



ROMANIA 2025-2030: FROM STRATEGIC VISION TO ACTION – INTEGRATING THE NEW NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY INTO THE NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE –

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The article analyses the conceptual foundations of national security and defence strategies, discussing the distinction and overlaps between the national security strategy and the defence strategy. A brief history of Romania's post-1989 strategic documents is provided, highlighting the gradual transition from a predominantly military approach to security to an extended, multidimensional model focused on resilience, interinstitutional coordination and societal involvement. The paper then places these documents in an ever-changing international context, marked by geopolitical reconfigurations, hybrid conflicts and transnational threats, as well as the doctrinal adjustments of NATO and the EU. In this framework, the article examines the National Defence Strategy of Romania for the period 2025-2030, in a context marked by the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, the intensification of global geopolitical competition and the proliferation of hybrid threats. The elements of continuity and novelty of the strategic document are identified, such as the explicit integration of societal resilience as a pillar of security, preparedness for multiple simultaneous crises, the correlation of national security with industrial development and technological innovation, as well as openness to public consultation and transparency. The conclusion of the article argues that, although formally called a defence strategy, the 2025-2030 Strategy goes beyond the strictly military framework and functions, in essence, as a national security strategy adapted to contemporary realities. This evolution reflects the need for an integrated approach to security, in which military deterrence, resilience and the capacity of society to manage complex crises become interdependent elements of Romania's national security in the period 2025-2030.

Keywords: national security strategy; national defence strategy; White Defence Paper; defence policy; Ukraine;



THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CONTEXT AND REGIONAL PARTICULARITIES

The international security landscape in 2025 continues to be marked by heightened geopolitical rivalry, the erosion of multilateral norms, and a rise in hybrid threats that blur the line between war and peace. Great power competition continues to reshape global alliances and security priorities. Conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific reflect not only military tensions but also systemic disputes over political models, technology control, and economic influence. Climate-related instability, cyberwarfare, and disinformation further complicate crisis management and deterrence. Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, launched in February 2022, still represents the most significant violation of European security norms since the Second World War. Beyond its direct consequences, the war has triggered a geopolitical realignment: NATO has expanded, EU defence coordination has intensified, and Western states have imposed unprecedented economic sanctions on Russia. Ukraine's resistance, bolstered by Western military and financial aid, continues to be a defining test of the West's unity, credibility, and commitment to a rules-based international order.

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The Trump administration's approach to security and defence has also had a profound impact on Europe since 2025, reshaping transatlantic relations and prompting European nations to reconsider their strategic posture. By urging NATO allies to significantly increase defence spending – advocating a target of up to 5 percent of GDP – the approach has sparked debates about burden-sharing and Alliance cohesion. Collectively, these developments are moving Europe towards a more independent defence posture, reshaping the balance within the transatlantic Alliance.



The Black Sea region has become a key arena of geopolitical competition. To complement allied measures in the region, regional cooperation efforts have intensified. For example, in 2024 a Romanian-Bulgarian-Turkish initiative – the MCM Black Sea Task Group – was established to counter drifting mines in the Black Sea resulting from the Russo-Ukrainian war.

In this global context, South-Eastern Europe remains a volatile but strategically vital region. It faces a convergence of internal and external security challenges: Russian hybrid operations along NATO's south-eastern flank, growing authoritarianism and democratic regression, economic vulnerabilities linked to foreign influence (especially from Russia and China), and underdeveloped cyber resilience. Large-scale protests in countries such as Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia reflect public discontent with corruption, democratic regression, and authoritarian tendencies. These internal pressures are compounded by economic dependencies on authoritarian regimes, particularly through investments from Russia and China, which undermine transparency and encourage corruption. Thus, the stability of the region appears to depend, to a large extent, on resolving internal governance crises and strengthening its integration into European and transatlantic security frameworks. As South-Eastern Europe navigates these complex security dynamics, the interplay between external pressures and internal reforms will be essential in shaping the region's stability and its role within the broader European and transatlantic security frameworks.

