



## WAYS AND METHODS TO MAKE THE SELECTION PROCESS OF PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS MORE EFFICIENT

Major Alice-Claudîța MANDEȘ, PhD Student

Joint Forces Command

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*Given Romania's participation in multinational operations under the aegis of the United Nations and the leadership of international organizations such as NATO and the EU, this article addresses the issue of streamlining the process of selecting the personnel participating in such military actions, which is not only a necessity, but also a functional reality that influences the way in which the entire approach is organized. The purpose of this article is to highlight a number of aspects that influence the organization, planning and selection of military personnel taking part in multinational operations outside the national territory.*

*The study has used, as a research method, the SWOT analysis, to identify the normative acts that should be modified at the level of the military institution, to assess the impact of these changes on the military selection process in order to participate in multinational operations. Through the conducted research, it has been analysed the extent to which the existing normative framework in the field ensures the permanent adaptation to the realities of the new geopolitical and geostrategic environment, namely the way in which the Romanian Armed Forces personnel structures manage the legislative changes specific to this field.*

*Keywords: NATO; multinational operations; efficiency; personnel management; EU;*



### INTRODUCTION

The accession and, subsequently, the integration of our country, at particular times, into Euro-Atlantic security organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), represents, in the opinion of many political-military analysts, a natural consequence of the social, economic, human, material and financial efforts of Romania, as a state, and of the military institution, as an organization, to correctly address some of the challenges specific to the 1990s and, subsequently, to the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the multinational operations carried out under the aegis of two other international security organizations, having regional and global coverage, namely the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN).

Romania's membership of NATO and the EU has represented, in our opinion, a combined result of the processes of reform and transformation of public institutions in our country, including the military institution. Thus, the participation of the staff and force structures of our country in multinational operations, such as those in Somalia, the Republic of Moldova, Angola, Congo, former Yugoslav space, Albania, Iraq and Afghanistan, Mali, the Central African Republic, to name just a few, led to the creation of conditions for the accession and, subsequently, integration of our country into NATO and the EU, respectively for the recognition of the Romanian military professionalism alongside that of the military belonging to the member states of the aforementioned organizations (Neag, 2004, p. 1).

### CURRENT LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The participation in multinational operations led by the UN, OSCE, NATO or the EU, before and after our country's accession to the latter two international security organizations, has been accompanied by a whole series of challenges of a diplomatic, economic, financial, military and human nature. This type of involvement has always required a deep

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analysis of the existing geopolitical and geostrategic environment, of the security climate in the countries where the force structures of the Romanian Armed Forces have been deployed and, last but not least, repeated efforts in terms of organizational structure, procurement of military assets and equipment, allocation of considerable material and financial resources, aimed at adapting to the international military realities and to the implications identified in all areas of social life.

The involvement of the Romanian armed forces structures in such missions has required a series of legislative changes at the level of the military institution, which would allow them not only to take part in various military actions, but also to execute a wide range of operations, in cooperation with large units and units belonging to other states contributing troops (Alexandrescu, Duțu, 2007, pp. 15-16). Thus, the selection process of the military participating in the aforementioned military operations has undergone a series of changes aimed, in addition to the expression of volunteerism, at ensuring theoretical and practical knowledge, high-level mental and physical skills and, very importantly, an appropriate level of knowledge of one of the international languages of communication, with a predilection for English. Secondly, depending on the country of deployment, the selection process has also taken into account a component related to the standard operating procedures in the mission area, the realities of the deployment area, the risks and threats to which the participating troops could be exposed, on a case-by-case basis.

Although still influenced by normative regulations and institutional traditions consolidated over time, often characterized by resistance to change, the selection process has benefited from a significant improvement with its evolution over time. This progress has been favoured by both the gradual integration of our country into NATO and EU structures and the experience acquired by the Romanian military in multinational operations, contributing to increasing efficiency and professionalism in the selection and training process.

The rapid evaluation of such a selection process highlights five important tests for both the military participants (along with the structures they are part of) in multinational operations, as well as for the staff personnel who hold various positions in multinational commands, including: the English language test, the physical fitness

test, the psychological test, the theoretical (practical) knowledge test, and the medical test, the last stage that certifies the level of health that allows those participating in the selection to fulfil their assigned missions in optimal conditions.

