Today’s world presents a contradictory picture that, along with economically prosperous areas, characterised by stability and integration trends, also includes poor, unstable regions, on the verge of disintegration. International threats and vulnerabilities have not disappeared, they have not diminished, they have changed. Instability has spread, and the danger of war has been replaced by a multitude of risk factors, the importance of which varies from situation to situation. Therefore, situations generate tensions that will become explosive and will inevitably lead to a whole range of domestic and international crises, crises that, as a rule, have ethnic, religious, territorial or economic roots. The multitude of actors involved in the process of ensuring security and defence in the Euro-Atlantic area makes it difficult to coordinate and streamline the initiatives launched for each area. Hence the need for each “security actor” to try to develop comprehensive strategies to address defence consolidation.

Keywords: ensuring security; strengthening defence; common defence policies; security culture;

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary security environment is characterised by substantial transformations, which require the adaptation of classical criteria for the analysis of international security. Although a “clash of civilisations” (Huntington, p. 164) was refuted by the evolution of international relations after the 1990s, and the change in the balance of power through devastating wars such as those of the twentieth century is quite unlikely to occur at least in the medium term, the international environment is not characterised by a state of security that is at the level of expectations.

The new challenges to security, generated by overlapping phenomena such as globalisation, on the one hand, and the fragmentation of nations, on the other hand, add to classical forms of regional risks and vulnerabilities, leading us to approach documentary research methods doubled by an analysis for the structural correlation of the analysed field, the identification of synthetic schemes for expressing the analysed information or, in this case, the reflection of a comparative study of NATO and EU approaches, significant approaches underlying the optimisation of cooperation activities to strengthen security and defence in the Euro-Atlantic area. Thus, following the analysis, we have identified that traditional outbreaks of tension persist, but their development is intrinsically influenced by the emergence of unconventional and cross-border risks, such as terrorism, organised crime, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The complexity of the factors involved in ensuring the security and defence of a region, the financial efforts required for this process, explains why, in the current conditions of the international environment, no actor can project power, in the context of strengthening security and defence, alone. Interdependencies obliging it to total or partial cooperation.

Coordinating and streamlining the initiatives launched to ensure security and defence is becoming difficult at the level of the actors involved in the process for each area. Thus, it is necessary to make efforts at the level of each of them to standardise the approaches and simplify the planning, coordination and other related procedures. It is necessary for each major actor to try to design strategies,
comprehensive plans to address reconstruction, public diplomacy strategies, because more and more structures belonging to such actors have an essential role, especially in the post-conflict reconstruction process.

Among the non-state actors, the most important structures that stand out in the field of security and defence are the international organisations. As part of the world system, they can be considered relatively new elements, which arose during the 19th century. Their importance increased rapidly during the next century and a significant increase can be seen only after 1945.

An international organisation is not a continuation in another form of the exercise of traditional means of force, as some theorists (e.g., Clausewitz) claim, and no stage in the formation of a state. International collaboration, materialised through these associations is the fundamental element of a stable global system. The need for this type of organisation comes from the excessive diversification of problems faced by state actors, the multiplication of threats and increasing needs. Moreover, there is the need for collective action in solving common problems, based on effective solutions, as well as for institutionalising a collective decision-making process.

In what follows we will focus on two of the most important international organisations, namely the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union, trying to identify the importance and tools used by them in managing the process of strengthening security and defence in the Euro-Atlantic area.

ENSURING/STRENGTHENING SECURITY AND DEFENCE FROM A NATO PERSPECTIVE

NATO is a defensive alliance. The main responsibility is to protect and defend the territory and the population against an attack. Any attack on an ally will be considered an attack on all, in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Thus, a special role in the comprehensive approach to the security and defence process is the 2010 Lisbon Summit, where member countries decided to adopt the new Strategic Concept of the Alliance for the next 10 years, a concept that took into account, in addition to the classical threats such as the terrorist danger, the new challenges of the international environment, namely cyber-attacks, piracy etc. (Ghiba, Chivu, 2014, p. 66).