In the landscape described above, the Black Sea region has become a key arena of geopolitical competition. To complement allied measures in the region, regional cooperation efforts have intensified. For example, in 2024 a Romanian-Bulgarian-Turkish initiative – the MCM Black Sea Task Group¹ – was established to counter drifting mines in the Black Sea resulting from the Russo-Ukrainian war. From a European perspective, in May 2025 the European Union launched the *Strategic Approach to Security in the Black Sea* (Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, 2025), proposing initiatives such as a Black Sea Maritime Security Hub and integrating economic resilience and environmental protection. Together, these

¹ *Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Black Sea Mine Countermeasures Task Group (Semnarea Memorandumului de Înțelegere privind constituirea grupului operativ pentru combaterea minelor marine în Marea Neagră)*, Ministry of National Defence of Romania, Bucharest, 11 January 2024, https://www.mapn.ro/cpresa/18251_semnarea-memorandumului-de-intelegere-privind-constituirea-grupului-operativ-pentru-combaterea-minelor-marine-in-marea-neagra, retrieved on 30 May 2025.

developments reflect a concerted effort by NATO, the EU and regional actors to counter Russian aggression, strengthen security and stabilise a region essential to broader European and transatlantic security interests.

In the turmoil generated by the dynamics of geopolitical developments, the importance of a political vision becomes all the more essential. Its reflection in clear national strategic documents becomes a fundamental instrument of coherence, orientation and legitimacy for state action. Strategic documents do not only identify risks and threats; they also translate major political options choices into a predictable framework for action, capable of guiding institutional decisions over the medium and long term. In the absence of such an articulated vision, the state's reactions risk remaining fragmented, reactive and insufficiently aligned with national objectives and international commitments.

In this sense, national strategies function as a link between the international security environment, domestic constraints and the political aspirations of the state, providing a common point of reference for decision-makers, institutions and society. They provide not only strategic direction, but also a framework for public accountability, in which priorities, resources and instruments of action are transparently articulated. Thus, in a context marked by uncertainty, strategic competition and overlapping crises, a state's capacity to coherently formulate and update its strategic vision becomes an essential indicator of its political and institutional maturity.

NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY OR NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY?

In a state context, the terms *National Security Strategy* (NSS) and *National Defence Strategy* (NDS) are often used interchangeably. However, the two types of documents serve distinct purposes and play different roles in shaping a state's approach to protecting its interests. Understanding the difference between these two strategic documents is essential to understanding how nations assess threats and organise their resources to counter them.



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The National Security Strategy usually addresses geopolitical and domestic threats, vulnerabilities, international partnerships and membership in international organisations, strategic priorities and global position, economic and energy security etc., with objectives such as: prevention of hybrid and non-military threats; protection of critical infrastructure; combating terrorism, organised crime, illegal migration; energy, food, health security; societal resilience.

Thus, the NSS is a broad, comprehensive policy document that outlines a nation's core interests, perceived threats, and the overall strategic approach to maintaining national security, encompassing all dimensions of national power – military, diplomatic, economic, informational, and, more recently, national resilience. Its purpose is to define what *national security* means to a given country and to provide a unified vision of how the various elements of government and society will contribute to protecting it. The *National Security Strategy* usually addresses geopolitical and domestic threats, vulnerabilities, international partnerships and membership in international organisations, strategic priorities and global position, economic and energy security etc., with objectives such as: prevention of hybrid and non-military threats; protection of critical infrastructure; combating terrorism, organised crime, illegal migration; energy, food, health security; societal resilience.

In this case, the document represents the vision of the President of the state, and the audience is the general public, including decision-makers, legislators, citizens and, sometimes, even adversaries, to signal the strategic intent and position. Being developed at a high level and being conceptual, the document is often written in broad strategic language, setting long-term objectives and providing a national vision for security across multiple domains.

