Landmarks of Euro-Atlantic Integration:
Key Actors, Institutions and Decision-making in Romania's Foreign and Security Policy

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Abstract

Romania's foreign and security policy has to be analysed in the wider regional and international security context. Its political, economic, juridical and political-military aspects have been highly influenced by NATO and EU membership criteria. Ever since the fall of the communist regime in 1989, Romania's foreign and security policy has passed through a serious set of reforms including the downsizing of the armed forces, establishing democratic control over the military, implying a reform of the institutions as well as a change in its strategic thinking. The hypothesis is that Romania's foreign and security policy was reshaped in the conditions of a consensus, largely, among decision-makers and stakeholders, due to the importance and influence of foreign factors – NATO and the EU – perceived as the main security guarantors in an unstable security environment.

Introduction

In almost 30 years since the fall of the communist regime, the country has passed through a long transition from isolationism to Euro-Atlantic integration, to becoming connected with the major trends.

The fact that Romania's top priority in its post-1989 foreign and security policy consisted of NATO and EU integration deeply influenced both its internal and external evolution. Internally, the need to implement the required reforms to gain NATO and EU integration has been the main force that formed and developed the political, economic, juridical, administrative and military dimensions. Externally, Romania carried out actions proving its adhesion to NATO and EU values, standards and interests. It achieved NATO membership in 2004 and EU membership in 2007.

Actually, NATO and EU integration and, subsequently, the engagement to become a reliable member within these organisations constituted the major axes of the Romanian foreign and security policy. Strongly interconnected with this trend, but also with Romania's geographical position at the border of NATO and the EU, in the proximity of relatively

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unstable regions, is its interest in promoting and maintaining security and stability in its Eastern and Southeastern neighbourhood.

Setting itself as a regional stability and security promoter has been not only a legitimate interest, based on the need for being surrounded by stable and secure actors, but also constituted a way of emphasising Romania's added value within the organisation. Thus, Romania's foreign and security policy builds on the following main pillars: NATO and EU membership, a strategic partnership with the U.S., and stability and security in the Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA) and in the Western Balkans.

Nowadays, Romania is deeply involved in international efforts to manage global and regional security challenges, and foreign and security policy decisions have stood as proof of the state's responsible engagement as an EU member and as a NATO ally. Just to name a few current and relatively recent efforts in this regard, we could consider the active involvement in NATO's reassurance measures in the context of the Ukrainian crisis, the participation in the Missile Defence System, the support of EU economic sanctions in the same context, or the efforts of developing cooperation in Southeastern Europe (SEE), participation in the Bucharest 9 Format being just one of the most recent such initiatives. Additionally, Romania initiated together with Austria the EU Strategy for the Danube Region; it is also involved in energy security related projects.

Its involvement in promoting stability and security in the neighbourhood can be traced back to the early 1990s. In the East, Bucharest has shown constant support for the Republic of Moldova, as the two states have a common cultural, historical and linguistic background. Also, the violent breakup of Yugoslavia created a situation in which Romania had to prove its commitment to democratic values and an allied position, when NATO needed support in Western Balkans stabilisation missions and in the 1999 campaign against Serbia. Romanian participation in various missions under the NATO and EU aegis needs to be seen as a contribution to the stability and security of the region. Nevertheless, Bucharest was not among the capitals recognising Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008.

Beyond all the progress in terms of foreign and security policy lies a constant effort to reform foreign policy and security institutions in accordance with democratic principles and standards, ever since the fall of communism, as well as a widely shared belief that Euro-Atlantic integration would bring and represents the strongest security guarantee Romania could possibly get, given its geopolitical circumstances.

All of this was achieved by means of the decision-making stakeholders sharing a strong consensus in the matter of the fundamental security and defence decisions. The *hypothesis* of the present study is that Romania's foreign and security policy was advanced in the conditions of the key decision-makers and stakeholders' consensus, due to the importance and influence of external factors – NATO and the EU – perceived as the main security guarantees in an unstable security environment.

From isolationism to integration and interdependence

After the overthrow of Ceaușescu's regime, Romania's political leadership was assumed by the Front of National Salvation (FNS). During the December 1989 Revolution, FNS released a Communiqué to the Country, framing Romania's future foreign and security policy within

the European context, referring to it as a means for promoting good neighbourly relations, friendship and international peace (Historia s. a.).

