ROMANIA IN THE EUROPEAN COHESION CONTEXT

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This paper presents Romania's strategic position on the main European security programmes reflected and accepted at EU level, as well as a brief assessment of EU officials towards Romania and the concrete actions through which Romania decided to align with EU's security and defence standards. It discusses the main strategic objectives of Romania and the European Union, actions and measures to promote European cohesion in terms of security, but also other study elements, and research in the direction of national and international security.

Keywords: European security; cohesion; PESC; security policies; European cohesion;

INTRODUCTION

Strengthening Romania's profile as a European Union partner in terms of achieving a European cohesion and security project is the main goal for our country. Currently, the courses of action in this regard are promoting European values and building an internal and external policy that respects the European Union's Strategic Agenda.

Withal, regarding the European Union's current challenges, Romania chooses to remain an active supporter also from the co-initiator perspective of the *EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)*(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

From Romania's involvement in projects with common or security topics debated by the European Union and the support of the Union and its member states, to Romania's current security strategies and the combat against cyber-attacks, while encouraging projects aimed at digitalisation, all these topics, and not only, will be presented for a more coherent overview of Romania's position concerning the achievement of the European cohesion and security project.

ROMANIA'S POSITION TOWARDS EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY

According to the position paper, signed on 23 March (2000), during the Government meeting, Romania *"welcomes the decisions adopted in the Common European Security and Defence Policy field"* (Mureșan, Pop, Bonciu, 2004, p. 51). Romania is actively involved in three main strategies to ensure European security:

- *ensuring stability and governance in the immediate neighbourhood (taking into account foreign political relations with the Republic of Moldova and Hungary, but also with other neighbours);*
- *establishing a desideratum regardingthe promotion of international order based on an effective multilateralism;*
- *preparing a response to modern threats (cyber-attacks, data exchange, etc.) – through the Cyber Security cell.*

Romania also agrees to get involved in supporting states with an emerging internal policy, from the Balkans, but also from Afghanistan, and Africa, being part of the state foreign policy. In addition, our country actively creates valuable

and strategic external relations with important state partners, strongly involved in the European Security Strategy. To this end, it shall ensure compliance with the principles laid down by the Brussels Treaty on 17 March 1948. Romania is a CFSP member, being involved in peacekeeping projects, strengthening international security policies and developing democracy and the rule of law. These are also the European Union's main objectives when it comes to EU security. And Romania aligns with them, our country's position being a favourable one.

Concerning Romania's involvement in strengthening EU security, our country ensures the protection of citizens and their rights, and actively promotes the European Union's capital values: democracy, the rule of law and fundamental human rights through the policy developed at home and abroad. Also, in terms of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, Romania has been a signatory to all documents supporting their non-proliferation from the outset.

In addition, Romania is part of international security organisations such as the UN, and NATO and is also part of several regional organisations, such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Royaumont Process, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Through all these partnerships, Romania actively supports the EU's values regarding the policy pursued and the security strategy and is involved in the development of new European security programmes

HOW DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION EVALUATE ROMANIA'S POSITION IN THE PROCESS TO BUILD EUROPEAN SECURITY?

"Romania has confirmed that it is on the right track in alignment with the CFSP", as evidenced in a report from the European Commission (European Commission, 2003). Moreover, Romania has shown a particular interest in the implementation and integration of the ESDP system - the European Security and Defence Policy, so that the fulfilment of ESDP objectives has become a priority for our country from the very beginning.

According to European officials, even the current *Military Strategy of Romania* is in line with EU policies, which is a substantial advantage in crystallising a European security project, to which Romania not only adheres but also actively engages.

Military Strategy of Romania, at the moment, is defensive-active and t is based on four common concepts:

- *credible defensive capability;*
- *restructuring and modernisation;*
- *enhanced operational partnership;*
- *gradual integration* (Military Strategy of Romania, 2021, p. 30).