This concept essentially reflects an integrated approach of NATO to participation in operations and the fulfilment, in general, of its missions, which involves relationships with other partners and international actors, civil-military crisis management tools, support for stabilisation and reconstruction operations, ensuring security and defence in a region – the example of Afghanistan being relevant in this regard, showing that NATO’s role is no longer strictly military.

According to the new Strategic Concept adopted at the summit, in the following period NATO underwent a real transformation, at both organisational and conceptual levels, by reconfiguring the missions, which has allowed NATO to engage beyond the traditional area of action.

NATO is a governmental organisation in which member countries retain their sovereignty and independence, based on political and military cooperation. This organisation is the transatlantic link through which the security of North America is permanently linked to that of Europe.

The North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington on 4 April 1949, created an alliance between ten independent European nations and two North American nations engaged in mutual defence, following successive enlargements. The number of member states is now 30, including Romania. According to the Preamble to the Treaty, the members of the Alliance are committed to safeguarding the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, based on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law (NATO Guide, 2011, p. 21).

NATO’s main goal, set out in the Washington Treaty, is to defend the freedom and security of all its members through political and/or military means. Achieving this goal, however, could be jeopardised by the emergence of crises and conflicts that would affect Euro-Atlantic security. Therefore, the Alliance not only ensures the defence of its members, but also contributes to maintaining peace and stability in the region by providing any form of assistance in accordance with the specifics of the conflict.

NATO, as a strong security organisation determined to participate in the global effort to ensure a stable and secure international environment, must strengthen its efficiency in crisis management operations through an increased share of military-civilian cooperation. NATO permanent military transformation is doubled by a political one, in response to the transfer from one type of threat – the massive military invasion – to a variety of asymmetric risks and threats to member states.

NATO is currently involved in peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster support, the fight against terrorism and security sector reform, public diplomacy, political consultations, constantly adapting its working concepts in a way...
that allows it to meet specific requirements. The Alliance’s dominant military goal today is to promote stability in regions of the world where instability could affect the well-being rather than military security of its many members (Bertram, 2006).

Certainly, NATO has shown considerable adaptability in recent years. The Alliance has expanded its membership, thus extending the area of stability within Europe even further. It has also acknowledged that security has become global, which means that NATO, the West’s main security organisation, has to be prepared to act outside the Euro-Atlantic area if it wants to remain credible in front of its members and the whole world. However, what NATO has yet to accept is that promoting stability is the only task its forces are now required to fulfil. NATO is needed and prepared to generate forces to help ensure the security and defence of sensitive regions of the world. It began in the Balkans and extended to the Middle East, and the demand for such missions is likely to increase in the future.

Ensuring security and defence is a requirement for which NATO is best suited politically and militarily. From a political point of view, recent experience has shown that members tend to agree quickly on security operations. From a military point of view, although none of the European armed forces can match the United States of America in terms of spending and top combat capabilities, many of them have experience in security and defence operations. Moreover, the European Supreme Allied Command in Mons is the only one qualified to prepare preparatory work for both allies and partners to deploy forces in peacekeeping and crisis isolation operations.

In the decision-making process of the Alliance, the share of “stabilisers” must not be less than that of “fighters”. In the end, the forces that deal with the consequences of the intervention are at least as important as the forces that enter the field first. Any member that wants NATO to have the capacity to stabilise after the fight is over should know how to gain the support of as many members as possible as soon as possible. Allies whose forces will be of crucial importance after the end of the conflict must have a proportionate influence before it begins.

The Alliance’s Strategic Concept “Active Engagement, Modern Defence”, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, brought new approaches to the Alliance’s engagement in crisis prevention, conflict management and post-conflict stabilisation in cooperation with partners, the UN and the EU (Lisbon Summit Declaration, 2010). Thus, the Strategic Concept was the basis of the Alliance’s evolution in the next period, an evolution developed in a dynamic and changing international environment, against new threats, with new capabilities and new partners (Ghiba, Chivu, p. 73).

