



STRATEGIC HEDGING AND RESILIENCE DYNAMICS ON THE EASTERN FLANK: ROMANIA BETWEEN USA, NATO AND EU

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Starting from the theoretical framework of strategic hedging, Romania does not adopt a classic model of balancing between major powers, but rather a limited and intra-ally hedging, compatible with its Euro-Atlantic commitments. The Strategic Partnership with the USA, as a pillar of military security and deterrence on NATO's eastern flank, contributes substantially to Romania's strategic balance/hedging position, while simultaneously leveraging the European dimension for development, resilience and strategic stability.

Looking ahead, Romania is not undergoing a strategic reorientation from the USA toward the European Union, but rather a pragmatic and resilient recalibration of the balance between the two dimensions, in line with national and Euro-Atlantic strategic documents. In this regard, strengthening Romania's strategic profile in the Black Sea region, increasing the level of national capabilities, as well as maintaining cooperation within NATO and the EU define the conditions for transforming strategic hedging into a multiplier of resilience and geopolitical influence.

Keywords: deterrence; hedging; Black Sea region; military security; Romania;

PROLEGOMENA

Security – a fundamental concept in the trilogy of the existence of the state, the defence of sovereignty and the axiological framework of the state, preserved in culture of the population culture and on the national territory. State security is defined by the capabilities that a state possesses and uses in order to deter not only internal threats, but also external ones. In the case of Romania, national security requires particular attention, given the permanent dynamics of geopolitical developments, especially in its geographical proximity. The volatility of the environment's security, the numerous risks, vulnerabilities and threats, global competition and the growing worldwide instability collectively shape a scenario marked by uncertainty, fear and confusion.

The concept of *national security* has evolved in recent years beyond conventional military defence. In addition to armed combat, contemporary threats have become more and more complex, manifesting through disinformation campaigns, cyber-attacks, economic pressure and, evidently, diplomatic isolation (Constantin, 2025). Therefore, the need for feasible strategies has become a pressing concern. Romania recognised that alignment and cooperation with international organisations represent key strategic advantages. It not only benefits from political and decision-making support, but, through its involvement in regional formats such as NATO training exercises, the Three Seas Initiatives and EU's foreign policy efforts, it also benefits from a mutual and collective security agenda (NATO, 2022). All these organisations play a role in consolidating security commitments and expanding diplomatic reach.

Romania, being positioned at the confluence of interests in the Black Sea Region, does not have the luxury of aligning itself exclusively with the policy direction of a single state, coalition or alliance. Instead, Romania is compelled to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in the diversification of international relations. Hence, as a member of both NATO and EU, Romania pursues a European policy in parallel

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The consolidation of the Strategic Partnership with the US, formally established in 1997 and subsequently deepened through sustained military, political and technological cooperation, has transformed Romania into a frontline NATO ally and a genuine pillar of regional stability. This once again confirms the significance of Romania's role within the security architecture of the Alliance Eastern Flank.

with a transatlantic one, thereby forming a broad spectrum of strategic options and opportunities for different alliances. This dual approach helps Romania in emerging as both a beneficiary and a provider of stability in the Black Sea region.

Within a context defined by insecurity and numerous unforeseen “Black Swan” events, as well as predictable yet neglected “Grey Rhino” scenarios, compounded by hybrid methods ranging from cyberattacks to espionage, disinformation and sabotage, the concept of **strategic hedging** acquires decisive relevance, particularly with regard to state resilience in international relations.

In this sense, the consolidation of the Strategic Partnership with the US, formally established in 1997 and subsequently deepened through sustained military, political and technological cooperation, has transformed Romania into a frontline NATO ally and a genuine pillar of regional stability. This once again confirms the significance of Romania's role within the security architecture of the Alliance Eastern Flank. This ambivalence – the strategic partnership with the US alongside membership in the EU – provides Romania with a dual set of responsibilities and, at the same time, a dual security umbrella. The current study examines the interaction between these two dimensions, highlighting the benefits associated with maintaining a coherent strategic balance.

