



MILITARY EDUCATION – BETWEEN TRADITION, MODERNITY AND FINDING A PURPOSE –

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The military education system is based on the experience drawn from many decades of trials, adaptation and reforms, derived from the specific context of their times, each with their specific advantages and disadvantages. Over time, attempts have been made to align Romanian military education with modern trends, but this process was faced with difficulties in combining the modern concept with those derived from tradition, the concepts from abroad with elements specific to Romania. These difficulties have sometimes been accompanied by the dispersal of energy and resources into short-term actions that lacked focus towards a clearly established medium and long-term goal. Can it be said that the current regulations and legislative norms, as well as the models taken over time from the tradition of Romanian military education and other states, are sufficient to clearly outline the direction that should be followed by the Romanian military education system? The aim of this article is to propose an analysis of these issues and outline some conclusions related to identifying the future directions of the Romanian military education.

Keywords: training; education; resources; objectives; tradition; challenges;



INTRODUCTION

The process of training and educating officers is a constant challenge for any of the world's armies. Forming and developing the necessary competencies on hierarchical levels and in close correlation with the other categories of personnel means a very good knowledge of both the general defence and security environment and of the pedagogy in all its forms. The current system of Romanian military education and training is the result of numerous transformations over time, reflecting in each historical moment the characteristics of society as a whole, derived from political, cultural and security contexts specific to the moment. These were accompanied by specific requirements and expectations from the military environment regarding the training of military personnel, leading to a series of attempts, adaptations and reforms that took place over time *in an attempt to align Romanian military training with trends considered modern at that time. The process was fraught without difficulties, derived from the need to combine modern concepts with those derived from tradition*, concepts of foreign orientation (German, French, Anglo-Saxon) with concepts and elements specific to Romania. These difficulties have sometimes been accompanied by the dispersal of energy and resources into short-term actions that lacked focus towards a clearly established final goal, in the medium and long term. This article aims to analyse these issues and formulate conclusions in order to identify some main directions to guide the Romanian military education in the future, starting from the premise that a military system cannot develop beyond the quality of the level of education of its leaders, fighters and specialists. The study methodology is based on the analysis of the programmatic documents and the legislation in force, on interviews with military and civilian personnel within the Ministry of National Defence, as well as *on the analysis of lessons learned*.

Military education is an extremely complex, dynamic and challenging subsystem to the national education system (National Education Law, art. 34). In the current international and national context, the power of knowledge becomes an absolute prerequisite

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Education is carried out in an organised, formal way, under the guidance of instructors and teachers, using pedagogical methods such as transferring knowledge, tools, storytelling, discussions and/or through direct research, or informally. Every experience that has a formative effect in the way an individual thinks, feels or acts can be considered an educational act.

and is asserts its importance in human interactions, in all forms of organizations: circles of friends, families, associations, public or private organizations, enterprises, state or supranational. Knowledge is the main subject of epistemology helping us to understand what we know, how do we learn and what does it mean to really understand what we know.

Education can be defined as the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, personal values, moral values, personal beliefs, habits. Education is carried out in an organised, formal way, under the guidance of *instructors and teachers*, using pedagogical methods such as transferring knowledge, tools, storytelling, discussions and/or through direct research, or *informally*. Every experience that has a formative effect in the way an individual thinks, feels or acts can be considered an educational act.

The law on national education identifies a series of objectives of education and professional training, as follows: “*the development of competencies, understood as a multifunctional and transferable set of knowledge, skills / abilities and aptitudes, required for:*

- a) *a) personal fulfilment and development, by achieving the life goals, according to the interests and aspirations of each person and the desire to learn throughout the entire life;*
- b) *b) social integration and active citizen participation in society;*
- c) *c) finding employment and participation in the functioning and development of a sustainable economy;*
- d) *d) the formation of a conception of life, based on humanistic and scientific values, on national and universal culture and on the stimulation of intercultural dialogue;*
- e) *e) education in the spirit of dignity, tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms;*
- f) *f) cultivating sensitivity to human issues, to moral, civic values and the respect for nature and the natural, social and cultural environment” (art. 4).*

Starting from these general aims, the military training system must identify its own objectives, which will guide the training and education activity. In this context, it is useful to highlight the distinction between two commonly used terms, that are sometimes considered as having a synonymous meaning, but which refer to activities with distinct goals and purposes.