Given these issues and considering the growing transnational nature of the new challenges of the international security environment, the key issues of NATO were highlighted at the Lisbon Summit, namely: collective defence, crisis management and security through cooperation. Accordingly, NATO is actively engaged together with other international actors and organisations dealing with security and defence issues, being open to deepening this cooperation.

The Alliance will continue to promote a 360-degree approach to security and effectively fulfil all three key tasks set out in the Strategic Concept: collective defence, crisis management and security through cooperation.

The complexity of security operations seeks to keep pace with the multidimensional nature of 21st century security challenges, calling for a comprehensive approach that effectively combines political, civilian and military instruments. The analysis of Chapter 4 of the Strategic Concept – security through crisis management can highlight the innovative nature of crisis management, reiterating that NATO, through political and/or military approaches will engage where possible and when necessary to prevent and manage a crisis (Savu, 2011, pp. 85-86) or to take measures specific to the post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction process, in cooperation with civil structures.

The NATO Summit in Chicago in 2012 is very important in the evolution of the Alliance because it is practically the verification of the “roadmap” of the Lisbon Summit. Thus, debates were planned on how to implement the seventh strategic concept to make the best decisions on NATO operations, develop the Alliance’s capabilities and present a comprehensive and coherent defence package, which included new concepts: Smart Defence, NATO Forces 2020, Connected Forces (Chicago Summit Declaration, 2012), and other topics of interest. The importance of this summit is special, because, in practice, this meeting materialises the transition from the stage of decision-making or theoretical approaches that took place at the Lisbon Summit to the implementation phase.

The Alliance has a unique and internationally recognised expertise in security and defence, being also involved in the civil-political sphere. The US Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) solution, initiated by the US and later extended to other NATO member states involved in managing post-conflict reconstruction in theatres of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, may represent a certain stage
of post-conflict management, an alternative to the purely military one, these teams having an interdisciplinary composition (military and civilian) and the ability to restore the legitimate rights of national and local authorities, to remove regional causes of instability and to participate in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of key infrastructure elements.

Managing security and defence, from a NATO perspective, involves knowing the threats, risks, anticipating and preparing reactions, finding the necessary solutions, as well as optimal communication with the population, which must be properly prepared and advised in relation to decisions and situations. The large number of civilian personnel, belonging to international, non-governmental, private or volunteer organisations, involved in NATO-led operations, determines the need to coordinate civil and military actions to achieve unity of effort and purpose to normalise economic and social life in the area affected by conflict or crisis.

The forces participating in ensuring security and defence will have to maintain, as a basis for planning and execution, the expeditious character, will continue to have a united and multinational character, and the extent of actions in post-conflict context will remain dependent on state availability, in terms of financial contribution and willingness to get involved.

In this context, the structure of the force intended to ensure/strengthen security and defence will be characterised by increasing the civilian component of the multinational force, by increasing the number of international humanitarian organisations, governmental, non-governmental and private organisations of volunteers participating in such operations, compared to NATO military forces whose main role will be to prepare and train the military forces of the state(s) concerned, as well as to ensure the security of the civilian component.

From the study of more specialised works, presented in the selective bibliography, it results that the approach of operations from the perspective of several NATO member states tends towards the same purpose, but with particularities generated by the interests and resources provided by each state. Therefore, it can be concluded that NATO member states will continue to be “actors” with transparent doctrines in the context of security operations, with known principles and rules, in the spirit and letter of the provisions of international law applicable in armed conflicts, “actors” that will continue to face others, seemingly devoid of doctrines, but with flexible and adaptable techniques, tactics and procedures depending on the opponent they face and the motivation maintained and fuelled by fanaticism or other types of interests. This situation highlights, especially in the context of ensuring security and defence, another participant in this type of action, namely the civilian population.

