

Romania as a security provider for NATO and the EU

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Abstract

Romanian defence policy is currently developing in a complex environment characterized by constantly emerging threats and unpredictable events. As a result of its membership within the North-Atlantic Organization and the European Union, Romania enjoys a strong umbrella of protection, which engenders, however, severe obligations on both sides.

The Romanian approach to national defence policy is two-folded: redefining military power and adapting its means of reaction to threats and risks. This approach is both a result, as well as an effort of the country's membership within NATO and the EU. Membership - related activities date back to the early 1990s, when Romanian authorities initiated proactive measures to clearly express their firm intention of joining the two organizations. However, the efforts have been rather disbalanced, given the intensity of action of the two targeted entities, and their very nature. While the North-Atlantic Organization is a collective defence entity, bound together by the Washington Treaty of 1949 and its strong Article 5, the European Union remained, until recently, a political and economic entity. Its creation of a military branch, although long envisioned, became a reality only recently, through Article 42 (7) of the Treaty on the European Union. As a result, the degree of Romanian military participation in the European defence effort is only recent and not particularly developed, given the fact that European defence is not itself well-developed and institutionalized. On the other hand, as far as NATO is concerned, Romania pledged its allegiance and support even before membership and engaged actively in military exercises, prior to 2004, seeking thus to show its strength and capability to become a trustworthy and dependable member.

The aim of the paper is to perform a thorough analysis of the country's security and defence policies in recent years, in order to determine the steps made in order to achieve the capability of providing security and protection within the two blocks (NATO and EU). In this regard, the paper shall be focused on a compare and contrast approach, as well as use of content analysis as far as methodology is concerned, integrating within the effort both strategic documents, such as security strategies, defence white papers, government programmes and military doctrines, as well as scholarly views on how Romanian defence and security policies have been unfolding recently. Moreover, it will also resort to the reports issued by the Romanian Ministry of National Defence to create an ample view of the efforts made by the country since its accession in 2004 (NATO) and 2007 (EU), respectively, and the successes it has achieved in this sense.

A thorough investigation of the position held by Romania within NATO and EU's Common Security and Defence Policy needs to take into consideration firstly the chronological evolution. Secondly, it needs to be focused on the manner in which Romania grew from a member state in need of assistance to a provider of security and stability in the region, as well as inside the two organizations. This is visible through the country's participation in the fulfilment of the political and military goals of NATO and the EU, in addition to the involvement in the decision-making process. Fulfilment with organizational goals requires strong efforts to ensure transition and reform in agreement with NATO and EU demands. In order to be able to do that, Romanian military forces have undergone an acute process of change, which is first and foremost visible through the allotment of 2% of the GDP for defence, starting 2017. Finally, the best expression of having fully embraced its position within NATO and the EU and the responsibilities deriving from it, is the participation in various EU and NATO missions and operations, providing experience and expertise, training and resources.

Romania's pledge to reach interoperability and an interdependence status within both NATO and the EU has materialized in the most tangible manner: through the many operations, missions and exercises the Romanian forces took part in, as well as the increase in the GDP allotment for defence. It is a fact that Romanian efforts to cope with the challenges posed by the international community, as well as by the emerging threats and the demands of the two organizations, have not yet come to an end, the 2% of the GDP for defence being merely the completed starting point. It will be a challenge for the country to maintain itself at this rate and even increase it in the years to come.

The complexity of the Romanian role in the NATO and CSDP policies is visible through the steps taken by the country both prior and after the accession, in both cases. While efforts made in the participation to the European Defence Agency and to CSDP altogether were rather timid, they were compensated by the boldness manifested in the active participation in NATO activities. The commitment to participate in the achievement of political and military goals, as well as within the decision-making process has prompted Romania into the role of security provider, a position it has aspired to ever since the accession.

Taking everything into consideration, both within NATO and CSDP, Romania has manifested as a strong country, eager to step over the label of "new member state" and become an active participant in the programmes developed by the two organizations. This is most visible in the country's participation in NATO, as Romania is currently able to host several NATO structures, and also contribute to NATO missions with troops, expertise and training.