ROMANIA'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS – PILLARS OF ROMANIA'S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

Romania currently maintains 14 strategic partnerships: with the United States, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Korea, France, Bulgaria, Italy, Japan, Georgia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Poland, Türkiye, Hungary, Spain and Moldova. At the same time, Romania has also outlined special relationships with India and the People's Republic of China. Chronologically, Romania's relations with these states were elevated to the level of strategic partnerships as follows (MFA, 2025):

❖ 1997 – United States (11 July): The consolidation of the strategic partnership between the two countries was formalised over time through the *Joint Declaration on the Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century between Romania and the United States of America*,



adopted on 13 September 2011 in Washington by the Presidents of Romania and the United States; the *Joint Declaration on the Implementation of the Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century between Romania and the United States of America*, adopted on 19 June 2018 in Bucharest during the Romania-US Strategic Dialogue at political level and the *Joint Declaration of the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis and the President of the United States of America, Donald J. Trump* signed on 20 August 2019 in Washington, D.C.

❖ 1997 – Italy (17 April): through the signing of the *Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Romania and Italy on the Romanian-Italian Strategic Partnership*. Subsequently, on 9 January 2008 in Bucharest, the foreign ministers of the two states signed the *Joint Declaration on the Consolidated Romanian-Italian Strategic Partnership*.

❖ 2002 – Hungary (29 November): through the signing of the *Declaration on Cooperation and the Romanian-Hungarian Strategic Partnership for Europe in the 21st Century*.

❖ 2003 – United Kingdom (June): through the adoption of the document entitled *Britain and Romania in Europe: Strategic Partnership*. Later, in June 2011, a Joint Declaration on Relaunching the Strategic Partnership between Romania and the United Kingdom was agreed.

❖ 2008 – Republic of Korea (8 September): through the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between Romania and the Republic of Korea*.

❖ 2008 – France (February): through the signing in Bucharest of the *Joint Declaration* by the Presidents of the two states. Subsequently, in November 2018, the two Heads of State signed a new Political Declaration on the *Strategic Partnership* in Paris.

❖ 2009 – Azerbaijan (30 September): through the signing of the *Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between Romania and the Republic of Azerbaijan*, on the occasion of the official visit to Romania of President Ilham Aliyev (28-30 September 2009).

❖ 2009 – Poland (7 October): through the signing of the *Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Romania and the Republic of Poland*, on the occasion of the Polish President's visit to Romania.

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On 8 March 2013, in New Delhi, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Romania and India signed the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an Extended Partnership between Romania and India.

❖ 2010 – Moldova (27 April): through the signing in Bucharest of the *Declaration on establishing a Strategic Partnership between Romania and the Republic of Moldova* for Moldova's European integration.

❖ 2011 – Türkiye (12-13 December): through the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Strategic Partnership between Romania and the Republic of Türkiye*, on the occasion of the Romanian President's state visit to Türkiye.

❖ 2013 – Spain (22 July): through the announcement by the Prime Minister of Romania and the Prime Minister of Spain, during a joint press conference, regarding the political decision to establish a *Strategic Partnership* between the two states.

❖ 2022 – Georgia (11 October): through the signing of the *Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between Romania and Georgia*, on the occasion of the official visit to Romania of Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili (10-12 October 2022).

❖ 2023 – Japan (7 March): through the signing of the *Joint Declaration Establishing a Strategic Partnership between Romania and Japan* by President Klaus Iohannis and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, during the official visit of the Romanian Head of State to Japan (6-9 March 2023).

❖ 2023 – Bulgaria (15 March): through the signing in Sofia of the *Declaration on the Strategic Partnership between Romania and the Republic of Bulgaria* by the two Heads of State in Sofia.

On 8 March 2013, in New Delhi, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Romania and India signed the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an *Extended Partnership between Romania and India*. Subsequently, on 23 February 2024, a Joint Anniversary Declaration was adopted, marking ten years since the establishment of the Extended Partnership between Romania and India in 2013 (*Joint Declaration following the 10th Anniversary of the Signing of the Joint Statement on Establishing an Extensive Partnership between Romania and India*). Additionally, in 2004, a joint political declaration at presidential level was signed on the occasion of the visit to Romania of Chinese President Hu Jintao, entitled *Joint Declaration of Romania and the People's Republic of China on Establishing a Comprehensive Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation* (MFA, 2025).

These partnerships define a substantial part of Romania's foreign and security policy, each representing a success within Romania's strategy for managing international relations.