In turn, the NDS is derived from the NSS, focusing specifically on the political-military aspect of national security, providing guidance on how the armed forces should prepare to support broader national security objectives. The document typically includes: military threat assessments; force structure and modernisation plans; training and readiness priorities; doctrinal and operational concepts; strategic deterrence and combat capabilities. Developed by the national defence establishment, its primary audience consists of the military leadership, defence planners, and relevant government stakeholders responsible for defence policy and budgeting. More operationally and specifically, the NDS translates the strategic objectives of the NSS into concrete military objectives, including specific capabilities and the alignment of military resources with strategic threats.



A key aspect in comparing the two documents is that they must be complementary, given that a solid national security architecture requires coherence and alignment between both strategies. If the NSS outlines what the state aims to protect and why, the NDS explains the ways in which the armed forces will contribute to achieving the objectives.

A relevant example is provided by the strategic documents of the United States of America. In 2022, the US National Security Strategy² focused on integrated deterrence, alliances, climate change and economic resilience, while the US National Defense Strategy³ prioritised deterring China and Russia, promoting force modernisation and jointly addressing global security challenges – as direct military responses to the threats identified in the National Security Strategy.

In other states, the names of these two programmatic documents vary, but their purpose and structure correspond to those of the NSS and NDS. Thus, the United Kingdom has both a national security strategy and a Defence Command Paper, and a strategic defence review; while Germany, Canada and Australia have national security strategies and defence white papers.

Thus, although both the national security strategy and the national defence strategy aim to protect a nation's interests, they differ in scope, focus, and audience. The NSS provides a broad vision of national priorities and the strategic environment, while the NDS is limited to how military power will be organised and used to support that vision. Understanding both is essential for anyone interested in defence policy, international relations, or national governance.

A key role in the development of either document is played by the field of defence policy. *“Strategy deals with the difficult problems of national policy, the areas where political, economic, psychological, and military factors overlap. There is no such thing as purely military*

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² National Security Strategy of the United States of America, October 2022, White House, Washington, <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>, retrieved on 30 May 2025.

³ National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, October 2022, Defense Department, Washington, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.pdf>, retrieved on 30 May 2025.



Romania officially has a National Defence Strategy that also functions as a National Security Strategy, issued approximately every five years, beginning in 2001. By 2025, six such strategies had been adopted, reflecting the evolution of the geopolitical context, security threats and Romania's position within international alliances.

advice when it comes to issues of strategy” (Baylis, Wirtz, Gray, 2016, p. 3). The renowned political scientist Henry Kissinger, who held senior positions in successive US administrations, believed that “the separation of strategy and policy can only be achieved to the detriment of both” (Kissinger, 1957, p. 422).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROMANIA'S SECURITY AND DEFENCE STRATEGIES

Romania began developing national security and defence strategies after 1989, following the transition from the communist regime to a democratic system and its gradual integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. These strategies became important official documents adopted at the highest level of the state, especially after Romania's accession to NATO (2004) and the European Union (2007).

Romania officially has a National Defence Strategy that also functions as a National Security Strategy, issued approximately every five years, beginning in 2001. By 2025, six such strategies had been adopted, reflecting the evolution of the geopolitical context, security threats and Romania's position within international alliances: 2001⁴ – National Security Strategy, the first strategy following Romania's accession to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), in a context of military reform and preparation for NATO membership (during the presidency of Ion Iliescu); 2006⁵ – National Security Strategy, the first adopted after Romania's accession to NATO (2004), focused on the modernisation of the Armed Forces (during the presidency of Traian Băsescu); 2010⁶ – National Defence Strategy, developed during the global economic crisis, with an emphasis on asymmetric threats (during the presidency

⁴ *Romania's National Security Strategy (Strategia de Securitate Națională a României) “Guaranteeing Democracy and Fundamental Freedoms, Sustainable Economic and Social Development, NATO Accession and European Union Integration*, Bucharest, 2001, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/59479>, retrieved on 31 May 2025.

⁵ *Romania's National Security Strategy (Strategia de Securitate Națională a României) “European Romania, Euro-Atlantic Romania: For a Better Life in a Democratic, Safer and More Prosperous Country”*, Bucharest, 2007, <https://www.juridice.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SSNR1.pdf>, retrieved on 31 May 2025.