Soon after the Revolution, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was reorganised and its mandate was extended beyond mere representation and foreign affairs management, to planning and implementing strategic action in the international arena. The Supreme National Defence Council of the Country (SNDC) was established to coordinate national security issues. Also, there were established a series of departments of European integration within executive structures, regarded as serving the new, professional and democratic approach of Romanian foreign policy after 1989.

European integration was coordinated through the Ministry of European Integration, established in 2000 and disbanded in 2007. Subsequently, its attributions were assigned by the Department of European Affairs, firstly subordinated to the prime minister and the secretary of state and, subsequently, transformed into the Ministry of European Affairs. Ever since 2012, Romania has a Ministry of European Funds, including structures and activities for the coordination of structural and cohesion funds and the grant funds pertaining to the European Economic Area. Within the MFA, the Department for the European Union manages the activity and structures in the area of European Affairs.
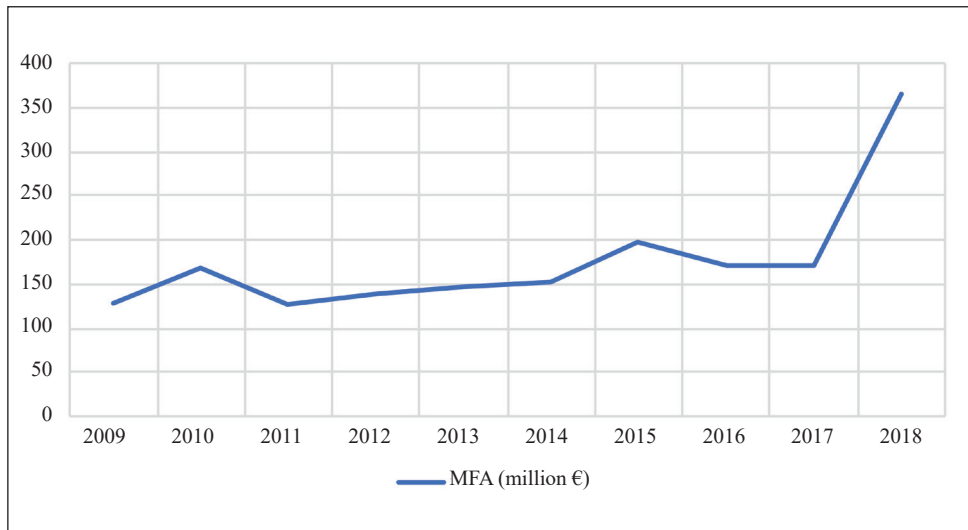

Figure 1.
The evolution of the MFA budget, 2009–2018

Source: MFA Budget 2018.

The MFA's budget remained fairly constant throughout this period, mirroring the evolution of the national economy. However, as Romania is to assume the Presidency of the European Council in 2019, the MFA's budget has been notably supplemented for preparing for this stage (Figure 1).

The reform of the national security system was one of the greatest challenges after 1989. The urgency was to reform the system of internal security, as one of the instruments of the communist regime for maintaining power was the Department of State Security or DSS (widely referred to as "Securitate"), which restricted to a great extent the fundamental rights and liberties of citizens. On December 30 1989, FNS disbanded all the DSS structures and, in March 1990, issued Decree no. 181, establishing the Romanian Intelligence Service (RIS), the state institution specialised in gathering national security information and providing intelligence. Subsequently, Law no. 51/1991 regarding Romania's national security established structures with a mandate in the area of national security: RIS, Foreign Intelligence Service, the Service of Protection and Guard, together with other specialised institutions within the MoD, the MoI and the Ministry of Justice. The entire activity related to national security was placed under the coordination of the SNDC. RIS's responsibilities were set by Law no. 14/1992. In 2001, the legal framework for RIS was reset, and in 2008, the SNDC issued a decision regarding the approval of the RIS structure and functions.