***The Strategic Partnership between Romania
and the United States – An Essential Element of the Action Triad
in Romania's Foreign and Security Policy***

Since its launch, the Strategic Partnership has represented a key landmark of Romania's foreign policy, as well as an effective instrument of cooperation supporting the country's reform efforts in the political, economic, military, and administrative domains (Ibid.).

In line with Romania's previous National Defence Strategy (2020-2024) (Presidential Administration, 2020), as well as the current one covering the period 2025-2030 (Presidential Administration, 2026), deepening and expanding the Strategic Partnership with the United States constitutes one of the components of the action triad underpinning Romania's foreign and security policy.

Romania builds its security strategy on the premise that its primary guarantees are NATO membership and the privileged relationship with the United States, a partner that shares Romania's perception of the level of threat along the Alliance's eastern border (Ibid.).

Within the current national security strategy for 2025-2030, the central concept is that of *"solidary independence"*, which, according to analysts, emerged both from an assessment of the current situation on the ground and from a medium-term development vision. *"(...) Thus, Romania is seen as a country increasingly confident in its own capabilities, even though institutions have not yet fully adapted to the pace of societal and economic change"* (Popovici, 2025). According to the current strategy, solidary independence cannot exist outside the international environment. In this regard, membership in structures such as NATO and the EU contextualizes this concept, providing it with relevance and credibility. *"Romania has consolidated its position through solidarity and loyalty toward its allies, while consistently pursuing its own interests. Thus, independence and solidarity reinforce one another: **neither can fully exist without the other**"* (Ibid.). At the international level, the document also assigns major importance to the Strategic Partnership with the United States, considered



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an essential pillar of Romania's security and prosperity (Popovici, 2025). In this context, the US military presence and American investments in strategic domains are viewed as strengthening the foundations of national security.

The Evolution of the Strategic Partnership between Romania and the United States

The elevation of Romanian-American relations to the level of Strategic Partnership in the summer of 1997 marked a major inflection point in Romania's post-Cold War foreign and security policy. The visit to Bucharest of US President William (Bill) J. Clinton sent a strong political signal of support for Romania's Euro-Atlantic trajectory and paved the way for deeper cooperation anchored in shared values and convergent strategic interests. Subsequent diplomatic dialogue, materialised through official exchanges at the level of foreign ministries and the identification of priority areas of cooperation, laid the foundations of a structural and long-term bilateral relationship.

In the years that followed, US support for Romania's integration into NATO was reinforced by commitments undertaken by Bucharest in the field of domestic reforms, as well as by Romania's increasingly active profile as a security provider. After the attacks of 11 September 2001, Romania firmly aligned itself with Washington in global counterterrorism efforts, contributing troops to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and strengthening bilateral security cooperation. This strategic convergence was also reflected in enhanced collaboration in combating transnational crime and hybrid and unconventional threats, within which context an FBI office was opened in Bucharest as an expression of mutual institutional trust.

The military dimension of the partnership experienced significant consolidation beginning in the mid-2000s. The agreement on the presence and activities of US forces on Romanian territory created the conditions for expanded operational cooperation, while the decision to deploy the US missile defence system in Romania represented a major strategic step. The certification of the operational capability of the Aegis Ashore facility at Deveselu and its integration into NATO's defence architecture confirmed Romania's role as a security pillar on the Alliance's Eastern Flank (Bâtcă, 2026).

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The year 2011 marked the adoption of the *Declaration on the Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century*, a document that provided the bilateral relationship with a coherent conceptual framework and a long-term vision. This expanded cooperation beyond the strictly military sphere, encompassing areas such as the economy, energy, research, education, science, and people-to-people exchanges, and established a bilateral strategic dialogue mechanism conducted periodically at both political and technical levels.

High-level dialogue between Romanian President Klaus Iohannis and US President Donald J. Trump, materialised through official visits in 2017 and 2019, contributed to recalibrating and adapting the Strategic Partnership to new security realities. The Joint Declaration of August 2019 set clear directions for cooperation in areas such as defence, energy security, investments, good governance, and anti-corruption, while also introducing new axes of collaboration, including 5G network security and the civilian nuclear sector.