Depending on the profile and capabilities of the force, the achievement of objectives and the success of the security process, as a generic process, as well as on the military operation subsumed under it, consists in selecting and applying techniques to promote cooperation and consensus, either through persuasion and influence, or through a combination of techniques designed to promote consensus with those aimed at control, enforcement and sometimes even correction.

Pursuing its policy of preserving peace, preventing war, strengthening security and stability, in accordance with its fundamental security tasks, NATO will seek, in cooperation with other organisations, to prevent conflicts, or, in the event of a crisis, to contribute to its effective management, with the application of the rules of international law, including the possibility of carrying out non-Article 5 crisis response operations. Preparing the Alliance for such operations supports the broader goal of strengthening and expanding stability and often involves the participation of Alliance partners.

An increasingly important part of the effectiveness of NATO security and defence missions is the Alliance’s distinct contribution to the international community’s efforts to preserve and restore peace and prevent conflict. In this context, NATO has offered to support, as appropriate and in accordance with its own mechanisms, peacekeeping and other operations under the authority of the UN Security Council, including through the provision of NATO resources and expertise.

The post-2010 NATO evolution illustrates not only the concern to respond effectively to new risks and threats, but also the tendency of member states and their governing structures to transform the Alliance into a politico-military nucleus of a possible security system with a general European vocation.

The following factors argue in this regard: changes in doctrine and structure; concerns to project the stability of Western Europe in the eastern part of the continent, by supporting the processes of assertion of democratic societies in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular by assisting in the restructuring of military bodies and ensuring civilian control over the armies of these countries; ensuring civilian control over the armed forces of these countries, as well as the preparations made to participate, in case of need, in peacekeeping missions and in those of imposing
peace outside the provisions of Art. 5; the intention to gradually expand to the east, by including Central and Eastern European countries; developing partnerships and cooperation with the Russian Federation, in order to create an environment of global security and stability.

That is why NATO should reaffirm its commitment to the collective defence of its member countries. In addition, given the likely challenges, the strength that the Alliance can provide for security operations will also be adequate to ensure collective defence.

NATO demonstrates a remarkable willingness to adapt to new realities and to make security and defence its central mission. The Alliance remains the cornerstone of a strong collective defence and the key transatlantic forum for security consultations and allied decisions.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE FROM AN EU PERSPECTIVE

The European Union is a prominent global player that has indeed developed policies in a wide variety of areas. In the field of crisis management and conflict prevention, the EU Security Strategy the basic document, and a first step in its effective implementation can be drawn from an inventory of existing policies in all areas of external relations; another may be to re-evaluate existing policies, depending on the objectives set by the strategy by strengthening policy coordination; finally, there are areas that still need to be identified and developed in depth.

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is the EU’s response to security crises and challenges to the interests of Member States since the end of the Cold War. Although the idea of integrating European security and defence policies has a history of almost half a century, its actual realisation came quite late, in the context generated by the Kosovo crisis (Sarcinschi, 2005, p. 38.). Created with the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2007, the CSDP follows the former European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), providing the institutional framework for security and defence cooperation at EU level. An individualising element of the CSDP is that it retains its intergovernmental character, operating based on the principle of unanimity in decision-making.

The Global Strategy for Foreign Policy and Security, adopted in June 2016, is the medium- and long-term framework for the Union’s external action, to which the CSDP is also subject. Thus, the EU is based on strong partnerships with other actors in ensuring security and defence, including the Council of Europe and the OSCE, its role in ensuring security and defence developing in a relatively short period of time (Circiumaru, 2010, p. 90).

With the support of national parliaments and the European Parliament, the EU is a major international player: its political arsenal includes civilian and military instruments, and its policies – whether trade, development or security – are of great importance in the world.