Even though, ever since 1990, it was clear that Romania needed a regulation act regarding access to the files of the former Department of State Security "Securitate", only in 1997 did the Government issue a law granting the public access, as well as calling for the content of the respective files to be published in official positions. Law no. 187/1999 allows access to these files and the exposing of Securitate as political police. In 1999, the National Council for the Study of Securitate's Archives (NCSSA) was established as an autonomous administrative authority, under the Parliament's control. Nevertheless, in 2008, the Constitutional Court decided that Law no. 187/1999 was unconstitutional, as NCSSA might act as a parallel juridical power. Subsequently, NCSSA has continued its activity based on Law no. 293/2008, abrogating the unconstitutional provisions.

In 2006, the Senate approved the lustration law bill, which has not been adopted within the Deputy Chamber until 2010. In the same year, the Constitutional court decided that the respective law was unconstitutional, as it impinged on the fundamental right of voting and being elected and that there was no justification for such a legal regulation within a democratic society. However, the lustration law was approved in 2012, allowing the lustration of all the individuals with political leadership functions paid by the former Romanian Communist Party or the ones having worked within the former Securitate (Legea Lustratiei 2012).[2]

The application of democratic principles in national security institutions had to rest on the development of democratic civil-military relations, and a consensus on the norms guiding national security related actions. One of the first moves in this direction was the establishment of the SNDC, including both civilian and military officials, functioning as an institutionalised framework for the coordination of civilian and military visions on security. In 1990, five of the ten members were military officers: the Chief of the General Staff, the Presidential Counsellor, the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS), the defence and the interior ministers. In 1997, only 3 of the 10 members were active officers of the

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[2]   The law of lustration regarding the temporary limitation of the access to certain public positions and dignities for the individuals who were part of the power structures and the represive apparatus of the communist regime during 6 March 1945 – 22 December 1989.

military: the Chief of the General Staff, the Presidential Counsellor and the Director of FIS (Watts 2001, 603). This ratio between civilians and military officials is still in force.

As the security-related topics were taboo until 1990, the training of civilians to be able to act and work effectively within national security institutions was a key issue for developing proper civil-military relations. In this context, under the MoD aegis the National Defence College (NDC) was created in 1992, adopting a model of similar institutions from NATO member states. NDC courses were opened to both civilian and military individuals who had experience in decision-making positions in national security and defence policy (Decision 438/1992).

Similar institutions were established within the intelligence area. In 1992, the Superior Institute of Intelligence was created that would subsequently become the National Intelligence Academy (NIA) and, later on, the National Intelligence College (NIC) was also established. The latter is set as a structure within the NIA, and, since early 2018 its activity is suspended. NIC was defined as a structure by which RIS contributes to the increase of the level of expertise and know-how within the civil society, public administration and the private environment regarding current security challenges (NIC s. a.).

Research institutes in the foreign, security and defence policy areas have contributed to the increase of knowledge and understanding regarding national and international security and defence issues. Among such institutes there are the Centre for Security and Defence Strategic Studies (ROU NDU "Carol I"), the Institute for Defence Political Studies and Military History (of the MoD), the National Institute of Intelligence Studies (NIA) and the Romanian Diplomatic Institute (MFA).

The military reform began soon after the Revolution as a consequence of the change of system as well as in accordance with the provisions of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), mainly by the process of downsizing. Another major landmark in the reform of the military was SNDC's establishment as *Law no. 39/1990 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the Supreme Council for National Defence.* It was one of the first laws helping the organisation and coordination of defence policy. The initial phase of the reform lasted until 1992, and is considered a period of "de-communisation" (Zulean 2004, 16).