More recently, on 4 February 2026, the President of the Romanian Senate participated in the Interparliamentary Security Forum held in Washington, D.C., where he reaffirmed Romania's commitments at the allied level, including the objective of allocating 5% of GDP to defence and security by 2035: *"It was emphasized that Romania maintains its allied commitments, including the objective of allocating 5% of GDP to defence and security by 2035, as well as efforts to develop military capabilities and the national defence industry, in close cooperation with Euro-Atlantic partners and especially with the United States of America"* (Eduard, 2026). At the same time, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio praised Romania's efforts to meet defence spending commitments and its role as a security provider in the Black Sea region (Bâtcă, 2026).

Against the backdrop of the deteriorating regional security environment, Romania and the United States are currently coordinating efforts alongside their Euro-Atlantic allies to manage the consequences of the war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Cooperation addresses both support for Kyiv and the mitigation of indirect effects on regional and global security, including in the food and energy sectors.

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THE CONCEPT OF “*HEDGING*” IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ITS CONNECTION TO RESILIENCE

“National security can no longer be viewed solely in terms of military prowess in a time of uncertainty and multifaceted threats, especially when diplomacy provides states with a flexible and peaceful means of anticipating, managing and reducing risks through its people, institutions and values”.

Traditionally, Romania has regarded diplomacy as an important instrument of statecraft, especially in light of its membership in multilateral organisations such as NATO and the EU. As for the benefits derived from its allies, particularly NATO and the EU, Romania enjoys significant opportunities to project stability and influence in the region due to its strategic position, historical ties to Eastern Europe and commitment to Euro-Atlantic principles: *“National security can no longer be viewed solely in terms of military prowess in a time of uncertainty and multifaceted threats, especially when diplomacy provides states with a flexible and peaceful means of anticipating, managing and reducing risks through its people, institutions and values”*. (Constantin, 2025). The foundation of security consists of facilitating the creation of alliances, developing cooperation and mitigating challenges before they intensify and evolve into crises. All these elements are, no less, outcomes of diplomatic strategies and policy. In other words, diplomacy continues to be the first and most effective line of defence, both in times of peace and in times of crises (Ibid.).

In our opinion, *hedging* represents the art of maintaining a balanced and broadly cooperative diplomacy. In theory, *hedging* is a foreign policy strategy through which a state seeks to reduce risks in an uncertain or unstable international environment without fully committing to an exclusive alliance or coalition and without antagonising other major powers. In other words, it reflects a balanced diplomatic approach towards all relevant actors. In short, the state does not select one path or camp outright, but instead keeps its options open in order to prevent potential future risks and threats. Hence, *hedging* represents a risk-management strategy whereby a state simultaneously pursues policies of cooperation and caution towards certain major powers, allowing it to benefit from collaboration while also protecting itself against potential threats.

The key characteristics of *hedging* include:

- strategic ambiguity – the state does not fully align with one actor, but maintains a certain degree of flexibility;

- diversified options – developing multiple partnerships across PMESII (*political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, information*), technology and other domains;
- avoidance of extreme costs – *hedging* lies between direct confrontation with a power (*balancing*) and full alignment or unconditional affiliation with a dominant power (*bandwagoning*);
- minimisation of risk – preparation for unforeseen or adverse events.

In essence, *hedging* is a strategy through which a state reduces geopolitical risk by diversifying its options, maintaining a balance among major powers and preserving strategic flexibility. It functions as a protective mechanism in an uncertain world, conceptually positioned between *balancing* and *bandwagoning* (Ciorciari, 2019).

Resilience, however, represents a set of strategies carried out by actors ranging from individuals to central public authorities and institutions, whose responsibilities include ensuring the continuity of governance, maintaining essential services and core functions during crisis situations that may affect national response capacity, and restoring normality following disruption (Glod, 2025). Therefore, *enhancing resilience* becomes a central pillar of collective defence, contributing to the reduction of security risks and the preservation of state cohesion, independence, national security and the security of NATO member states (Ibid.).

Romania's status as a full NATO member has required the development of domestic policies capable of addressing new types of risks and potential threats to national security, such as the expansion of terrorism, religious radicalisation, and the emergence of state and non-state actors capable of acquiring weapons of mass destruction or generating a high level of instability and insecurity in the Black Sea region. (Ibid.)