⁶ *National Defence Strategy (Strategia Națională de Apărare) “For a Romania that Guarantees the Security and Prosperity of Future Generations”*, Bucharest, 2010, https://www.cdep.ro/caseta/2010/08/31/hp100622_CSAT.pdf, retrieved on 31 May 2025.



of Traian Băsescu); 2015⁷ – National Defence Strategy (during the presidency of Klaus Iohannis); 2020⁸ – National Defence Strategy (during the presidency of Klaus Iohannis); 2025⁹ – National Defence Strategy of the Country.

The provisions governing the National Defence Strategy are set out in Defence Planning Law no. 203/2015, which defines the purpose of the document, its content and the procedure for its approval at national level. Thus, the NDS *“is the fundamental document underlying defence planning at national level. Within no more than six months from taking the oath of office, the President of Romania shall submit the National Defence Strategy to Parliament, where it shall be debated and approved by decision in a joint sitting of the two Chambers”*¹⁰. It includes *“the national security values, interests and objectives; the assessment of the international security environment; the identified potential risks, threats and vulnerabilities; the strategic objectives and priorities in the field of defence; the courses of action and the main means of ensuring Romania’s national security in the field of defence”*.

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Table 1: Evolution of Romania’s national security/defence strategies

2001-2005	International context: growing role of NATO; the terrorist attacks on the USA on 11 September 2001, which led to a change in the approach to the concept of national security for several states, but especially for the USA; preparation for accession to NATO and the EU of some European states
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⁷ Romania’s National Defence Strategy (Strategia Națională de Apărare a Țării) “A Strong Romania in Europe and the World”, Bucharest, 2015, https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_1.pdf, retrieved on 31 May 2025.

⁸ Romania’s National Defence Strategy (Strategia Națională de Apărare a Țării) “Together, for a Safe and Prosperous Romania in a World Marked by New Challenges”, Bucharest, 2020, https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_2020_2024.pdf, retrieved on 31 May 2025.

⁹ Romania’s National Defence Strategy 2025-2030 (Strategia Națională de Apărare a Țării 2025-2030) “Independence and Solidarity – Romania’s Vision for a Changing World”, Bucharest, 2025, <https://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/csat/strategia-nationala-de-aparare-a-tarii-pentru-perioada-2025-2030>, retrieved on 4 December 2025.

¹⁰ Law on Defence Planning No. 203 of 16 July 2015, Romanian Parliament, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, No. 555 of 27 July 2015, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/170048>, retrieved on 2 June 2025.



	Domestic context: NATO accession Risks and threats to national security: classic (regional conflicts, terrorism) and predominantly of a non-military nature (possible regional negative developments in the field of democratisation; proliferation of transnational organised crime; incitement to extremism, intolerance, separatism or xenophobia) Vulnerabilities: of an economic, financial and social nature; corruption; poor management of public resources Strategic orientation: traditional defence, accompanied by military reform
2006-2010	International context: accelerating globalisation and regional integration processes; high-intensity military engagements by the US and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan; Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (2008); Russia's war against Georgia (2008); the 2008 global economic crisis; nuclear proliferation (Iran); recognition of non-traditional threats (energy security, pandemics etc.) Domestic context: EU accession Risks and threats to national security: regional conflicts; gas crisis (Russia-Ukraine); predominantly extremist-religious terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; transnational organised crime Vulnerabilities: inefficient governance; increasing social differences; fragility of civic spirit and civic solidarity; underdeveloped infrastructure; difficulties in adapting the education system to the demands of society; insufficient involvement of civil society in debating and addressing security issues