Thus, the concept “*process of tuition*” is less used in the literature, more commonly found being the phrases “*educational process*”

or “*instructive-educational process*”, with the meaning of a complex activity of teaching and *learning*, which is intentional, programmed, organised and conscious. The concept of Romanian *military education* has two distinct components, the academic component and the vocational component. The academic component is provided by university and post-graduate educational institutions (service level academies and the “*Carol I*” National Defence University), while the vocational part, representing the practical part of the training process, is achieved through a combination of university institutions and training centres (Țîrdea-Păunescu, 2018, p. 4).

Within the general concept of *military education*, the distinction between the concepts of *training and education* needs to be emphasised and clarified. Training refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills specific to a particular field, necessary for the performance of duties. *Education* refers to the acquisition of information, knowledge and skills that constitute the theoretical foundation of a field. In the military field, training can mean, for example, the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to the preparation and execution of a parachute jump, or the knowledge, acquisition and implementation of procedures and regulations. An officer’s education can refer to the *acquisition of values and the definition of ethical and moral landmarks, understanding the theoretical aspects of the concept of leadership, psychology, communication, resource management, but also the development of skills such as analytical and synthetic ability, intellectual flexibility, systemic thinking, critical thinking, communication skills*. It would be tempting to simplify the subject by stating that training refers to the practical part and education to the theoretical part, but we must keep in mind that training cannot be done without a theoretical foundation, and education cannot be done effectively only through lectures, without exercises and practical applications. The difference between the two concepts is given by their purpose and final objectives, and within the military education system, they must be approached in a correlated and unitary way, throughout the whole professional trajectory of the military, avoiding their use as synonyms.

The training process is more complex than the simple “*teaching-learning-assessment*” process, because it involves the inclusion in the analysis, in addition to defining teaching objectives, steps such as setting content, applying appropriate methodology and ensuring the assessment and the situational factors that determine a certain evolution of process. The formative activity is reflected in the results



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of the training which, after they are controlled and evaluated, indicate the shortcomings, deficiencies and desynchronisations of the didactic components and actions. Through feedback, the regulation of the instructive-educational process takes place. The outputs of the system become inputs for a new cycle.

OBJECTIVES OF MILITARY EDUCATION AS PART OF THE INTEGRATED DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

From the perspective of the documents that substantiate defence planning and the long-term vision of the Romanian military system, the military education and training system is managed through the human resource management process, which takes into consideration two main aspects: *“planning of the career development in order to achieve the organizational objectives and the accumulation of command/ leadership experience, by the assignment of functions at different levels of the military hierarchy”* and *“rigorous planning of human resources, so as to increase the degree of competition and professional performance, to reproduce and generate military values”* (White Paper on Defence, 2021). The military education and training system can be located mainly in relation to the second statement, regarding the planning of human resources, as its main task is to ensure, through the training and education process that the personnel attracted to the military system through the recruitment process is up to the quality standards necessary for the fulfilment of missions.

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From the point of view of identifying a direction for the military education and training system, increasing the level of professional performance and *reproducing military values* is a relevant goal, generally valid, even if perhaps too generic (of course, it is expressed in a strategic-level document and it can be further refined). But the question arises as to what does it mean to increase the degree of competition of human resources? The military training system should generate competitive graduates compared to those of equivalent specialisation and rank from other armed forces (taking into consideration the duration of their military career), or compared to graduates of civilian training (taking into consideration their professional evolution after retiring from the military)? *The answer to this question is one of the factors with a direct influence on the development direction of the military training system.*



In addition to this general objective regarding human resources management, the same document details the main directions of action for the modernization of the military training system: *“the management of the military education system will seek to change the training and education paradigm, by redirecting the resources towards training and educating specialists capable of achieving success in a constantly changing operational environment, with the professional skills necessary to carry out missions now and in the future”*. (Ibid.).

From this formulation emerge three distinct approaches, related to the management of resources related to the educational and training process, to the output-related objectives (graduates of various forms of training) and the time horizon considered. These approaches are fundamental factors in shaping a high-performance military education system, leading to a process of analysis, decision-making and requiring more complex and detailed guidelines than those identified in the aforementioned document.

In view of the three approaches outlined above, the courses of action set out in the *White Paper* can be grouped as follows.