The entire Military Strategy is drafted and explained at length in the most comprehensive reference document in this respect: The White Paper of Defence. Romania's current Military Strategy, taking into account the possible risks and threats, consists of defence development, in particular, the achievement of the objectives set to complete the *"Armed Forces 2026 Modernization Program"*. Along with supporting NATO and European Union, Romania has built sustainable and strategic relations with neighbouring countries and a strategic partnership with the United States, which provides the optimal framework for strengthening relations between the two countries' armed forces in order to substantiate Romania's strategic position in the Black Sea (Ibid.).

Moreover, the current strategy was drafted based on the results of the Strategic Defence Analysis 2020 (SDA), and the Romanian Armed Forces Transformation Program until 2040. In recent years, Romania has focused its attention on the development of dual-use capabilities, beneficial both for military operations and in support of the civil authorities, given the major impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ibid.)

The military operating environment main characteristics, according to the Military Strategy of Romania, are:

- simultaneous increase of the precision of the armament systems and the firing range;
- extending the interconnection of force projection capabilities in all confrontational environments (land, naval, air, cyber, space) and at all levels of engagement (tactical, operational and strategic);
- intensifying the scale of actions in cyberspace and the level of complexity, significantly affecting both command and control systems and kinetic actions;
- generating specific capabilities to new environments of military operation (cyberspace and outer space);
- hybrid strategies and actions (Ibid., p. 9).

The main objective of national defence is focused precisely on respecting the rule of law and preserving a healthy democratic environment, fundamental values of the European Union. That is why Romania is considered one of the countries actively involved in the European security project, supporting it from all points of view.

CONTINUOUS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
IN EUROPEAN SECURITY

In November 2016, European Commission Vice President Federica Mogherini presented a security implementation plan. At the same time, various action plans in the defence field were discussed, relying on the importance of a European Defence Fund (EFF) for defence research and development capabilities. Romania is in line with these standards (Common Security and Defence Policy). Thus, through the programs carried out within the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies/ CDSSS/UNAp, it aims to become the main pole of scientific knowledge and expertise in the military and security field.

Main objectives of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies:
- *to provide scientifically based expertise for Romanian political-military institutions;*
- *to provide the theoretical foundation of the functions of the military component within the overall security and defence framework;*
- *to investigate changes in the evolution of security and defence environment influencing Romania's national interests;*
- *to explore the role of the military in the future operational environment;*
- *systematic study of the Romanian society phenomena influencing the military field;*
- *to develop cooperation with similar military and civilian research institutions, both national and international;*
- *to promote the security and strategic culture within the Romanian society;*
- *to support the strategic level training and education within the ROU NDU by integrating security and military theory research results in the curricula and teaching process.* (https://cssas.unap.ro/).

Thus, it is noticed, even from the CDSSS objectives management, that Romania is actively oriented toward building and supporting a project to strengthen security both in the internal and external environment, seeking to cooperate with institutions and groups at international level in this regard.

By proposing security policies that involve the development of cooperation with military research institutes in the country and abroad, Romania can ensure its entry into the largest circles of influence in the EU, thus having decision-making power, but also visibility and unlimited opportunities to promote their values and strategies.

ROMANIA'S ROLE IN THE COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO

The EU and NATO have formed a collaboration in 2015, being extremely advantageous for Europe in terms of measures and opportunities that this alliance has brought in the security domain. Since 2018, NATO and EU have signed a new declaration, setting out new ways to counteract possible threats to common safety and security.

According to the European Council, the main areas on which the collaboration between NATO and EU will focus are (The European Council):
- military mobility;
- cyber security;
- hybrid threats;
- combating terrorism;
- gender inequality;
- security (UE Cooperation).

In recent years, the Council has conducted extensive research on civilian missions, with the aim of improving and streamlining efforts to establish and maintain security.

Romania supports effective actions in the European Union internally and externally, by promoting major objectives within European policies and documents, continuing to promote these objectives aggregated at the European level through the *EU Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024*, a document setting out priority areas for the Union's work over the next five years (Ministry of Foreign Affairs):
- *protecting citizens and freedoms;*
- *developing a strong and vibrant economic base;*
- *building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe;*
- *promoting European interests and values on the global stage* (Priorities of Romania).