	Strategic orientation: building Romania's new European and Euro-Atlantic identity; transformation of institutions with national security responsibilities
2010-2014	International context: the rise of ISIS; post-9/11 strategic fatigue (the transition from ISAF to Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan); the Arab Spring (2010-2012); Russia's renewed assertiveness through the illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula (2014); China's growing assertiveness in the South and East China Seas; the first signs of the transition towards multipolarity Domestic context: strengthening the bilateral relationship with the USA; economic crisis Risks and threats to national security: hybrid and cyber threats; weapons proliferation; state fragility and civil conflicts (Syria, Libya, African countries); post-2008 economic instability; the persistence of a high level of instability in the Black Sea region; drug trafficking Vulnerabilities: excessive politicisation of state institutions; reduced administrative capacity; corruption Strategic orientation: focused on defence against conventional threats, while simultaneously opening towards emerging risks; targeted institutional reform
2015-2019	International context: the return of great-power competition; consolidation of hybrid warfare (foreign interference in electoral processes, disinformation, fake news, the use of proxies and economic coercion); the erosion of multilateralism; challenges to NATO and EU unity; climate change Domestic context: government instability; civil protests



	Risks and threats to national security: the persistence of frozen conflicts in South-Eastern Europe; hybrid and cyber threats; the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic Vulnerabilities: limited capacity to absorb European funds; underdeveloped infrastructure; vulnerabilities in the justice and education systems; corruption Strategic orientation: systemic and interinstitutional reform; international cooperation; citizen participation regarded as essential (societal resilience)
2020-2024	International context: the convergence of global crises; the acceleration of great-power competition; the expansion of hybrid threats across almost all areas; the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022); the return of large-scale war to Europe (following the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in 2022) Domestic context: the public health crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic; political polarisation; modernisation initiatives and adaptation to new European and global realities Risks and threats to national security: Russia's military build-up; the economic crisis generated by the health crisis; pandemics; the stagnation of EU enlargement; volatility in the Western Balkans; hybrid threats; cyber attacks Vulnerabilities: political fragmentation; lack of interinstitutional coordination during the pandemic; underdeveloped infrastructure; low level of security culture

	Strategic orientation: paradigm shift – transition to the concept of comprehensive security (multidimensional approach: military, economic, health, energy, cyber, educational and environmental dimensions); the triad of Romania’s membership in NATO, membership in the EU and the Strategic Partnership with the USA; societal resilience
2025-2030	International context: the continuation of Russian Federation’s war of aggression against Ukraine, redefining the European security architecture and NATO’s deterrence posture; the strengthening of global strategic competition (USA-China-Russia), the acceleration of the transition towards a fragmented international order; the increased pressure on transatlantic unity, intensifying debates on European strategic autonomy; the expansion and sophistication of hybrid threats (cyber, informational, economic, energy-related); the increasing importance of the Black Sea as a space of geopolitical, military and economic competition Domestic context: political polarisation and declining public trust in state institutions; the need to accelerate the modernisation of critical infrastructure, including dual-use infrastructure (civilian and military); budgetary pressures and the need for multiannual predictability in defence; the increasing relevance of the national defence industry and public-private cooperation; the gradual recognition of the importance of societal resilience and security culture



In November 2025, the Supreme Council of National Defence approved, and the Romanian Parliament subsequently adopted in a joint sitting, the National Defence Strategy for the 2025-2030 period. It is the first strategic document of this level to undergo a public consultation process and to incorporate observations from civil society and relevant institutions.

	Risks and threats to national security: the direct or indirect military threat posed by the Russian Federation; hybrid warfare: disinformation, foreign interference in democratic processes and cyber attacks; the vulnerability of critical infrastructure (energy, transport, communications and healthcare); regional instability in the extended neighbourhood (Ukraine, the Western Balkans, the Middle East); systemic crises (energy, climate, health, economic) Vulnerabilities: fragmentation and institutional overlap within the national defence and security system; limited administrative capacity to manage complex crises; low levels of media literacy and security culture among the population; social polarisation and weakening of internal cohesion Strategic orientation: consolidated defence and credible deterrence within NATO, with emphasis on the Eastern Flank; an integrated approach to security, which goes beyond the military dimension to include societal, economic and informational resilience; increased defence investment and the development of the national defence industry as a strategic security asset; solidarity independence: strengthening national capabilities while deepening Euro-Atlantic cooperation; modernisation of the national defence and security system through digitalisation, interinstitutional coordination and multiannual planning.
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and relevant institutions. The strategy is built around the concept of solidarity independence – a formulation that combines Romania’s decision-making autonomy with close cooperation within NATO and the European Union, while further strengthening the Strategic Partnership with the United States. The 2025-2030 Strategy reaffirms and expands the list of threats: Russia’s aggression and the potential for a large-scale conflict along Romania’s eastern borders, hybrid and cyber attacks, institutional vulnerabilities, information manipulation and risks to critical infrastructure – including energy and telecommunications in the Black Sea region.