Under the general objective of establishing a common European defence capability, achieved through the contribution of Member States with civilian and military capabilities, under the auspices of the CSDP, significant progress has been made both in developing the conceptual framework and in launching initiatives to develop security and defence capabilities, in support of the EU’s active profile to meet security challenges. A reflection process (Strategic Compass) was also launched in 2020 to define the profile of the relevant EU actor in the field of security and defence.

A key objective of the EU is to link the CFSP approaches (Pillar II) to the Community role (Pillar I) (Annex VI to the Presidency Conclusions of the 2000 Nice European Council). Indeed, both the European Council’s “EU Program for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts” and the “Commission Communication on Conflict Prevention” focus on developing coherence between EU “pillars” in order to improve its effectiveness as an actor in ensuring security and defence in the Euro-Atlantic area. The EU’s overall strategy on foreign and security policy is the basis for the future sustainable development of this large European family.

The EU’s involvement in security and defence management is closely linked to the evolution of the common foreign and security policy, which did not exist until 1993, when the Maastricht Treaty entered into force. Previously, external relations were limited to trade relations, relations with former colonies of some Member States or aid to developing countries.

The EU is now facing a series of major crises, both inside and outside it (according to the European Union’s Global Foreign and Security Policy Strategy).

The first steps in defining a European foreign policy began with the so-called process of European political cooperation, which, despite its declarative nature, represented an important moment.
In recent decades, the EU has built a multiple network of international relations, the scope of which extends far beyond trade and economic development, leading to the development of cooperation that includes political dialogue, democracy support and investment cooperation. This, coupled with deep integration, has given the EU a new status in the exercise of its responsibilities, rights and obligations as a global player and in the creation of the tools needed to exercise them. With the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Member States have been able to coordinate their own policies and give the EU its own political identity, with the Union having the necessary mechanisms and tools to achieve this identity (Cameron, 2003, pp. 20-34).

Today, the EU benefits from a strategic vision, integrated within its own security strategy, as well as from the tools necessary to assume an operational role in the field of crisis management, which allows it to be actively engaged in developing a global profile in the international security architecture. At the internal institutional level, the organisation goes through a complex process of reconfiguring its role in the management of global security, of development on extended coordinates of the security and defence dimension, supported by the operationalisation of the relevant capacities on this dimension, rejecting violence, terror and bigotry ab initio, not remaining indifferent to the injustices the world currently faces.

Almost all of its post-2010 achievements are due to the application of the broad-based provisions of the European Security Strategy (ESS), a comprehensive strategy that presents a common vision of the threats and responses to them, provides the Union with a guide to international action and calls for developing a strategic European culture and the capabilities – military, civilian, diplomatic – necessary for Europe to intervene in the regional, continental and international security environment.

By materialising the ideas of the ESS 2003, with a new hierarchy of threats to European and global security, the organisation is on its way to becoming a credible European political authority, a responsible regional actor, and by the multitude and scope of regional and global security and stability, it has an important contribution to asserting its quality of credible world power. This trend of action affirmation, found after the content analysis, comes from all its military operations, which strengthen the visibility of the CSDP on the continent and in the world, allow the validation of the main political, economic and financial instruments, contribute to improving the Union’s defence capabilities, confirm the idea of strategic partnership with a strong but not exclusive NATO, complement a global European defence device and contribute to building a credible world power.

A particularly important issue for increasing the effectiveness of EU crisis management missions, according to the Lisbon Treaty, is the extension of the scope of missions beyond existing humanitarian, peacekeeping, and crisis management missions, including peace enforcement (known as Petersberg-type tasks) by including joint disarmament operations, providing military assistance and advice, combating terrorism.

We have also identified as novelty elements the solidarity clause and the mutual assistance and support clause in case of aggression. Thus, notable achievements in implementing the Global Strategy include security and defence package, in all its dimensions, state and societal resilience in the neighbourhood, integrated approach to external crises and conflicts, cooperating regional orders, rule-based governance and multilateralism, internal-external nexus.