From this perspective, *strategic hedging* can be understood as a distinct form of resilience that any state may adopt, particularly those that have, at some point, existed within a sphere of influence. A concrete example can be found in Southeast Asian states such as Singapore and Vietnam, which cooperate economically with the People's Republic of China while simultaneously strengthening



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The concept of “strategic hedging” defines a strategy through which a state, instead of aligning exclusively with a single power pole, employs measures of cooperation and layered partnerships with many actors, with a unique goal of reducing vulnerabilities within an uncertain international environment. As opposed to balancing and bandwagoning, hedging seeks neither direct confrontation nor total subordination, but rather the preservation of strategic room for manoeuvre.

their security ties with the United States. Similarly, India cooperates with the United States in the Indo-Pacific region while maintaining relations with the Russian Federation.

The application of this concept to Romania is somehow nuanced, given that Romania is a member state of both NATO and the EU, with firm security commitments that significantly constrain the possibility of adopting a classical, *Asia-style hedging strategy*. Nevertheless, Romania does practice *selective* yet functional forms of *hedging*, particularly in the economic, energy and diplomatic domains.

STRATEGIC HEDGING: ADVANTAGES AND CAVEATS FOR ROMANIA

As aforementioned, the concept of *strategic hedging* defines a strategy through which a state, instead of aligning exclusively with a single power pole, employs measures of cooperation and layered partnerships with many actors, with a unique goal of reducing vulnerabilities within an uncertain international environment. As opposed to *balancing* and *bandwagoning*, *hedging* seeks neither direct confrontation nor total subordination, but rather the preservation of strategic room for manoeuvre.

Romania is not a typical example of *classical hedging*, as it is firmly integrated into NATO and the EU, with a predominant strategic orientation towards the United States. However, within a multipolar environment, Romania may occasionally adopt micro-forms of *hedging* in order to diversify its economic relations, manage dependencies and, more importantly, strengthen its national resilience. Hence, in Romania’s case, *strategic hedging* primarily refers to a two-pronged approach consisting of the consolidation of the partnership with the United States and, at the same time, the leveraging EU membership for economic growth and technological development. That way, Romania may play a significant part in maintaining resilience within a dynamic, volatile evolving regional environment.

According to some authors (Caloianu etc.), *hedging* offers the possibility of “*playing*” several cards simultaneously by maintaining diplomatic and economic relations both with major Western powers and with states such as the People’s Republic of China or the Russian Federation. We would go further with a counterargument



suggesting that *hedging* is neither limited to nor dependent upon geographic or political categorisations that divide actors into friends and adversaries. In essence, *hedging* represents a mode of survival in uncharted waters, not necessarily more hostile ones (Caloianu, Ibid.). From this perspective, in Romania's case, *hedging* can be observed in the effort to strike an optimal balance between NATO and the EU, while simultaneously aligning with certain US security objectives, given the United States' role as a key strategic partner in Romania's foreign and security policy.

A major advantage of *strategic hedging* consists in reducing strategic risks within a volatile security environment. In other words, by anchoring itself in its strategic relationship with the United States and, at the same time, by strengthening the European dimension of security, Romania avoids exclusive dependence on a single security provider. Furthermore, *strategic hedging* contributes to the diversification of partners, sources and options across multiple domains beyond the political sphere, including the economy and energy. This way, Romania seeks to reduce dependence on resources originating from the Russian Federation while simultaneously developing transatlantic and European cooperation, which strengthens not only energy security but also autonomy in the decision-making process.

In this context, one may also refer to the increase in Romania's strategic relevance. As a connecting actor between the EU, the United States and NATO on the Eastern Flank, particularly in the Black Sea region, Romania is able to benefit from both the transatlantic and the European dimensions of security. At the same time, *controlled hedging* provides diplomatic flexibility. Romania can support European initiatives aimed at strengthening strategic autonomy without contradicting its transatlantic commitments, while maintaining its profile as a loyal ally, but not a passive one.