Romania supports the domains approach aimed at ways to strengthen the European Union's resilience to crises. It also supports strengthening cooperation on health, measures that will lead to countering the economic and social effects of the pandemic and, last but not least, supports the strengthening of a high capacity of the EU to have common and effective responses in crisis situations. Romania supports and participates in the process of strengthening the internal market, economic growth and employment, paying particular attention to issuesrelated to social affairs, climate change and digital transition (Ibid.).

Referring to negotiations for the aggregation of the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 and the EU Recovery Instrument (NextGenerationEU), Romania has consistently supported ensuring a generous allocations volume, capable of supporting the efforts to recover Europe's economy and the implementation of the Union's medium and long-term development objectives. Romania's objective was to promote the major role of the *Cohesion Policy* and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from the European budget perspective (Ib.).

Also, a substantial factor for Romania as a member state is to maintain relations with the nearby countries, acting to sustain the Union's attention on the regions, supporting the Eastern Partnership (Ibid.). Romania also upholds European actions on strengthening the transatlantic partnership. A good relationship with the rest of the EU member states and neighbouring countries ensures a favourable path for Romania, with increased attention to the health and well-being of Romanian citizens, with the help of proposals for a greener Europe, attention to climate change and the member states citizen's living standards.

Regarding EU decisions on crisis management, Romania has promoted the creation of transit lanes, also called *"green lanes",* for a free flow of goods and services, ensuring the protection of Romanian seasonal workers in the member states, especially in the pandemic context, which generated difficulties among workers during their activities. It has also promoted the repatriation of European citizens and is constantly upgrading the adoption of several economic measures (Ibid.).

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND SAFETY

In 2016, in the context of the Bratislava summit, the leaders of the EU took a series of measures on European safety and security. These measures include building a plan to ensure this safety and security and attempts to consolidate the new cooperation between the EU and NATO. As regards the plan mentioned, the priorities included the need to *find answers to external crises and conflicts rapidly, in order not to allow these conflicts to disrupt attempts at safeness*; *to solidify the partner's capacity* and, one of the most essential objectives in carrying out this plan is, *to protect the EU and its citizens* (Ibid.).

In order to ensure that these objectives are met, the Union's leaders have put in place several measures to verify and enforce these new security movements and their proper functioning:

- enhancing cooperation between EU member states in the field of defence, a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) being set up;
- establishing the Permanent Structured Cooperation(PESCO) aimed at enhancing cooperation between member states;
- establishing the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in order to improve crisis management decisions;
- setting up a set of EU response tools, including battlegroups (European Council, 2021).

The purpose of the coordinated annual defence review process (CARD) is to provide a more realistic overview of what is happening in the European Union, whether it is the amounts invested in equipment or other defence resources, or national research and investment. Through this process it is expected to provide a better image and transparency in terms of the EU's ability to defend itself, making it easier to identify deficits, the source of financial problems and bring better spending planning, finally, successful cooperation between member states on safety matters will result.

Concerning PESCO, it was established in 2017 after an attempt by the EU Council to find an effective solution for cooperation between all member states. All countries in the Union participate in this process, except Denmark and Malta.

Since the beginning of this cooperation, the number of projects that have been debated has reached 60, covering various areas, among which we can also find the training and development of capabilities or operational availability in the field of defence, whether we are talking about land, air or water operations. Over time,

the projects have been or will be adopted and implemented. Among these defence fields, in addition to those aimed at more or less *"traditional"* defence, the EU has begun to implement projects related to cyber defence, given the recent years and the development of technologies.

Among the tools for the European Union's rapid response to numerous security challenges and threats are the European Union's tactical combat groups. Their aim is to be able to respond more quickly and effectively to crisis situations or certain conflicts that may arise and concern the members of the Union. Maintaining these tactical groups is a common cost for EU members (Ibid.).

According to the European Council, the European Defence Fund (EDF) has a budget of around 8 billion Euros in 2021-2027, divided into:

- 2.7 billion Euros to fund defence research and collaborative work;
- 5.3 billion Euros for collaborative projects in attempts to supplement national contributions.

This fund is intended to improve interoperability between national armed forces (Ibid.).

