



INVESTMENTS IN SECURITY AND DEFENCE AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE EU STRATEGIC COMPASS AND THE NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT

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Considering the current strategic paradigm, fundamentally different from the one existing in the early years of this century, Romania's level of ambition is aimed at a solid defence posture, in the national and allied context, in the Black Sea region, on NATO's eastern flank, and on the European Union eastern border. In order for Romania to strengthen the defence and deterrence posture and to remain a security provider in the region, it needs armed forces adapted to the present and future levels of information, knowledge and technological progress.

Therefore, the development of the armed forces as well as of the associated capabilities that enable the adequate response in the event of any type of aggression entails five essential elements, as they are presented in the defence planning documents, in line with the 2040 Defence Strategic Analysis: capabilities employing cutting-edge technology, highly-skilled and trained human resources, a well-developed defence industry, an innovation-based organisational culture and, last but not least, resilience.

In this context, Romania has to ensure the effective complementarity between the national and collective defence systems, including in terms of procurement procedures and military capabilities meant to meet the Romanian Armed Forces Procurement Plan.

Considering the initiatives promoted in Brussels and Madrid and recorded in NATO Strategic Concepts, it is necessary a continuous effort to update the national legal framework so that it can be fully integrated in the defence projects developed by both NATO and the EU, and it can make use of these projects associated resources. I am particularly referring here to the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the European Defence Industrial Programme (EDIP) that allow not only for the national defence industry development but also for the Romanian Armed Forces equipment interoperability with that of the Allies.



It is also important to strengthen Romania's participation in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Strategic Compass and the other European programmes in the field of defence, as well as in NATO development programmes, with a special focus on the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), concentrating on the implementation of disruptive technologies, a programme launched at the NATO Summit in Brussels. The programme was initiated in the context of emerging and disruptive technologies (Artificial Intelligence, quantum technologies, 5G communications, smart cities, cloud, blockchain, Software Defined Radios or Zero Trust Networks).

With regard to the European programmes, their main goals are to develop projects in order to enhance military training and exercises as well as to jointly strengthen European capabilities, including in cyberspace, and to increase joint and collaborative strategic defence capability projects. They are also meant to harmonising, pooling resources and reducing duplication, meaning capability development and support for the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The mentioned programmes consider the joint use of existing capabilities, the increase in cooperation on cyber defence, making strategically deployable formations available, contributing to the EU Battlegroups, and simplifying and standardising cross-border military deployment procedures.

In this context, Romania has committed to participating in 20 PESCO projects, having the status of member in 16 and that of observer in 4 of them. Two of the projects, namely the EU Network of Diving Centres and the CBRN Defence Training Range, are PESCO projects coordinated by Romania. Moreover, entities from Romania, having the Ministry of National Defence support, take part in 7 projects under EDIP.

In addition, the Ministry of National Defence has endorsed the participation of some entities from Romania in 16 projects launched under EDF, 10 of them focusing on capabilities development and 6 research projects. As for the European Defence Agency (EDA), Romania has participated in 19 projects and supported the efforts made by the agency meant to promote the cooperation between the EU

member states in the field of developing military capabilities, including by connecting the national defence industry and the Ministry of National Defence research and development units to the EU programmes and projects that benefit from non-refundable grants.

As for NATO, important steps have been made by our country within the framework of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP). In this context, we can mention the Romania-NATO Joint Consultation Meeting, the completion of the Defence Planning Capability Survey as well as Romania's participation in the cooperation initiatives in the field of capabilities development in Allied context. In this regard, we emphasise Romania's participation in the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force. The NATO E-3A Component is the first multinational flying unit established by the Alliance, which performs rapid deployments, airborne surveillance and battle management tasks ordered by the NAEW&C Force Commander on behalf of the SACEUR. Moreover, under the circumstances of Smart Defence concept, aimed at investing in more flexible and mobile armed forces, while capitalising on collaborative defence projects and avoiding duplication of capabilities, Romania is involved in the Strategic Airlift Capability, a NATO multinational programme that provides assured access to the mentioned capability for its 12 member nations.

In addition, Romania, as a NATO member country, participates in the NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP). The range of facilities eligible for common funding has generally been limited to NATO Command Structure Static Facilities, Permanent Installations, Deployable Assets, Communication and Information Systems and Crisis Response facilities. Within the NSIP framework, Romania supports the implementation of all capabilities aiming to provide key capabilities required to meet the Alliance's level of ambition. Moreover, Romania is committed to implementing in a timely manner those projects for which it acts as Host Nation, supporting a transparent participation of all eligible enterprises in competitive biddings conducted in order to implement common funded capabilities. In this context, at the Ministry of National Defence level, the guidelines for the implementation and administration of the NSIP-funded projects in Romania have been approved.





Taking into consideration the current situation as well as the fact that emerging and disruptive technologies remodel the military actions environment, as it has been once more proved in the conflict in Ukraine, the Defence Innovation Accelerator of the North Atlantic (DIANA) is meant to be a new NATO body, closely related to the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). DIANA is tasked to bring innovative civilian and military organisations closer together to develop cutting-edge solutions, especially in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies.

Thus, start-ups, academic institutions and non-traditional industry organisations can come together and submit proposals to participate in the innovation accelerator effort intended to solve the emerging real-world problems, in the field of defence included. The programme goal is for DIANA to reach its full operational capability by 2025. As for the funding mechanism, it is represented by NATO Innovation Fund, namely public funds allocated by participating nations from either existing defence budgets or newly established innovation funds. Nevertheless, with adopting a new mindset conducive to systems thinking, namely a holistic one, DIANA allows for seeing NATO as a resource, employing academia, research and money in the effort meant to preserve the Allied and partner rules-based societies technological supremacy. It is well known that technologies revolutionise the world. Nowadays, the focus is on emerging and disruptive technologies, which can have a disturbing effect once implemented in military equipment. Therefore, it becomes increasingly important for them to be employed in a responsible manner, thoroughly considering rules and ethics. In this regard, and in relation to DIANA, it is worth emphasising that NATO has adopted an Artificial Intelligence strategy that includes elements related to ethics and responsibility in terms of both the products and the outcomes, which requires an effort for the political decision-makers to adopt the appropriate legislation.

DIANA initiative comes with more than 60 innovation sites, including a headquarters in Europe and another one in North America as well as more than 50 dedicated test centres hosting labs and equipment, which is an additional argument for the fact that it is a NATO opportunity and that NATO can be seen as a resource in this regard. The “accelerator sites” provide financing and mentorship.

Moreover, they create the necessary space and exposure for business development, thus generating an innovation ecosystem.

In this context, following the dedicated competition, two centres from Romania have already been declared winners and become members of the mentioned NATO innovation system. The two centres are the Artificial Intelligence International Centre of Excellence within the Faculty of Automation and Computers of the Polytechnic University in Bucharest and the National Institute of Aerospace Research “Elie Carafoli” – INCAS in Bucharest. Mention should be made that INCAS is the interface with Romanian aeronautical industry, being the designer of IAR-99 ȘOIM, an aircraft manufactured in Craiova and in service of the Ministry of National Defence, meeting the interoperability requirements established by the Forces of NATO member states.

In conclusion, Romania, as a NATO and EU member state, has made important efforts in terms of planning and employing the defence resources in credible and competitive capabilities able to decisively contribute to the Euro-Atlantic security construct in the region.