In the new strategic equation of the 21st century, we believe that the EU has a privileged position, based on the quality of a global organisation, provided with all means – economic, diplomatic, civilian and military – of external action as well as with a global vision and a specific security strategy on its military-strategic modernisation efforts, in the conditions of more and more consistent requests from other international actors, such as the UN and NATO.

The EU is determined to play a responsible role in global security, as the European Security Strategy emphasises, in civilian crisis management, which is an essential component of its foreign policy.

In the field of security and defence, the most advanced in terms of implementation, there are a number of milestones in supporting the objectives assumed by the Union at this level, progress identified as a basis for optimising activities to contribute to ensuring the field, thus: strengthening the operational dimension the EU’s commitment to building the Union’s Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) for non-executive military missions and the exercise of command and control at the military strategic level, launching and operationalising a package of initiatives, including the European Defence Fund (EDF), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as well as strengthening the civilian dimension of the CSDP, including through the adoption of the CSDP Civil Compact.
NATO-EU cooperation in ensuring euro-atlantic security

The EU-NATO relationship was institutionalized by the adoption in Copenhagen, in 2002, of NATO-EU Agreements that allowed the EU access to the Alliance’s means and capabilities, with a view to conducting EU-led operations.

The so-called “Berlin Plus” agreements provided guaranteeing EU access to NATO planning capabilities to conduct operations and identifying European command options for DSACEUR during an EU operation using NATO means and capabilities. (Handbook on CSDP, 2012, p. 46). The 2000 Nice European Council laid the foundations for the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, which was formalised by the EU-NATO Joint Declaration on European Security and Defence Policy. Following the conclusion of these arrangements, the first EU – Concordia military operation was launched in 2003 and the EUFOR – Althea operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2004.

The strategic partnership is built on a common vision of the new challenges to global security. While NATO remains the main international organisation with the necessary capabilities to defend member states and maintain or impose peace, the European Union, through the development of the European Security and Defence Policy, has added to its economic instruments the ability to independently conduct missions in crisis management. The common principles on which the strategic partnership between the two major organisations is based are:

- Partnership – ensures that crisis management activities are mutual, but at the same time respects the nature of each organisation.
- Consultations, dialogues, cooperation and transparency.
- Equality – by respecting the autonomy of the decisions of each party.
- Respecting the interests of EU and NATO member states.
- Respect for the UN Charter.
- Consistent, transparent and mutual consolidation of the common military capabilities of the two organisations (EU Global Strategy).

The established objectives of the strategic partnership are:

- The European Union ensures the full involvement in the ESDP of NATO member states that are not EU members.
- NATO supports ESDP and ensures EU access to NATO capabilities.
- Both organisations are committed to developing established common capabilities.

At the 2010 Lisbon Summit, the Alliance emphasised its desire to improve its partnership with the EU, in the spirit of a joint and complementary effort by the two organisations to maintain a climate of peace in the world: “The full consolidation of this strategic partnership, as agreed by the two organisations and enshrined in the Strategic Concept, is particularly important in the current environment of austerity; NATO and the EU must continue and strengthen practical cooperation in operations, in broad political consultations and in capability development. NATO and the EU are cooperating in crisis management operations, for mutual reinforcement, especially in Afghanistan, Kosovo and in the fight against piracy” (Savu, 2011).

In Afghanistan, for example, the European Union and NATO sought to implement the comprehensive approach. NATO’s ISAF mission aimed to build a stable and secure environment in which the Afghan state and other international actors can develop a democratic regime and institutions that would underpin its development. On the issue of piracy, NATO and EU naval forces (Ocean Shield and EUNAVFOR Atalanta) have been deployed on the Somali coast since 2008 for anti-piracy missions.

Through these partnerships, the two major organisations have tried to strengthen their weaknesses. Thus, the EU has the financial resources and development instruments that can contribute to the economic recovery of war-torn societies, and the prospect for some states to become EU members can provide a strong incentive to ensure cooperation. On the other hand, NATO’s undisputed advantage lies in its military capabilities, including its expertise in planning, organising and conducting operations involving the armed forces of Allies and partners in the field of security.

