



# Russia and the West After the Ukrainian Crisis

## European Vulnerabilities to Russian Pressures

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Given Russia's annexation of Crimea and continued aggression in eastern Ukraine, Europe must reassess its approach to a regional security environment previously thought to be stable and relatively benign. This report analyzes the vulnerability of European states to possible forms of Russian influence, pressure, and intimidation and examines four areas of potential European vulnerability: military, trade and investment, energy, and politics.



### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given Russia's annexation of Crimea and continuing destabilization of eastern Ukraine,

- How are NATO and EU countries vulnerable to Russian military pressures?
- How are NATO and EU countries vulnerable to Russian economic pressures?
- How are NATO and EU countries vulnerable to Russian influences on their domestic politics?



### KEY FINDINGS

Russian Military Action and the Imbalance of Forces Have Made Its Neighbors Nervous

- Russia could threaten the sovereignty of the Baltic states, but any attempt to control Baltic territory would likely provoke NATO counteraction.
- European governments do not presently seem greatly concerned about Russian nuclear capability, though this could change if the prospect of conflict becomes more immediate.

Europe and the United States Remain Vulnerable to Russian Nuclear Forces, as Russia does to American, French, and British Nuclear Forces. Europe's Vulnerability to Disruptions in Energy, Trade, or Financial Flows Is, Overall, Limited

- European needs in almost all sectors can be readily covered by other suppliers.

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- Europe relies on Russia for a not-insignificant share of its energy, but Russia relies on Western European technology and capital for its oil exploration and extraction industries. Although Russia provides a high percentage of European oil supplies, Russia's oil exports provide it with little leverage, as Europe could tap into alternative sources.
- While the smaller economies of southeastern, central, and northeastern Europe are disproportionately vulnerable to a cutoff in Russian natural gas supplies, overall, substitution measures could compensate for a permanent cutoff in Russian gas.

#### European Domestic Politics May Provide Russia an Opportunity to Foster Instability

- Some countries have disaffected russophone minorities that could be manipulated, while others are in severe economic difficulty that could be exploited. While fragile, EU sanctions have held so far.
- Right-wing extremist parties are on the rise in Europe, and some enjoy Russian support. None of them, however, enjoys enough domestic popularity to gain control over foreign policy.