There have been situations known by the people who participated in such a selection process, either as a result of taking the tests or as members involved in the process organization and coordination, when some candidates, after completing certain stages, such as the English language proficiency test (ALCPT test), physical assessment and psychological testing, proved to be insufficiently prepared for the specifics of the position.

Subsequently, the medical examination, the last stage of the selection process, which is placed at the end, often for financial reasons that are not always clearly justified, led to unsatisfactory results in terms of the number of candidates admitted. Positions such as those in the legal, financial, medical and psychological fields have been consistently difficult to fill by candidates registered for the competition, possibly due to the fact that these positions are less numerous in the armed forces structures and require less physical effort. In most cases, these tests represented difficult trials for the participants, being dependent on a high level of physical training and endurance.

Considering the above-mentioned aspects, the completion of the selection process has been a difficult task for those involved. Under these conditions, in order to recruit personnel for not very numerous structures with a specific and special purpose, such as the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams or the National Support Element, several selection sessions are carried out, in order to fully staff these structures.

Although such situations have occurred and will probably continue to occur, and such incidents are frequently recorded at the level of personnel structures, they evolve from the stage of lessons identified to that of lessons learned (Pînzariu, Mocanu, 2016, pp. 70-71). The delay in adopting legislative amendments aimed at ensuring a significant streamlining of the selection process also contributes to the persistence of these problems, given also the considerable reluctance to debate on this topic that have been observed in certain contexts.

Taking into account the significant difficulties associated with the human resource recruitment process in the Romanian Armed



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Forces (Alexandrescu, Dușu, p. 21), which is not exclusively caused by the lack of interest of the country's population, but also by a low degree of promotion of this process, by the relatively low level of salary (although, lately, it has registered increases), as well as by the demographic factors and the existing selection structures at the national level, we consider that the optimisation of the selection process for participation in multinational missions under the leadership of NATO and the EU is becoming, in the current context, increasingly relevant, regardless of the positions and preferences expressed by some of the military decision-makers. In this situation, we consider it necessary to review the entire selection process for participation in multinational operations, which would ensure a complete level of staffing, as far as possible only with military personnel from the structures nominated to participate (in individual cases, with personnel from other structures), as well as with staff personnel, who are to fill non-permanent positions within regional commands.

### SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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In the research process, we have taken into account, in addition to the legislative provisions found in various laws, regulations, orders and instructions issued at the level of the Ministry of National Defence, a series of scientific references considered of high value (modern approaches, theories, reports etc.) in the field of human resources management, on the basis of which we have conducted the present research. Thus, we have analysed dedicated literature, among which



we can mention the following: Gr. Alexandrescu, P. Dușu, *“Optimizarea regenerării structurilor Armatei României angajate în acțiuni militare în afara teritoriului național/Optimization of the regeneration of the Romanian Armed Forces structures engaged in military actions outside the national territory”*, 2007; R. Grigoraș, *“Metode științifice prospective în securitatea națională/Prospective scientific methods in national security”*, 2022; R. Ivorschi, *“Analiza SWOT – instrument managerial pentru eficientizarea activității/SWOT analysis – a managerial tool for making the activity more efficient”*, 2012; M. Lungulescu, Al. Adomnicăi, *“Resursele umane din Armata României, pe calea interoperabilității cu structuri similare din armatele statelor membre ale NATO/Human resources in the Romanian Armed Forces, on the path of interoperability with similar structures in the armed forces of NATO member states”*, 2012; M. Palaghia, *“Principiile și conținutul sistemului de generare și regenerare a forțelor/Principles and content of the force generation and regeneration system”*, 2004; M. Neag, *“Prezent și perspective privind participarea României la acțiuni NATO/Present and perspectives on Romania's participation in NATO actions”*, [armyacademy.ro/reviste/1\\_2004/Prezent%20și%20perspective.pdf](http://armyacademy.ro/reviste/1_2004/Prezent%20și%20perspective.pdf), 2004; S. Pînzariu, B.-P. Mocanu, *“Ghidul de logistică pentru teatrele de operații/Logistics guide for theatres of operations”*, 2016; V. Stoica, *“Rezerva de forțe și mecanismul completării pierderilor în acțiunile militare/Force reserve and the mechanism for replacing losses in military actions”*, 2015.