From the point of view of *resources*, the above statement mentions the need to redirect resources to increase the efficiency of the educational and training process, in correlation with the requirements of the operational environment. In this regard, it should be emphasized that an effective military education and training system involves not only aspects related to human resources management (seen mainly in terms of its exit elements, namely the graduates), but also the management of input elements (financial, material, information resources).

Thus, the input elements involved in the quantitative and qualitative fulfilment of the education and training process are the following:

- human resources: teachers, auxiliary teaching staff and administrative staff. Human resource management sometimes loses sight of this component, focusing only on the output elements (the graduates), but the efficient and effective management of human resources in the education system is of crucial importance for the quality of the output elements. Ensuring an optimal proportion between teachers and administrative staff, attracting and motivating high-performance military and civilian teaching staff to remain in the military education system, ensuring opportunities for career development and professional development, the use

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of experiences and lessons learned throughout the military career by officers who have participated in various missions or held positions in international structures without blocking their evolution in the military career, are just some of the aspects that should be considered. The development of an effective training and education system should be done in a structured and integrated manner, correlated with the objectives of the military system, on the short, medium and long term.

- material resources: logistical-didactic base, preparation time. Regarding this aspect, the *White Paper on Defence* mentioned “modernization of infrastructures and endowment of military educational institutions with teaching materials corresponding to the new platforms and systems of armament and military equipment”.
- financial resources;
- information resources: concepts, programs, education management documents, information supports, organisational memory.

From the point of view of the *objectives and outputs*, the *White Paper on Defence* mentions a number of seven directions of action in order to modernise military education and training. Some of these directions of action are not related the process of modernisation, because they represent the classic foundations of a civil and/or military education/training system. For example, “encouraging and rewarding excellence in learning” is a foundation of any successful education system throughout the education cycle, starting right from primary school. “Maximising the level of specific competencies, by developing study programs aimed at obtaining a military qualification” is a basic objective of military education, the reason of its existence. “Structuring educational content by areas of competence, in order to ensure, progressively and correlatively, the knowledge, skills and fundamental attitudes specific to the leader, fighter and specialist” is also the classic foundation of a military education system, the starting point of teaching activity, after establishing the graduate profile and not a direction for modernisation.

Nor is “the training of lifelong learning skills and the continuous professional development of military personnel” a factor of novelty as a concept. For example, in the period immediately preceding the First World War, the officer’s training path involved graduating from the officer school, then special service-based schools, such as

the Special School of Cavalry, followed by internships in another service. Later selected officers attended the Higher War School and a complementary course, within the General Staff. This complementary course consisted of practical activities in various offices/sections, in order to familiarise participants with the activities of each section and acquiring “*knowledge on the functioning of the nerve centre of the armed forces, with an end-of-course goal of selecting officers who meet the skills needed to be officers of staff*” (Pantazi, 1999, p. 17). As another example, before 1989, by order of the Minister of National Defence, officers in positions of commanders in the students subunits in military schools and high schools (platoon, company/battery, battalion/division), as well as the military staff in education departments, were required to complete a 4-month internship in the operational units every 4 years, in order to maintain the level of training in their branch and at the same time to get familiar with the reality outside the military education system.

If this concept of lifelong learning is not new, reforming the structural framework and the specific ways of putting the concept of lifelong learning into practice can indeed be an element of modernity, by integrating and correlating this process with the current day professional activity, its requirements, but also with the military career guide.

The directions of action that are real steps towards modernisation refer to “*the adoption of digital technologies, to facilitate learning by simulating as close as possible the conditions in which future military will act*”, “*the adoption of modern learning strategies and the use of adequate teaching methods and technologies, in close correlation with the transformations of the operational environment*” and “*capitalising on the lessons learned from international missions (theatres of operations, positions in international structures) and the knowledge acquired by military personnel who have undergone training programs abroad*”.

All the directions mentioned above are valid and relevant, but it would be useful to make a distinction between “*reform*” (with the meaning of identifying and eliminating dysfunctions, including by applying classical educational design methods) and “*modernisation*” (introduction of elements with novelty aspect), because the actions necessary for the implementation of the two concepts are different. The reform mainly involves a managerial, systemic and unitary, output-oriented approach, while modernisation can be achieved both from



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a managerial point of view (purchase of modern teaching equipment and materials, rethinking the contents of curricula), but also individually (at the level of teacher/instructor), being oriented towards methods and means.

THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ROMANIAN MILITARY EDUCATION/ TRAINING SYSTEM

In the context of the objectives and output elements, it would be useful to clarify some aspects that are not the subject of programmatic documents, but have considerable implications on the quality of Romanian military education.

Taking into account the limitation given by the time factor during a training cycle (such as military university education), which curricular area should take precedence - English language proficiency or acquisition of skills and knowledge related to the military specialty?

When using the term military education/training objectives, the systemic objectives, correlated with strategic defence objectives, are the ones most often taken into account. *“Training, educating and ensuring the professional development of leaders, fighters and specialists, able to achieve success in a constantly changing operational environment, with the professional skills necessary to fulfil missions now and in the future”* is the systemic goal presented in the White Paper on Defence, but also in other programmatic documents. However, the question arises, which competencies should be adapted to the operational environment (national competencies or NATO-relevant competencies) and which of them should be acquired as a matter of priority, at specifically what level of education? Although these objectives often overlap, there are situations in which some of them will have to be prioritized over the others. As an example, *taking into account the limitation given by the time factor during a training cycle (such as military university education), which curricular area should take precedence - English language proficiency or acquisition of skills and knowledge related to the military specialty?* Should officers be trained exclusively in accordance with the Alliance’s doctrines, or the possibility (of course, low in probability and undesirable) of the need to ensure national defence outside the alliance should also be considered, bearing in mind that part of the training/education should also address the future operational environment (with a time horizon of 30 years), which generates the need to also study the doctrines of other, potentially unfriendly, states.

The programmatic documents state that the military education system, as part of the national education system, follows the Bologna

principles and is subject to the national educational policies and quality standards. This can create difficulties in harmonizing the different objectives pursued on the two levels, civilian and military. The knowledge and skills derived from the requirements of a dynamic operational environment are not identical to those derived from the Bologna principles, in terms of curricular area, organization of education, teacher evaluation criteria, training duration, etc. The limited duration of the study period must thus be carefully thought out for the harmonisation of the two directions, which generates many challenges, such as the transfer of a significant share of the specific military training towards training schools/application centres. Another example is that for an academy graduate, the continuation of his/her studies by participating in a master's program (required by the Bologna cycle) often overlaps with the first steps in his/her military career (through the appointment in an officer position), with the related challenges derived from the adaptation to a new environment, the needs to acquire position-specific information, the lack of experience. All these challenges may have as a result the decrease of the educational effectiveness. The service level objective, or the objectives of the commander of the military unit where the officer will be assigned, is to ensure his/her adaptation to the requirements of the position (through practical activities, but also by studying specific regulations and procedures), as soon as possible. The objective at the level of the military system should be to have officers with a solid theoretical basis, values, principles and skills to be used throughout the career, which means that the officer should dedicate his/her time to attend courses and study the master's program disciplines. The overlap of these two types of objectives, given the time constraints, entails compromises in the quality of the learning act, in one of the aforementioned areas.

Also, the requirements regarding the evaluation criteria for the university teachers, based on the Bologna principles, are different from the performance evaluation criteria for instructors/teachers who train the officers for meeting the operational environment requirements. For example, in the latter case, the evaluation criteria should be based on sharing the experience in theatres of operations/international positions, development of practical applications, war games, simulations, etc., while the evaluation of academic staff based on the Bologna principles emphasises the research activity (articles in publications with impact factor, research projects, etc.) and less the teaching activity. Thus, a contradiction arises, between the objectives



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of the teaching process and the career objectives of academic staff. Given the specifics of military activity (even in support areas such as resource management), the results of classroom work (development of lessons, textbooks, applications, research projects in line with the needs of the military) cannot be capitalised through publication (due to the level of classification), forcing the academic staff to focus on areas of less relevance to the military in order to meet the criteria for professional evaluation and generating a counterproductive dispersion of effort, time and energy.

An effective military education/training system thus involves the harmonisation of the two aspects, academic and training, so as to highlight the advantages of each, avoiding a false dichotomy between university education, perceived as less useful, and training. As I stated at the beginning of the article, the two issues are interconnected and should not be addressed separately. For this, it is necessary to clearly establish the role of the academic staff (civilian and military), but also of military instructors, in order to effectively benefit from the strengths of each category, in a joint effort.