A first distinguishing feature of the National Defence Strategy 2025-2030 is the explicit integration of societal resilience as a central pillar of national security. While previous strategic documents treated resilience rather as a subsidiary objective or as a result of sectoral policies, the new Strategy places it at the very core of the national security architecture. Security is no longer defined exclusively by the state’s capacity to deter or repel external aggression, but also by society’s capacity to absorb shocks, maintain the functioning of institutions and prevent hostile actors from exploiting internal vulnerabilities. This approach reflects the lessons learned from recent crises – pandemic, energy and information ones – which have demonstrated that social and institutional weaknesses can quickly evolve into security risks.

Closely linked to this paradigm shift, the Strategy places a clear emphasis on preparedness for managing multiple simultaneous crises, whether military or non-military in nature. Unlike previous approaches, which were predominantly sequential and sectoral, the document explicitly recognises the cumulative and interdependent nature of contemporary crises. A military conflict in Romania’s neighbourhood may coincide with cyber attacks against critical infrastructure, disinformation campaigns, economic pressures or energy and public health crises. Recognising this reality requires a shift in strategic thinking towards interinstitutional coordination, integrated planning and rapid response capabilities, instead of fragmented and reactive responses.



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The National Defence Strategy 2025-2030 marks a more pronounced openness to public consultation and transparency. The development process included, to a more visible extent, contributions from civil society and academia, and the document explicitly recognises the role of the citizen in strengthening national security.

Another important innovation is the explicit linkage between national security and industrial development, economic growth and technological innovation, especially in the defence sector. The Strategy goes beyond the traditional view of the defence industry as merely a supplier of military equipment and redefines it as a driver of strategic security, economic competitiveness and operational autonomy. Investments in industrial capacities, research and development and emerging technologies are presented not only as measures to modernise the armed forces, but also as instruments for reducing external dependencies and strengthening the state's economic resilience in a context where economic interdependencies itself can be used as a strategic weapon.

Last but not least, the National Defence Strategy 2025-2030 marks a more pronounced openness to public consultation and transparency. The development process included, to a more visible extent, contributions from civil society and academia, and the document explicitly recognises the role of the citizen in strengthening national security. This approach reflects the understanding that legitimacy, public trust and civic participation are essential components of national resilience and that security cannot be built exclusively from the top down, without the involvement of society as a whole.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? DIRECTIONS OF ACTION FOR ROMANIA

In relation to the current security environment, the strategic directions adopted by Romania reflect the need for an integrated, adaptable approach aimed at strengthening national resilience. A first essential strategic direction is to counter hybrid and information threats, considered vulnerability multipliers in a society characterised by polarisation and low levels of trust in public institutions. Disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks against critical infrastructure can no longer be treated as peripheral risks, but as systemic threats to national security. Addressing them requires not only strengthening institutional capacities, but also the involvement of civil society,

academia and the media, as well as the development of a security culture and media literacy across society.

In parallel, strengthening the defence posture and deterrence on NATO's eastern flank remains a central pillar of Romania's security. The country's geostrategic position, in the proximity of a high-intensity conflict, requires maintaining a credible, interoperable and well-integrated military capability within allied structures. Increasing defence investments, modernising military capabilities and strengthening host nation support for allied forces deployed on national territory are indispensable elements for ensuring territorial security and reinforcing Romania's role as a regional security provider.