Moreover, we have analysed a series of legislative provisions, laws, GEOs, ministerial orders, doctrines, strategies, orders developed at the level of the Chief of the Defence or the heads of the armed forces services, presented in the bibliography.

The research objectives are, firstly, to identify the elements of novelty, at an international level, regarding the process of selecting human resources for participation in multinational operations and, secondly, to determine the elements that overlap in terms of the tests administered for the actual selection and the tests that each military is put to, through the training process, within the units to which they belong. In this regard, we have taken into account the answers to research questions, such as: What are the elements of novelty identified at the international level, particularly what are

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*Starting from the need to streamline the conceptual, normative, organizational and action-oriented process of generating and regenerating structures involved in multinational operations, we have constantly followed those current elements resulting from the participation of Romanian military personnel in foreign missions, so as to ensure not only an element of concreteness throughout the scientific research, but also to generate a new type of approach, which would ensure the adaptation of the mentioned system to similar systems in NATO and EU member states.*

the legislative changes that need to be made to increase the efficiency of the selection process? Last but not least, we have sought answers to the question: What are the concrete ways and means of increasing the interest of the Romanian armed forces troops in taking part in such a selection process, which does not always end with participation in multinational operations led by NATO and the EU?

In this context, the research is aimed at analysing the internal mechanisms of the human resource generation and regeneration system, with a view to transforming it into a modern one, based on concepts verified in military actions and normative regulations similar to those in other NATO and EU member states. Thus, we have considered, as a research method, the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to identify those provisions of the existing legislation that should be modified at the level of the military institution in order to determine their impact on the selection process of troops for multinational operations.

In terms of data collection, we have used the research and documentary analysis of representative documents, accepted at institutional level, within the member states of NATO and the EU or our strategic partner, the United States of America (USA), these being mentioned in the bibliography. The analysed resources have provided us with an overview of the addressed topic and contributed to the effective understanding of the research results. The conducted analysis has taken into account both the current geopolitical and geostrategic context, as well as the existing trends within the member states of NATO and the EU in terms of attracting human resources, and recent developments in this field.

In order to maintain the research relevance, in the analysis we have considered, in addition to various documents developed, the early period of the Romanian Armed Forces participation in multinational operations, the time interval 2020-2025, which has allowed us to obtain a correct assessment of recent trends and developments in the field of human resources.

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the participation of Romanian military personnel in foreign missions, so as to ensure not only an element of concreteness throughout the scientific research, but also to generate a new type of approach, which would ensure the adaptation of the mentioned system to similar systems in NATO and EU member states. Also in this regard, we have taken into account the need to identify those mechanisms and paths of action that would allow the development of a modern process of generating and regenerating military units and subunits participating in multinational operations.

Considering the two research methods, the conducted analysis has been organized on two important levels. The first research direction has targeted human resources management for participation in multinational operations, with an emphasis on important aspects such as the regulatory framework aimed at regulating the participation of the Romanian Armed Forces in military actions conducted outside the national territory, the organization and conduct of the human resource selection process for this type of military actions, respectively the normative, organizational and procedural streamlining of the entire process of generation and regeneration of the military, through the lens of SWOT analysis.

The second research direction has aimed to identify the particularities of the process of generation and regeneration of military personnel who take part in multinational missions abroad, with an emphasis on presenting some of the aspects of the organization and conduct of the selection process in order to complete the existing regulatory framework, namely the identification of those specific measures for the redeployment and reinsertion of personnel participating in multinational operations.

SWOT analysis is usually used to provide an overview of an organization, namely to collect the information necessary to protect its interests (Ivorschi, 2012). From an institutional perspective, we consider that this type of analysis allows for a concrete radiography of the normative evolution of the force generation and regeneration process and ensures the quantification of the internal and external influencing factors that act on it, in relation to the other processes that take place at the level of the military institution, in order to highlight



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the strengths and weaknesses of the specific stages of the addressed process in direct relation to the identified opportunities and threats.