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In certain circumstances, the creation of a collaboration framework between civilian/military university teachers and military specialists is the most effective way to achieve the training objectives. For example, the development of a resource management application (for a specialty course) was based on collaborative work between civilian researchers at the Institute for Defense Analysis, Washington D.C. (who contributed with the design part, specialised studies and software development), civilian and military academic staff at National Defense University, Washington DC (who contributed with the pedagogical and course design insights regarding the materials) and military specialists (at strategic and operational level, who contributed with the practical experience). If the project had been left only to the teachers, they would not have had the practical experience and maybe the level of classification necessary to have access/understand some more complex aspects. The drawback of letting the project only in the care of subject matter experts is that their time restrictions (considering that they were also working full time in their assigned positions) would have hardly allowed them to put in the full 10 months of work that were necessary to achieve it. Another drawback is that they generally lack the didactic and pedagogical skills necessary for the optimal organisation of the theoretical and applied part.

The transmission of skills such as critical thinking, systemic thinking or creativity is one advantage offered by civilian academic staff, because they are not the product of the military system, which emphasises a strict hierarchical structure and obedience to orders, and places less importance on mental flexibility and intellectual curiosity. Military instructors can make an essential contribution by sharing practical experience and lessons learned by participating in missions in theatres of operations or in various specialised positions in structures in the country and abroad.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHING STAFF WITHIN THE MILITARY TRAINING/EDUCATION SYSTEM

In order to increase the effectiveness of the military education system, it would be useful to redefine/update the role, competencies and limitations of the teaching staff (instructors and academics) and administrative staff. Thus, there is a need to align with the values, traditions but also with the new approaches specific to the alliances of which Romania is a part, emphasising the elements that lead to national performance. In this sense, it would be useful to analyse the correlation between the structure of teaching staff in NATO and EU countries and the level of education/training, in order to adapt external models to national specificities to increase their own performance.

Clearly defining the role of each category of teaching staff is useful and necessary both to increase the performance of the education system, but also to motivate and retain highly competent teaching staff in the system, by creating a professional development framework.

The career of a university teacher (following the Bologna principles) involves more than the transfer to a teaching position (without going through all the university degrees), with the fulfilment of the minimum requirements, of people who had another professional career until that moment. No matter how performant that respective specialist may be in his/her field of competence, he/she does not have the skills, knowledge and didactic and pedagogical experience necessary for the teaching activity. Subject matter experts have their role in the educational/training process, that is to share their practical experience, but as a complement to the theoretical foundations laid by university teachers, and cannot work as a substitute for them. This outlines the need to start a clear and precise process of identifying all the knowledge, skills and abilities to be gained through the education/training process, dividing them into clear disciplines, and assigning



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them to be taught by the appropriate type of qualified staff, through education or training, according to the level.

By its nature, the academic career implies stability and the gradual completion of successive phases, but for the military academic staff, this can generate a series of problems, related to the correlation between the teaching career with the military career, which requires greater mobility, but also the financial motivation of young teaching staff, who may be more attracted by the higher level of pay in an operational unit.

Some of these shortcomings can be addressed through the use of military instructors, but this requires clarifying their role. The concept of *military instructor*, as an idea, originated from other armed forces, in which the military instructor is often a non-commissioned officer and had/has the role of preparing the military (soldiers, non-commissioned officers, officers) for the development of activity-specific skills and abilities. In other words, the predominant role of military instructors is in the training area. The military professor (with the status of trainer, not of academic staff) is usually an officer from operational units, with a high degree of theoretical and practical knowledge in the field, recognised in the branch, assigned in the position of trainer for a maximum of 3 years, which has of the necessary and sufficient pedagogical skills required by the didactic activity.

The assimilation of the positions of instructors with the academic staff can only lead to confusions and the creation of an unfavourable image for both categories of teaching staff (instructors and academic). The role of military instructors and military professor (trainer) corresponds best to the requirement of *“capitalising on the lessons learned from international missions (theatres of operations, positions in international structures) and the knowledge acquired by military personnel who have undergone training programs abroad”* (White Paper on Defence, 2021).