After 1993, the MoD passed through a series of reforms, changing its structure by the reduction by 727 positions of the ministry and the introduction of over 100 civilian positions. Also, the General Staff (GS) was established, together with three separate component staffs – Land, Air and Naval Staffs. Patriotic Guards were dissolved and a system of territorial reserve was established (Zulean 2007, 11). Another important moment was the assignment of the first civilian as defence minister – Gheorghe Tinca (1994), a former diplomat. Also, the position of Secretary of State for Defence Policy and International Relations has been assigned to another civilian personality, Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu. The Deputy Chief of the National Defence College was also a civilian. Reform was made in stages, but at a rapid pace, as the number of Romanian troops dropped from 320,000 in 1990 to 207,000 in 1999 and to 140,000 in 2003 (Zulean 2005, 16). Presently, Romania has 69,300 active military personnel and 50,000 reserves (Military Balance 2018, 140). This also triggered an exponential decrease of the defence budget since the fall of communism, until the stage in which Bucharest came to invest less than the 2% of its GDP. However, the degradation of the security environment in the WBSA, together with the increasing pressure from the U.S. in this respect (with a view to spending dropping below 2% of GDP) entailed the increase of the defence budget, which translated in capabilities development and acquisition.
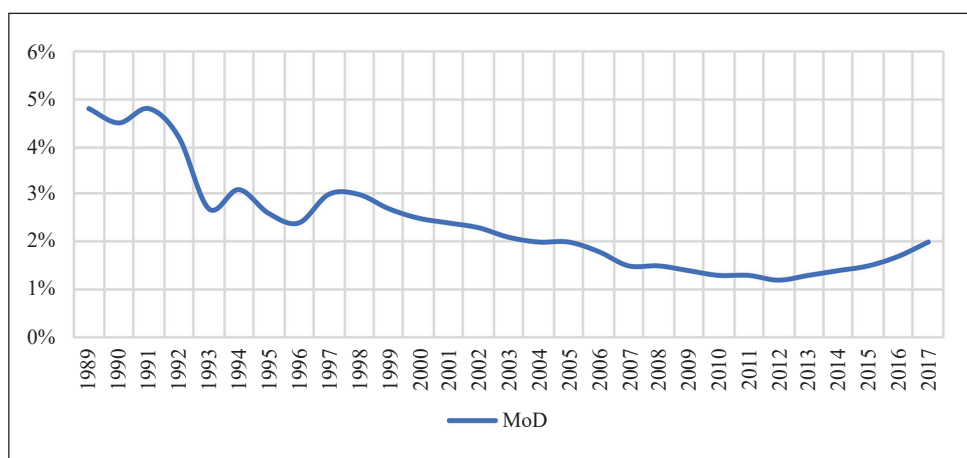
Figure 2.
Romania's defence budget evolution in terms of % of GDP during 1989–2017[3]

Source: SIPRI 2018.

In 1997, both the MoD and the GS were fully reorganised, with effects on the central structures and the combat forces. After becoming a NATO Member State, *Law no. 346/2006 regarding the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Defence* established the organisation of the ministry, its structures and responsibilities, force structure, leadership and personnel related aspects. Law no. 346/2006 was modified and completed through Law no. 167/2017, which also includes a change of name of the GS from Major General Staff to General Staff of Defence.

The Romanian vision on security risks and threats fundamentally transformed after December 1989, in tune with the dynamics of the internal and external security environment and with the progress made towards Euro-Atlantic integration. The first post-communist document referring to security risks and threats was Law no. 51/1991, mirroring the characteristics of the historical experience Romania was passing through at that moment, marked by the violent fall of the communist regime as well as by the violent riots in the early 1990s. The document reveals concern for military threats such as actions and plans affecting national sovereignty, integrity, unity and the independence of Romania. There was a strong focus on internal security risks and threats and the blurred line between internal and external risks and threats (Law no. 51/1991). In September 1991, SNDC approved the Military doctrine for Romania's defence, after Romania's participation in a series of CSCE events on military doctrines, and this included aspects of the democratic control of the armed forces, conditions regarding the transit of foreign troops on national territory, as well as concepts of "total war for the country's defence" (Anuța 2017, 257). In 1994, the Integrated Conception on Romania's security was approved by the SNDC. In fact, all the strategic documents until 1999 approached security strictly from a military perspective.

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[3] SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Source: https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex (Accessed: 31.01.2018.).

Table 1.