In the analysis, we have identified a series of strengths of the process of generating and regenerating the human resource, from a legislative perspective, which ensures the selection of the human resource intended to participate in the multinational operations, through which the mechanisms necessary to carry out an organized and planned approach are generated.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the good physical, psychological and medical condition of the personnel of the Romanian Armed Forces and the high level of professional training;</li> <li>the efficient process of periodical assessment, from a physical, psychological and medical point of view;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the level of remuneration, corresponding to participation in multinational operations;</li> <li>the existence of an appropriate work climate through which the conditions are created for the military to maintain a high level of training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the differentiated initial level of training of troops taking part in multinational operations;</li> <li>the regulation of the selection method of troops participating in operations abroad does not require a clear record of their physical and mental health status, over a determined period;</li> <li>the difficulties encountered in planning the resources allocated to the selection process;</li> <li>the uncertainties registered among those participating in the selection process.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing the level of training of participants in multinational operations;</li> <li>achieving an appropriate balance between the number of participating troops and the budgetary allocation;</li> <li>streamlining the selection process determines the formation of a reserve for rapid replacement of troops in a short time;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring sufficient reserves, capable of conducting military actions in optimal conditions;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the general aging of our country's population and, implicitly, of candidates for participation in multinational operations creates difficulties in terms of military selection;</li> <li>overestimation of self, on the part of some of the military deployed in theatres of operations, generates the accumulation of frustrations related to the level of salary, the importance given to their work;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing the level of interoperability of the structures engaged in theatres of operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of jobs on the domestic market, which implies a faster adhesion of candidates for joining the military institution;</li> <li>numerous departures from the armed forces, before the completion of the first contract, generate problems for the structures that organize selection processes for multinational operations;</li> <li>participation in multinational operations of military personnel can generate a distorted image regarding the missions of the structures intended to participate in such military actions;</li> <li>numerous fluctuations in the level of salary of military personnel negatively influence their motivation for joining the military profession.</li> </ul>
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Considering the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats mentioned in the SWOT matrix, we will to develop these aspects as follows:

- the personnel in the Romanian Armed Forces benefit from an appropriate physical, psychological and medical situation, undergoing not only a strict selection process, but also one of specific training, which ensures a volume of knowledge appropriate to the functions for which the military are selected;
- once entering the military institution, the armed forces personnel, regardless of the followed path and the held/obtained rank (both those who entered through the indirect path and even more so those who followed the direct path), are periodically subjected, according to the training and instruction plans (Stoica, pp. 37-38), to detailed periodic check-ups – physically (biannually), psychologically (annually), and medically (annually), which ensure that they are in a suitable



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condition to fulfil the duties in their job descriptions, during their participation in multinational operations;

- the level of remuneration, together with other benefits provided to the military, represent a way in which the Romanian Armed Forces meet their obligations towards them, expecting, consequently, that they will be able to fulfil their assigned missions at any time;
- ensuring an appropriate work climate to achieve the planned and expected combat potential generates high demands and responsibilities for the military to maintain their level of training, including through individual study, so as to allow the structures they are part of to fulfil their missions received both in peace, crisis and war, as well as in multinational actions intended for collective security (Palaghia, pp. 1-2).

The identified strengths contribute to obtaining answers to questions such as those that highlight the need to reform the military selection system for multinational operations. Some of these questions directly address human resources and take into account the skills and performance of the Romanian military, the advantages that reside in the quality of own personnel, the experience gained in various positions before their participation in military actions outside the national territory. Other questions to which we have obtained expected answers, both positive and less positive, are related to the experience of the management teams (decision-makers) and the degree of optimization of decision-making processes, the resources allocated to participation in missions, as well as the technology of the equipment used in this type of military actions.

Should decision-makers consider these aspects, assessed as strengths, could lead, in our opinion, to increasing the attractiveness of the military profession by creating certain behaviour in those who wish to make a career in this field that is so exciting. Last but not least, it could ensure changes to the regulatory framework in accordance with both the expectations of the management structures and those of the participants in this type of operations.