In the absence of a clarification of the role and purpose of this category of teaching staff, the potential of non-commissioned officers' knowledge and skills is under-utilised and the important contribution they can make to the military training system is ignored. As an example, officers participating in the US Special Forces Qualification Course are predominantly trained by non-commissioned officers who have been part of SOF teams and have extensive practical experience. Even though they apparently train officers with a higher level of education, the aim is to bring a new, practical perspective on how an SOF team works and what skills and competencies each member

contributes to, so that officers can apply theoretical knowledge in practice. The reason why this experience is not transmitted by an officer is a very pragmatic one: *“a captain stays in the team for two or three years, before being promoted to another position, while a non-commissioned officer can stay for 13 years. The purpose of the non-commissioned officer is to help the officer understand the dynamics of the team, the role of each member and the place of the officer in that team”* (Mattson, 2012). *“An officer must be able to consult with the non-commissioned officer and the rest of the team... while the role of the officer is predominantly in the planning part, the role of the non-commissioned officer is to ensure the unity of the team and take care of its members”* (Ibid).

As for the military professor (trainer), one of his\her strengths is the practical experience, gained in theatres of operations or in various national or international positions. By definition, the military professor should have more mobility than the academic teaching staff, as the dynamic operational environment means that after 5 years as a military professor, that officer must return to the operational part, in order to keep up to date with the latest developments in his/her area of expertise. The practical experience in Iraq is useful for the study of theory, but the Iraq operational environment cannot be compared with the one in Afghanistan, and if the purpose is to transmit practical experience and not the study of theory, by definition the military professor cannot remain in position for more than a few years. A career of 20-30 years as a military instructor would have limited benefits both from the point of view of system performance and also from the point of view of the officer, who opted for a military career and not a university career, and staying too long in that position only leads to loss of professional development opportunities. Of course, there is the important issue of how to select the best officers for the role of military professor, but also how to motivate them to postpone for a few years their professional career in the operational field.



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FORMING MILITARY LEADERS

The stated goal of the military education/training system of *“forming and ensuring the professional development of leaders, fighters and specialists capable of achieving success in a constantly changing operational environment, which have the professional skills necessary to fulfil the missions now and in the future”* would be worth



Leadership training is an essential component for every armed forces, as adapting to changes in the operational environment requires a combination of pre-existing knowledge and skills, the basis of which must be laid in view of a longer time horizon and following the tactical level, as well as the operational and strategic ones.

analysing in more detail. Thus, a distinction must be made between the training of fighters, the training of specialists and the training of leaders, because the educational process and the specific objectives for each of them differ. For example, it is the purpose of the Military Technical Academy to train specialists, but can it really be said that it trains fighters? What is the meaning of these expressions? The training of a chemical engineer, for example, involves a preponderant allocation of time for theoretical and practical training in the field, which leaves less time for the training necessary for a fighter. A chemical engineer officer or a finance officer cannot be expected to have the same physical or tactical performance as an infantry officer, because that is not the requirement of their positions. Some military specialisations, or training courses, have by design a stronger education component, requiring a theoretical, academic approach, while others require an approach with a stronger training component.

Leadership training is an essential component for every armed forces, as adapting to changes in the operational environment requires a combination of pre-existing knowledge and skills, the basis of which must be laid in view of a longer time horizon and following the tactical level, as well as the operational and strategic ones. An effective and efficient leader is formed, building on specific pre-existing personality characteristics, with leadership skills acquired starting from a solid theoretical basis in terms of leadership, psychology, communication, resource management, capacity of analysis and synthesis, critical thinking, systemic thinking, etc. (which form the education component), followed by the development of practical skills in the aforementioned fields (forming the training component). Not every specialist or fighter will have leadership skills, nor should this be pursued, as each person can contribute to the efficient functioning of the system through specific skills. We need leaders as well as fighters and specialists. That is why the formation of leaders is a much more complex process, which involves a unitary and inter-correlated approach between the education system, the human resources management system and the personnel management in each military unit.