However, the main drawback stems from Romania's status as a NATO ally, as the space for *hedging manoeuvres* remains relatively limited due to collective security commitments that require strategic clarity and predictability. Any perception of confusion, ambiguity or duality may be interpreted as reluctance or, worse, as a lack of commitment. From this outcome, additional disadvantages may emerge, especially in the adversaries' narratives. An external perception of strategic

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For Romania, hedging cannot constitute a core strategy in the classical sense, but rather a complementary instrument to a clear strategic alignment with the Euro-Atlantic space. While Romania may benefit from selective hedging, it may also face certain risks. Its advantages are maximised when applied selectively, transparently and in coordination with allies, while its risks increase when hedging is perceived as ambiguity or indecision.

ambivalence can fuel rhetoric about a lack of cohesion on the Eastern Flank and the weakening of Euro-Atlantic solidarity.

When European and transatlantic priorities do not fully coincide, a *hedging* position may generate institutional tensions and decision-making incoherence. In the absence of clear, organised strategic coordination, the possibility of contradictory messaging and even missed opportunities becomes quite high. Divergent institutional perspectives are frequent in the domestic affairs of any state, but when there are two strategic directions that Romania seeks to maintain in a state of convergence or, at least, complementarity, such differences may lead to disruptive decisions and a weakening of international credibility. Moreover, for a medium-sized state such as Romania, *excessive hedging* risks becoming *reactive rather than strategic*. In the absence of strong and efficient national capabilities, the diversification of external relations may result in the dispersion of resources and the dilution of efforts, rather than in the consolidation of a coherent deterrence posture.

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Thus, Romania illustrates a model of *limited and responsible hedging*, in which diplomatic flexibility and economic diversification coexist with firm security commitments, transforming this approach into a multiplier of resilience, rather than an alternative to an exclusive alliance-based security.

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So, is Romania less oriented towards the US in the context of the Greenland geopolitical issue?

No, at least not in a structural sense. For Romania, the strategic relationship with the United States remains a central pillar of its national security strategy for a straightforward reason: at present, neither the EU nor individual European states are able to provide military guarantees equivalent to those offered by the US, particularly



on the Eastern Flank. More specifically, military bases¹ (GlobalSecurity, etc.), rotational military presence (US Department of State, 2025), missile defence systems (US Department of State, 2025)², ISR capabilities (Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs, 2021), and indirect nuclear deterrence (NATO, 2025) are provided by the United States. From this perspective, Romania does not possess a functional alternative to the United States. Therefore, what we are witnessing is not a “*distancing*” from the US, but rather a prudent adjustment of exclusive dependence.

The projection of a state’s power is defined by its capacity to influence the international environment through military, economical, scientific and technological instruments. (Simileanu, 2025). Currently, the United States, the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation are all seeking to achieve synergy between resources and national strategy, while adapting this approach to their own strategic interests and vulnerabilities. (Ibid.). At present, the United States preserves its hegemonic status through a wide range of combined measures and capabilities, such as: its global network of military bases, NATO’s operational presence in Europe, global naval capabilities (*blue-water navy*), and technological, cyber and intelligence assets. When comparing such a strategic partner with a regional organisation such as the EU, the choice is not a realistic one. Therefore, a *hedging policy* represents the only mature position that a state can adopt.

The central issue in the current strategic debate lies in Romania’s positioning within the current context, shaped both by the Greenland controversy and by the relationship between the Trump administration and the Russian leadership, which appears more cooperative than confrontational. In this regard, Romania is not strategically “*shifting*” from the United States towards the EU, but it is adjusting its *hedging*

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¹ In July 2006, the Romanian parliament ratified the historic agreement that allowed U.S. troops to deploy to Romanian military facilities for training and other purposes, part of the larger U.S. Global Defense Posture Review.

² Romania hosts a key element of the U.S. *European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA)* missile defense effort for NATO. The fully operational system was integrated as part of NATO’s ballistic missile defense at the Warsaw NATO Summit in July 2016. The two countries signed a ballistic missile defense agreement in 2011. In October 2014, the U.S. Navy formally established *Naval Support Facility Deveselu* – the United States’ first new Navy base since 1987 – where the EPAA *Aegis Ashore* missile defense site has been constructed. The base houses over a hundred US sailors and Navy contractors on a persistent, rotational basis.