List of Romania's strategic papers 1990–2015 in internal and external context

Year	Title of the document	Coordination	Context	Observations
1991	Military doctrine for Romania's defence	Presidency, Parliament, MoD	Regional conflicts with a strong ethnic and religious dimension; first steps to Euro-Atlantic integration	
1994	Integrated conception on Romania's National Security (1994 ICRNS)	Launched by SNDC, coordinated by MoD State Secretary, Ioan Mircea Pascu	Regional conflicts with a strong ethnic and religious dimension; first steps to Euro-Atlantic integration; highly violent internal social revolts; building stronger relations with the U.S. and NATO (PfP)	• Simultaneously, the 1991 military doctrine is revised according to the principles of the Romanian state's national security principles, included in the ICRNS, within a separate task group, coordinated by the Chief of the General Staff, Dumitru Cioflină • ICRNS and the Military Doctrine Revisited would not be included in the Agenda of the Commission for Defence, National Safety and Public Order in the Parliament, due to vices of procedure, as they should not be remitted to the Parliament by the SNDC
1999	National Security Strategy of Romania – democratic stability, sustainable development and Euro-Atlantic Integration (1999 NSSR)	President Counsellor	Regional conflicts with a strong ethnic and religious dimension; enhancement of the relations with the U.S.; progresses on NATO and EU integration (PfP)	• Presented by the President to the Parliament. According to the procedure established in Edict no. 52/1998, also establishing responsibilities and deadlines for security and defence strategic documents: ◦ The president – national security strategy – 4 months since investiture ◦ The Government – White Paper in 4 months since the vote of confidence • Law no. 63/2000 approving Edict no. 52/1998 – the Parliament shall approve the Strategy; deadlines are restricted to 3 months • 2000: the Government issues the White Paper
2001	National Security Strategy of Romania – Guaranteeing democracy and fundamental liberties, sustainable economic and social development, NATO adhesion and EU integration (2001 NSSR)	President Counsellor	NATO and EU integration speeding up	• Analysed and approved by the SNDC; presented to the Parliament and approved

Year	Title of the document	Coordination	Context	Observations
2006	National Security Strategy of Romania – European Romania, Euro-Atlantic Romania: for a better life in a democratic, safer and more prosperous country (2006 NSSR)	Presidency Administration (LTG Constantin Degeratu), with the participation of the same ministries	9/11 attacks – shift in decision-makers' perception on security issues; progresses in the reform of Armed Forces; NATO integration	• Law no. 473/2004 on defence planning changes the process deeply • Subjected to public debate with civil society • Approved by the SNDC • As the Constitution and Law no. 476/2004 stipulate that the President shall present a National Defence Strategy; the advance of national security strategy by the President was provided only by Law no. 415/2002 on the organisation and functioning of the SNDC; this state of facts triggers the elaboration of a National Defence Strategy (2008)
2010	National Defence Strategy of Romania – for a Romania guaranteeing the security and prosperity of future generations (2010 NDSR)	Representatives of institutions with responsibilities in the area of security, coordinated by President Counsellor, Iulian Fota	Full NATO and EU membership; the world economic and financial crisis	• Approved by the SNDC, and advanced to the Parliament • The two subsequent White Papers (2011, 2013) are not approved in the Parliament • There are issued sectorial strategies: the National Strategy of Public Order (2010)
2015	National Defence Strategy of Romania for 2015–2019 – a strong Romania in Europe and in the World (2015 NDSR)	Department of National Security, led by President Counsellor, George Scutaru	Full NATO and EU membership, return of regional conflicts spectre	• Advised by foreign policy and defence, national safety and public order commissions in the Parliament, representatives of the civil society, academic environment and security related institutions • Approved by the SNDC, presented to and approved by the Parliament • Followed by a an Implementation plan of the National Defence Strategy and a Guide on National Defence Strategy, meant to contribute to the understanding and implementation of extended national security and security culture • 2017: White Paper on Defence

Source: Anuţa 2017, 257–258.

In 1999, the NSSR was the first strategic document in which national security was presented as more than defence, as a multidimensional concept. It was also the first time when a strategic document on national security was not focused on territorial defence, but on the citizens, with their interests and rights.

Ever since, Romania's perception of risks and threats has been focused on issues of global concern such as regional conflicts, WMD proliferation, international terrorism, etc. (see Table 2). The main differences come from the historical context (the most recent crises experimented) and from the stage of Romania's integration in NATO and the EU, which can be also traced through the subtitles of the documents. At the same time, in the internal domain, the main risks and threats seemed to be relatively constant – economic and financial issues reflected in social challenges and the poor or insufficient performance of national institutions. For instance, the 2001 NSSR reflects Romania's synchronisation with the Western perceptions on security and defence, but it reflects, at the same time, the extent of the challenges faced internally, especially in the economic and social areas. In this line of thought, the document mentions security challenges such as international terrorism and organised crime, but also the fact that Romania's main challenges are of an economic nature. The 2006 NSSR refers to vulnerabilities of an economic and social nature: negative demographic trends, social insecurity, frail civic spirit, high dependence on resources of difficult accessibility, low development and protection of infrastructure, low resources for crisis management. The 2010 and 2015 NDSRs maintain this vision on vulnerabilities, strongly anchored in the economic and social areas.