“Structuring educational content by areas of competence, so as to ensure, progressively and correlatively, the knowledge, skills and fundamental attitudes specific to the leader, fighter and specialist” is an essential direction for action to achieve a successful education system, but there is the need to clarify what are those competencies for each level (the graduate’s profile). Also, the educational process

must be correlated with the various stages of the military career, starting from a systemic, long-term approach. Certain knowledge and information that will be taught, for example, in a resource management course for a battalion commander can be understood and acquired much more effectively if there is a minimum level of knowledge in the economic field acquired from the academy. One of the objectives of the education component of military education/training system should be the formation of a minimum level of general culture in areas with which the officer will have subsequent contact: resource management, leadership, communication, psychology, security and military environment, etc. It is possible, for example, for a graduate of the Military Technical Academy to reach a position during his career that is directly related to the field of logistics, regardless of the initial specialisation, and a basic course in resource management, which might have seemed completely uninteresting during his university studies, shall prove to be extremely useful. An officer's professional path during his military career should be clearly outlined from the beginning, and the knowledge and skills taught in the educational process correlated with current and future needs.

Last but not least, the achievement of systemic goals must be seen in correlation with the career goals (and to some extent also with the personal goals, in the sense of maintaining the motivation) of students/trainees. Ignoring these objectives and focusing exclusively on systemic objectives can only lead over time to a decrease in the quality and qualification of human resources in the armed forces. Rewarding excellence in learning by awarding marks/grades/distinctions is not enough to motivate excellence in learning, nor to keep the top-performing officers in the military system. The motivational factors of the new generations need to be better understood; for them values such as patriotism are not necessarily a priority, compared to performing a stimulating activity, having opportunities for advancement, the recognition of merits or obtaining a certain material level (Macovei, Argintaru, 2016).

The limited possibilities of capitalising the experience and knowledge of top graduates of study programs abroad by appointing them to positions corresponding to their qualification, regardless of rank, the reduced possibilities of financial stimulation, the lack of effective social support for the family, the rigidity of the system, are all factors that lead to the loss of the most valuable officers (either through leaving the military system for more attractive career opportunities,



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or by not using their skills and knowledge to their true value) and retaining in the system a majority of military personnel motivated only by job stability.

Finally, from the point of view of the time horizon, an important factor for an effective education/training system is the clear definition of the curricular area, depending on the level, in order to ensure a progressive and correlated education/training. The end state declared by the programmatic documents (*White Paper on Defence, Concept on the modernisation of military education*) is to ensure the training of the military to achieve success in the present and future operational environment, to be able to use high performance technology and to be deeply attached to the national and European military values and cultural institutions. Defining and mastering national and European military and cultural values is part of the tradition of military education, which will be used as a benchmark by the military throughout his career. However, taking the operational environment as a benchmark generates a series of challenges. The preparation for the current operational environment is achieved through professional and training courses (especially after graduation, and throughout the career). Their purpose is to transmit information and generate skills currently valid in order to solve current problems that the military is facing in the current position or in the next position. The nature of these courses brings them closer to the training side than to the education side.

Training and educating the military personnel in order to adapt to the operational environment of the future, involves however a medium and long-term approach regarding how knowledge and skills are structured and presented, presuming the development of a systemic vision, flexible thinking, changing the mindset, skills such as critical thinking, analytical ability, decision making on various levels of power, use of modern technology. But how far in the future should we look when developing this type of education? A career course for higher ranks, such as colonel or general, cannot ensure the development of all these skills, for objective reasons, given the time limitation, but also due to the different set of knowledge, skills and experience the students start with. Changing the way of thinking, developing the skills of using modern technology and the analytical spirit are endeavours that should take place throughout the military career, through various forms of education/training, starting from the basic foundations set during the undergraduate studies and depending on the specific career stage and skills of each military personnel.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of a high-performance military education/training system is a difficult and complex process, due to the multitude of influence factors to be analysed, but also to the time horizon to be considered, including objectives, resources and time factor. Thus, we must start from the past (elements of tradition and foundations that have permanent validity), passing through the present (adaptation to the requirements of the contemporary operational environment, at all levels), but with the ultimate goal of well-defined objectives for the future.

Perhaps the most appropriate conclusion for this article is a statement by the great philosopher and pedagogue Emmanuel Kant *“a principle of pedagogy that people who make plans in education should keep in mind is that children should not be raised according to the current state of the mankind, but according to a better state, possible in the future, that is according to the ideal of humanity and of its entire mission. This principle is of great significance. Parents should not only raise their children for the sake of the world today, as bad as it is. They should also give them a better education so that it results in a better state in the future”* (Kant, 1886, p. 40).

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