As for the weaknesses, the conducted research has allowed us to identify some aspects that, although known, are not being addressed properly, in our opinion, so that their effects could be at least

minimized, if not eliminated. In this regard, we would like to highlight the following:

- the level of training of the military personnel taking part in multinational operations is differentiated, which creates the premises for inappropriate behaviour in extreme situations, in which the military personnel are called upon to act;
- the regulation of the selection method of military personnel participating in operations abroad does not aim at an appropriate level of training (standards to be met, results for a previous period of time, medical and psychological observations, these ensuring a clear and appropriate record of their physical and mental health);
- the resources (human, material, financial) allocated to the selection process often require their supplementation, as a result of resuming the selection several times for certain positions, which ultimately represents a loss that no one can compensate for;
- the activities specific to the selection tests create a series of uncertainties among both the participants in the selection process and their commanders, since this type of activity is carried out routinely, every year – medical, physical and psychological testing, command training, knowledge of foreign languages, driving and psychotechnical testing for staff personnel.

As in the previous case, the conducted research has entailed obtaining answers that are usually taken into account when analysing weaknesses, such as identifying vulnerabilities in the selection process, the necessary level of training to allow troops to participate in multinational operations, or the behavioural deficiencies that we must take into account in carrying out this process.

On the other hand, questions regarding the military level of attachment to the structures they are part of, the existence of financial resources throughout the mission period or the appropriate estimation of the costs to be recorded have been provided many answers that come to complete the conducted analysis. Last but not least, another set of questions to which we have intended to obtain answers concern the possibility of outsourcing, through procurement, of some services



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in the mission area, including personnel, possible unforeseen expenses generated by the extraction/introduction of troops from/into the theatre of operations or organizational management questions related to the successful or not conduct of actions in theatres of operations, without repeating the previously made mistakes.

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From the perspective of the identified opportunities, we consider that they must be exploited to the maximum, so as to ensure the increase in the degree of interoperability and compatibility of the Romanian armed forces structures with similar ones belonging to other NATO and EU member states. In this regard, we consider the following aspects to be opportunities:

- increasing the level of professionalization (training) of all military personnel involved in multinational operations (Alexandrescu, Duțu, p. 21);
- achieving an appropriate balance in terms of the ratio of the number of military personnel and the budgetary allocations, given that the decrease in the number of military personnel (through professionalization) balances the budget allocated to their training;
- increasing the efficiency of the selection process results in the formation of a reserve for the rapid replacement of military personnel or subunits in the theatre of operations, in a short time;
- eliminating the dysfunctions created at the level of the selection process, by the aging of the population, and ensuring sufficient reserves, capable of conducting military actions, under optimal conditions, even if the initial training of these troops is different;



- increasing the level of training of the troops participating in multinational operations allows them to carry out missions that are not included in the job descriptions;
- increasing the level of interoperability of the structures engaged in theatres of operations ensures the conduct of joint actions with other units and subunits belonging to NATO and EU member states, under appropriate conditions.

The questions considered to clarify the identified opportunities that should be exploited to the maximum are related to the answers obtained when verifying hypotheses such as the changes in the external environment that we could exploit, the types of programs for providing the armed forces with modern assets and equipment that are to be developed in the coming period, from the perspective of the technological advance existing at a global level, as well as some behavioural changes in the military who access participation in multinational operations both during selection and after returning from missions.

Another aspect of the research into the available opportunities concerns the military selection system from a strategic and operational point of view, the answers to questions regarding the need for diversification or specialization of activities specific to selection, or the actions meant to attract human resources, by creating organizational advantages that ensure participation in these operations outside the national territory, having a multinational nature.

The existence of these opportunities can lead, in our opinion, to an acceleration of the transformation process in the field of human resources, aimed at creating a new advantageous regulatory framework for those participating in the selection for multinational operations. The concrete measures that should be considered by decision-makers in the addressed field could contribute to the creation of a modern system, perfectly aligned with similar systems within the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

The identified threats may generate, among the military and the structures of which they are part, operational difficulties that may make it difficult to achieve the assigned tasks. From this perspective,

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we consider that the threats identified during the research in the field of human resources must be addressed directly, in order to eliminate them or reduce their adverse effects, as much as possible. Thus, we have identified some threats, as follows:

- the general aging of the population of our country and, implicitly, of the candidates for the military profession creates a new, quite challenging trend, as a result of the increase in the number of professional military personnel and the excessive modernization of military equipment and assets, which create difficulties in terms of the selection of military personnel for participation in multinational operations;
- the existence, even after several years of participation in multinational operations, of a small number of positions within the structures that take part in such military actions generates a series of cumulative tasks, not specified in the job description, which usually denotes an overestimation of self, often not very real, of some of the military deployed in the theatres of operations, and generates the accumulation of frustrations related to the level of salary (compared to other soldiers), the importance given to their work etc. (Alexandrescu, Dușu, p. 23);
- another threat concerns the lack of jobs on the domestic market, which entails a much faster adhesion of applicants to the military institution. This fact leads, more often than not, to the acceptance within the military institution of candidates with a low level of training, which creates difficulties, subsequently, in the training process using cutting-edge equipment;
- the difficulties encountered in the training process, in a system with a different level of organizational culture, generate untimely departures from the armed forces, often before the completion of the first contract. In this context, the disorder created by these departures results in numerous problems for the large military units, units and subunits that organize selection processes for multinational operations, particularly for maintaining their level of operability;
- the participation in multinational operations of staff personnel and military structures (through rotation), in addition to the numerous benefits, can also generate an erroneous image

regarding the tasks and missions of these large units and units, which, first and foremost, should consider national and collective defence, alike. This image must be permanently corrected through various corrective measures, targeting the entire spectrum of socio-behavioural activities, training included, in which the military are involved;

- the numerous fluctuations regarding the level of military salaries, as well as the discussions in the public space regarding the security of their income, generate a series of deficiencies of the most diverse nature, from the perspective of the selection process of the military personnel who wish to participate (voluntarily) in multinational operations, among which the impact on the motivation for joining the military profession would be the most important, from our point of view (Ib., p. 24).

The analysis of the identified threats and the answers to the questions formulated in this research have highlighted the need to intensify the attention devoted by the leading bodies to all levels of the military system. They must urgently identify and implement effective measures and strategies to solve the problems related to the imbalance of the human resources system, which is in a state of obvious difficulty. In this context, the formulated questions are aimed at evaluating the existing legislative framework and identifying the need to promote legislative amendments meant to support the selection process for participation in multinational missions, including through proposals that take into account the social norms and lifestyles of the military, adapted to the new geopolitical and geostrategic configuration in which we find ourselves.

Changes in the technological field, those specific to goods and services offered to the military, must quickly find answers that contribute to increasing the desire to participate in multinational operations. Last but not least, the difficulties encountered in the field of recruiting for the military system must be resolved through well-thought-out measures that provide predictability and security in the evolution of the military within the Ministry of National Defence, regardless of the structures they belong to.



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## WAYS AND MEANS TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY

The research conducted on the ways and means of streamlining the selection process of military personnel for participation in multinational operations focuses, in our opinion, on the manner in which the selection tests are established and, then, on their order. In this regard, there are opinions in the military environment for and against the conduct of these selection tests and the way in which the entire process is organized. Easier said than done, we would remark some of those who have become, for various reasons, outspoken critics of the selection process.

What should be changed in the way the selection tests are organized and ranked, so that, in the end, we can obtain from the first selection period the necessary number of troops to fill the structure, as follows: medically healthy and psychologically fit; with an appropriate level of knowledge of the English language; capable of prolonged physical effort and also specialists, able to fulfil their assigned missions?

In our opinion, a deep and complete re-establishment of the entire selection process on modern bases is necessary, combining the best practices in the field and the lessons learned from similar experiences of some of the armed forces of NATO member states, with additional emphasis on how human resources are attracted in states such as the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany or the Netherlands. Overlapping them with the experiences recorded at the level of our armed forces, we consider that we could, in this way, achieve a specific, efficient and effective selection process.

Taking into account the characteristics and particularities of the human resource within the Romanian Armed Forces, we consider that an efficient process of selecting troops for participation in multinational missions must include the clarification of essential organizational aspects. They are related to the way of conducting the entire process and providing coherent and adequate answers to fundamental questions, such as those that formed the basis of the analysis conducted in the research, including the SWOT analysis. They are natural questions, to which, many times, we either do not find consistent answers, or we offer explanations that do not have the gift of clarifying us regarding a more efficient approach to the selection process for multinational operations.