The Alliance makes a special effort to fulfil the full range of tasks necessary for the states’ consolidation and social and economic development. Here must also intervene the economic instruments and resources available to the European Union.

Regarding the continuation of actions to implement the inventory of measures agreed for the development of the NATO-EU cooperation framework, the structural correlation carried out in the documentary research has shown that significant progress has been made in military mobility, cyber security, hybrid field, strategic communication and joint exercises. At the same time, involvement in ensuring international security will mean: the coherent and integrated use, across the wide range of crisis management situations, of Community instruments and civilian instruments of the ESDP; civilian crisis management in priority sectors; the Union’s...
contribution to the reform of the security sector and support for the process of disarmament, demobilisation, stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction and reintegration; the development of integrated and variable civil crisis management instruments, which respond to the specific needs of the field and local institutions; simultaneous conduct of several ESDP crisis management operations; enrolling during the mission and placing at the height of the necessary qualification of the personnel participating in the civilian management of the crises and ensuring the coherence of the efforts.

This highlights the importance of transatlantic ties and the need for NATO and the EU to act as equal partners. The EU reiterates its commitment to NATO and asserts that a “balanced” EU-NATO partnership must be maintained.

CONCLUSIONS

A possible explanation for the different pace of assumption and implementation of security and defence objectives by different actors is even their different temporal involvement. From the analysed materials it has resulted that ideally both dimensions, both ensuring security and strengthening defence, should be launched simultaneously (Ionescu, 2014, p. 35). Here, however, we must point out that practitioners denounce the difficulty of simultaneously carrying out these fundamental objectives, while theorists criticise the focus of key actors on ensuring security at the expense of encouraging specific consolidation projects.

Following a detailed, customised analysis on the role of each actor, we have discovered both doctrinal and operational shortcomings (for example, the lack of input, output strategies, up to objective plans for each rotation, commander, senior representative). Moreover, for example for the situation in Afghanistan, the strategy and objectives theoretically identified by the Afghans, but in reality, by the international community, were neither relevant nor fully assumed by external actors.

On the other hand, although we are witnessing a demilitarisation of the defence consolidation process, the role of high-profile civilians such as the NATO Special Representative or the UN Special Representative is still underused. From this perspective, international security organisations must reaffirm “belief in fundamental human rights, dignity and the value of the human person” and create “the conditions necessary for the maintenance of justice and the observance obligations under treaties and sources of international law” (Charter of the United Nations).

Under a UN mandate, international security organisations are competent to act to ensure peace, resolve disputes and ensure international security. Although the UN mandate is universally applicable and any conflict that threatens international peace and security can be placed on its agenda, the way crises have been addressed has often depended on the interests of the great powers, namely the five permanent members of the Security Council (Almășan, 2012, pp. 138-149).

If, in the past decade, the benefits of regional cooperation have been measured mainly in political terms by rebuilding mutual trust between the states in the region, the challenge now is to identify and promote concrete projects that lead to the modernisation and development of the region as a whole and of each state in, so that the living standards of the population can be improved.

The UN cannot guarantee collective security, peaceful resolution of conflicts or the elimination of all forms of violence in the world, but it can help achieve these goals through state actors and international security organisations, ushering in a world where renunciation of all acts of violence to seem the right and appropriate way to act.

A conflict between states that are members of an international organisation, that cooperate within it and that try to resolve their disputes under its roof acquires important and effective incentives to reduce the degree of violence. The substance of the conflict will not change, but the way it will be resolved will be decisively influenced by the international organisation. The effects will be even greater if the bodies and institutions of the organisation are also involved in the settlement process.

Moving the conflict from the area of political ideology to that of ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic or class differences requires a reconsideration of the power of social entities and, consequently, of the instruments of ensuring security and defence.

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