The Greenland episode does not shift Romania exclusively towards the EU, but it does reinforce its inclination for strategic diversification. Indeed, Romania is becoming more strategically oriented towards the EU, though not in a substitutive sense, but rather a complementary one, especially in areas such as economic security, energy security, societal resilience, critical infrastructure, military mobility and the defence industry.

in a context where the centre of gravity of European security guarantees is beginning to shift partially. The growing role of Romania as a pillar of stability in the Black Sea region is supported both by *NATO 2030* (Blessing, Elgin, Ewers-Peters, 2021) and by the *EU Strategic Compass*, both of which highlight the strategic importance of this region for Euro-Atlantic security. In this context, Romania has the potential to become a strategic nexus of convergence between NATO and EU initiatives, contributing both to military deterrence and to regional resilience and broader security.

Regarding the support expressed by EU member states for Denmark in the Greenland issue, in the context of statements made by Donald J. Trump, this episode conveys an important political signal, although not a decisive military one. For Romania, the message is that the EU is beginning to respond more coherently at the political level to external pressures, including those originating from the US. However, this cohesion does not automatically translate into credible military deterrence. Romania interprets this episode not as a “*transatlantic rupture*”, but rather as an indicator of the unpredictability of US policy, particularly as influenced by electoral cycles.

In this sense, the Greenland episode does not shift Romania exclusively towards the EU, but it does reinforce its inclination for strategic diversification. Indeed, Romania is becoming more strategically oriented towards the EU, though *not in a substitutive sense, but rather a complementary one*, especially in areas such as economic security, energy security, societal resilience, critical infrastructure, military mobility and the defence industry. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that real military security remains transatlantic. This is the essence of Romania’s current *hedging approach: the United States for military deterrence and the EU for strategic sustainability*.

Romania does not practice a form of *hedging* aimed at “balancing among great powers,” as observed in parts of Asia, but rather a type of *intra-allied hedging*, remaining firmly anchored within NATO, strengthening its position within the EU and avoiding, as far as possible, exclusive dependence on a single political axis. This type of *hedging* is *defensive, transparent* and fully *compatible* with existing alliances. In fact, commitments within NATO, the continued enhancement of Romania’s strategic profile within the EU, and its strategic partnerships

constitute the action triad underpinning Romania's foreign and security policy.

The evolution of Romanian *strategic hedging* towards a more coherent and institutionalised form is compatible with the vision articulated in Romania's National Defence Strategy, which introduces the concept of "*solidary independence*". This concept captures the balance between strengthening national capabilities and assuming allied responsibilities, confirming that Romania's strategic flexibility is not an expression of ambiguity, but rather of decision-making maturity in a volatile international system. Within this logic, Romanian strategic hedging is expected to become more sophisticated and institutionalised, evolving from ad hoc responses towards coherent diversification policies integrated into national and European strategies for security and resilience.

CONCLUSIONS

In the current volatile security environment, characterised by strategic competition, structural vulnerabilities and hybrid threats, Romania's geostrategic position requires not only a flexible approach to national security, but also the systematic strengthening of national resilience. In this context, Romania cannot build its security exclusively around a single power axis, but rather through a carefully calibrated balance between alliances, partnerships and the development of its own military, institutional and societal resilience capabilities.

Simultaneous membership in NATO and the EU provides Romania with a dual strategic advantage, enabling it to combine transatlantic military security guarantees with European instruments for development, resilience, cohesion, and economic stability, all of which are essential for sustaining long-term security and reducing internal vulnerabilities.

Romania's *strategic hedging* is *limited, selective, and intra-allied*, oriented towards the diversification of economic, energy, and diplomatic options, with a direct role in enhancing the state's strategic resilience, without calling into question Romania's firm commitments to the Euro-Atlantic space or to the collective security architecture.

Recent geopolitical developments do not necessarily point to a strategic reorientation of Romania, but rather to a pragmatic



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recalibration of the balance between the transatlantic and European dimensions, aimed at further strengthening Romania's resilience and strategic relevance in an unpredictable international environment.

The success of Romania's *hedging* strategy will depend decisively on the consolidation of national capabilities, both military and civilian, so that national resilience transforms strategic flexibility into an *instrument of anticipation and influence*, rather than merely a reactive mechanism for adapting to external pressures.

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