Given the above, we consider that streamlining the selection process for the participation of Romanian troops in multinational operations within the UN, NATO, EU, OSCE should take into account, in addition to the voluntary expression of acceptance/desire to participate in such military actions, although here too there would be many arguments for and against, the following aspects:

- carrying out a single selection stage, in two steps, with the participation, in the first step, of the troops from the structure nominated to take part in the multinational operation, and, in the second step, of the troops from the structure representing the upper echelon of the first unit, to complete the personnel reserve, particularly the deficit by position, when registered (for single positions, this process can reach up to the level of force service command and support command);
- taking into account, for the classification, the physical fitness tests, the medical and psychological examinations completed by the troops, in accordance with the legal provisions in force in the military institution;
- completion of the entire mission-specific training program by all military personnel, both basic and reserve, including foreign language training hours;
- introduction of periodic mid-mission check-ups, which would highlight the level of training and would also make military personnel aware of the need to reach the standards required for participation in the multinational operation;
- execution of the final check-up, without the right to appeal, by the candidates, visibly, in full transparency, which would ensure that among those who will participate in the mission, military personnel who have understood to fulfil the tasks and responsibilities assumed by the contract, in the best conditions, are retained. For those who, for various reasons, have not been able to pass the final tests, the responsibility of the units to which they belong is to include them in intensive training programs, medical monitoring or other forms of training designed to allow them, in a short period of time, to achieve the physical and psychological condition necessary to fulfil the obligations assumed by the contract. In the absence of such



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measures, decision-makers must determine the appropriate course of action, including the possibility of transferring them to specific administrative functions.

What would be the conditions for such a selection process to take place in good circumstances, without generating additional expenses and ensuring the participation in the multinational operation of the military personnel that are most deserving, well-prepared from all points of view? First, increasing the efficiency of the human resource attraction process (physical, psychological tests, medical check-ups carried out transparently, without waiving specific standards); second, generating a competition between potential candidates for access to the military system, reviewing training processes and plans to ensure the accumulation of appropriate knowledge, maintaining the physical and mental qualities of the selected military personnel, thorough, extensive medical check-ups, which would lead to the removal from this process of the inappropriate candidates.

Furthermore, we consider that a change in the approach to medical examinations, in which family doctors would have a correspondent role during the selection (the military personnel being obliged to bring medical observation sheets from them) with the military personnel's families, which would ensure the detection of possible mental problems, difficult to detect even in the case of specialized tests, the creation of sports facilities at the level of military units, would be desirable and would not only provide valuable information for the members of the selection teams, but would also contribute to a more efficient use of both the time and resources currently allocated to this process.

## CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this article, we consider it necessary to draw attention to some of the situations that, over time, have occurred, in one form or another, in this type of process carried out at the level of many of the military units of the Romanian Armed Forces. Thus, many of the situations that have arisen over time during the selection process for participation in multinational operations could have been avoided, through the care of the personnel (decision-makers) who manage

the admission processes into the armed forces, as well as the training processes at the level of military units.

Retrospective analysis indicates that, by implementing appropriate measures, such as effective training of the command, physical training in accordance with established standards, effective and carefully monitored medical examinations and constant training and verification of the level of knowledge of foreign languages, it would have been possible to significantly reduce the rate of candidates rejected in the selection tests for participation in such missions. At the same time, it is observed that the measures adopted over time to manage this process has not contributed to its efficiency, but, in many cases, favoured blockages or the maintenance of perceptions of complacency, such as that of *"let it go on like this"*, limiting progress in certain critical areas. It is important to emphasize that, although identifying solutions is relatively easy, the responsibility for optimizing and continuously improving this process lies with all actors involved in the normative, legislative, operational and administrative plan, both currently and in the future.

Important steps towards streamlining the process of attracting human resources and of selecting personnel for participation in multinational operations have been made, especially in the recent period. It would be worth highlighting the transition of military selection from a centralized system, at the level of zonal selection centres, to a decentralized system, at the unit level, which has allowed attracting a larger number of military personnel and contributed to reversing the process of entries versus exits from the armed forces, in favour of the former. Last but not least, the increase in the attractiveness of the functions in the military system has generated much more important entries in the recent period. The idea of maintaining the balance between those who want to join the Romanian armed forces, who want to participate in multinational operations, and the obligations that they assume through the signed contracts is important.

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*Although identifying solutions is relatively easy, the responsibility for optimizing and continuously improving this process lies with all actors involved in the normative, legislative, operational and administrative plan, both currently and in the future.*



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