A third strategic direction aims to strengthen economic, energy and cyber resilience, at a time when interdependencies are increasingly becoming instruments of strategic pressure. Energy security, the protection of critical infrastructure and the development of cyber capabilities are treated as areas with a direct impact on the state's ability to function in crisis situations. In this regard, aligning security policies with economic and industrial ones becomes essential.

Last but not least, another strategic direction requires the modernisation of the national security system from both an institutional and a decision-making perspective. Fragmented responsibilities, institutional overlaps and insufficient digitalisation affect the ability to respond effectively to complex crises.

In a complementary vein, national security for the period 2025-2030 is inseparable from its social and civic dimension. Political polarisation, social fragmentation and a deficit in security culture reduce society's capacity to respond coherently to external and internal threats. Therefore, strengthening social cohesion, improving public communication of state institutions and investing in civic and media education should be regarded as strategic investments in national security rather than secondary policy measures. In addition to the directions already set out in the Strategy, this dimension could also include measures such as: reforming public communication of state institutions in order to enhance transparency and accountability,



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Romania's NATO and EU membership requires a broader understanding of national security, aligned with allied and European priorities (the Green Deal, digital security, border protection etc.), while society itself is vulnerable to multiple types of crisis: cyber attacks (e.g. against hospitals and public institutions), public health crises (e.g. pandemics), large-scale disinformation and energy and climate-related challenges.

promoting social cohesion through local projects and state-civil society partnerships or developing a national programme for civic and media education in schools and local communities.

Given the multidimensional nature of the challenges that have already characterised the national environment for at least the past five years, as well as the content of the Strategy itself, it is obvious that the document follows the pattern of a national security strategy. Why? Because current threats are hybrid – they are no longer generated exclusively by a state's armed forces, but also originate in cyberspace, information manipulation, economic sabotage, energy coercion, forced migration and climate change. In addition, Romania's NATO and EU membership requires a broader understanding of national security, aligned with allied and European priorities (the Green Deal, digital security, border protection etc.), while society itself is vulnerable to multiple types of crisis: cyber attacks (e.g. against hospitals and public institutions), public health crises (e.g. pandemics), large-scale disinformation and energy and climate-related challenges.

Thus, in light of the comparisons presented above, the particularities of the current security environment and the need to adapt to the evolving strategic context, a national security strategy appears to be the option better suited to present-day realities. Additionally, the concept of a defence strategy could continue to be reflected through the existing Defence White Paper, which already possesses all the characteristics of such a programmatic document. In this regard, there is a need to further consolidate the field of defence policy, which will be of critical importance in the long term given the pace of geopolitical developments and the prospect of their increasing complexity. Looking ahead to the next strategic cycle, it may be useful for political decision-makers to ask themselves a fundamental question: “*Defence or national security strategy?*”, given that opting for the latter would require legislative amendments.

In conclusion, regardless of the type of strategic document adopted, Romania is facing a profound transformation of the security environment – a reality that must be fully acknowledged both

by the state and by society. Romania's security in the period 2025-2030 can no longer be ensured exclusively through military means, but also through democratic cohesion, information resilience and institutional adaptability. Romania should build on its geographical position as a regional pivot in the Black Sea while integrating a stronger economic and energy pillar into its strategic vision, in a context in which interdependencies are increasingly becoming strategic weapons. Domestically, special attention paid to countering polarisation and disinformation through security education and strategic communication can ensure the inclusive adaptation of society to current and emerging security challenges. Among the instruments for implementation should be effective sectoral public policies, a politically supported multiannual defence budget genuinely aligned with NATO requirements, consolidated international cooperation at both the bilateral and regional levels and a proactive role within NATO and the European Union.



Romania's security in the period 2025-2030 can no longer be ensured exclusively through military means, but also through democratic cohesion, information resilience and institutional adaptability. Romania should build on its geographical position as a regional pivot in the Black Sea while integrating a stronger economic and energy pillar into its strategic vision, in a context in which interdependencies are increasingly becoming strategic weapons.

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