SECURITY AND DIGITALISATION IN ROMANIA

Romania upholds EU proposals on digitalisation, which will save time and energy for both citizens and employees, facilitating the organisation and information storage in the digital environment. Also, Romania benefits from the elimination of roaming charges when travelling in the European Union. In the context of the pandemic in recent years, Romania has taken several measures in the digital field to facilitate activities. A good example would be the case of DESI indicators (Digital Economy and Society Index), which helped the economic recovery caused by COVID-19, Romania being advanced in terms of VHCN coverage (Very High Capacity Network), at the same time, ranking 15th in the European Union for the degree of readiness to use 5G networks (Digitalisation).

Since 2016, through European Union funds, the Romanian Ministry of Communications and Information Society has implemented a technical assistance project, which aims to help central authorities and ministries in developing and implementing digitalisation projects for services entailed in *"life events"* of citizens and businesses, e-health, eIDAS node (Electronic IDentification, Authentication and trust Services), digital ID. This project has allowed various ministries to sign contracts to create IT systems for the digital provision of public services. The project also aims to enable citizens to access various services in digital form (Ibid.).

Having the ability to store, edit and structure all necessary information in terms of documents, payments, secure photos of passwords and codes, or to provide information of any kind through social networks or via TV channels, these new media, designed to provide security, can become the ideal attack environment. Cyber attacks are an increasingly used tactic, and security methods are extremely important to prevent information theft, propaganda, etc.

The European Union has taken numerous steps to prevent or end cyber-attacks and threats:

- increasing cyber resilience;
- fighting cybercrime;
- stimulating cyber diplomacy;
- strengthening cyber defence;
- developing research and innovation;
- protecting critical infrastructure (Cyber security).

Given the way in which current events in recent years are presented, we can say that cyber-attacks will be increasingly used, and a well-developed strategy to combat these threats is necessary for each country. The proposals for digitalisation and security in the digital environment are a priority, and the new security measures proposed by the EU can only be beneficial for a good and safe life in Romania, both physically and digitally. In 2021, EU ministers decided that a key objective was to achieve strategic autonomy while maintaining an open economy. This means strengthening the capacity to take different autonomous choices in the field of cybersecurity, with the main aim being to strengthen the EU's leading position in the digital field (Ib.).

CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between Romania and the European Union, at a diplomatic level, is extremely favourable to the development of fruitful projects in the military and strategic areas.

As long as the EU believes that Romania is involved and brings value to European security projects and strategies, our country will benefit. Therefore, concerns for a stable military and strategic environment are priorities on any list of Romania's security plans.

Considering the number of EU and NATO cooperation projects on the European security level and defence capacity in crises, both from a diplomatic and military point of view, as well as in terms of new threats that have as source the new

technologies developed, Romania is a country that needs this type of development, especially on the digital side, so a good collaboration with the rest of the European Union and involvement in various projects proposed for security is beneficial for both the Union and for Romania.

Romania engages in every project planned and presented by the European Union, showing interest, as EU officials say, in any initiative to build a European security plan. Therefore, the relationship between the EU and Romania, on the military, strategic and defence and security level, is a beneficial one for both parties.

The EU sees Romania as trustworthy, and our state acts according to the European security policies presented and accepted at the European level.

Romania assists and is also assisted by neighbouring states in return and has built solid relations and partnerships with different regions, the aim being to develop and maintain a high standard of living in all respects. Due to the plans to raise the elections rate and joint decisions of the Union in crises, Romania benefits from a strong, stable and secure alliance.

Precisely due to our involvement, which did not come only from the military-strategic direction, Romania also held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in 2019, which represented for the Romanian state a great opportunity to affirm and promote national and European values throughout Unions.

The cooperation relationship between the EU and Romania presented only positive events for the development of both parties, through ideas, projects and support in the plans regarding the security, defence and well-being of the EU member states' citizens. All being said, due to Romania's history, since 2007, when it became an EU member, until now, the level of involvement in all projects, support and resources offered, partnerships with neighbouring countries and plans to consolidate a green Europe, with a better economy and permanently developed military strategies, Romania is an important state for the European Union.

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