01, 0.03)</td>
<td>1.08 (1.06, 1.11)</td>
<td>0.64 (0.62, 0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2x_horacc</td>
<td>-0.003 (-0.01, 0.003)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.79, 0.81)</td>
<td>0.59 (0.58, 0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>v3 (Final Version)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>v2exdfdshs</td>
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<td>0.55 (0.52, 0.57)</td>
<td>0.96 (0.93, 0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exdjdsdg</td>
<td>-0.07 (-0.11, -0.05)</td>
<td>0.12 (0.10, 0.16)</td>
<td>0.97 (0.94, 1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2exremhmg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2psbars</td>
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<tr>
<td>v2psoppaut</td>
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<td>1.08 (1.06, 1.11)</td>
<td>0.64 (0.62, 0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2x_horacc</td>
<td>-0.003 (-0.01, 0.003)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.79, 0.81)</td>
<td>0.59 (0.58, 0.60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posterior median and 68% credible regions
Horizontal accountability

Checks and balances