The titles of the main Romanian strategic programmatic documents vary between "national security strategy" and "national defence strategy". The reason for these shifts resides in the provisions of the Constitution of Romania and in the laws on defence planning. The Romanian constitutional law refers only to the defence strategy, when listing the topics requiring common meetings in the Parliament Chambers. Law no. 141/2008 amends Law no. 415/2002 on the organisation and functioning of the SNDC, by prescribing that this forum approves Romania's national security strategy and Romania's national defence strategy. This is the reason for which there is a National Security Strategy issued in 2006, and a national defence strategy issued in 2008 (which is mainly a military strategic paper). However, the 2010 and 2015 NDSR's contents suggest that they are better seen as security strategies.

The way security risks and threats are approached reflects Romania's attachment to the Euro-Atlantic community, also implying responsibilities in their management. By this token, Romania was part of major international and regional actions and measures towards promoting and maintaining peace and stability not only in Europe, but also in the Middle East and Africa. In the same line of thought could be considered Romania's participation in the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defence System, contributing to the enhancement of both the U.S.–Romanian strategic partnership and Romania's role as a reliable ally within NATO and as a regional security provider.

Table 2.

Security risks and threats according to strategic documents, 1990–2015

Risks and threats/Strategic Papers	1991	1994	1999	2001	2006	2008	2010	2015
Economic and social issues		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
The state's institution inefficiency				✔	✔		✔	
Possible internal conflict	✔			✔				
Extremist internal movements	✔	✔					✔	✔
Foreign instigation to extremism, separatism, xenophobia	✔	✔		✔				
Regional conflict		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
Unstable neighbourhood		✔					✔	✔
WMD proliferation			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Easy access to conventional weapons						✔		✔
International terrorism			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Organised crime		✔			✔		✔	✔
Negative demographic trends				✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Illegal migration				✔	✔			✔
International financial system frailty							✔	
Poor governance in the neighbourhood				✔	✔			
Dependence on limited resources				✔	✔			✔
Cyber threats								✔
Actions impinging on ROU's image				✔				
Hostile actions for influencing decision-making, mass-media and public opinion	✔						✔	✔
Directed press campaigns								✔
Energy								✔
Environment			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Source: NSSR 2001; NSSR 2007; NDSR 2010; NDSR 2015.

Departing from this vision on security risks and threats and directed by the main objectives of post-communist foreign and security policy, beyond the regional cooperation processes initiated or supported by Bucharest, it was also decided, in 1999, to support the NATO campaign in Serbia and Montenegro, and further on, in 2003, to support the U.S.-led coalition operations in Iraq. However, in 2008, Romania was one of the few European countries that did not recognise Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, considering it a breach in the international law (MFA 2010). In supporting this position, Romania relied only on international law provisions, emphasising its attachment to its norms and principles as guarantors of a predictable and cooperation-prone regional and international environment (Aurescu 2010, 63). In other words, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence is

considered an act of secession, with the potential of fostering instability in a region where Romania has a legitimate interest in preserving peace and security. When regional crises re-emerged in the WBSA, together with the annexation of Crimea, Romania adopted a similar position, strongly condemning the breach of international law and being one of the main supporters of enhancing the NATO deterrence posture in the region, and rallying to economic sanctions decided within the EU. Also, Romania is lead nation for the NATO Trust Fund established to develop Ukraine's cyber defence.

Even before having become a donor, a national strategy for the international cooperation policy for development was elaborated by the MFA (Decision no. 703/2006). According to this strategy, East Europe, the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus are the priority areas, while good governance, enhancement of democracy and rule of law, along with economic development, education, health, infrastructure and environment are the sectoral priorities.
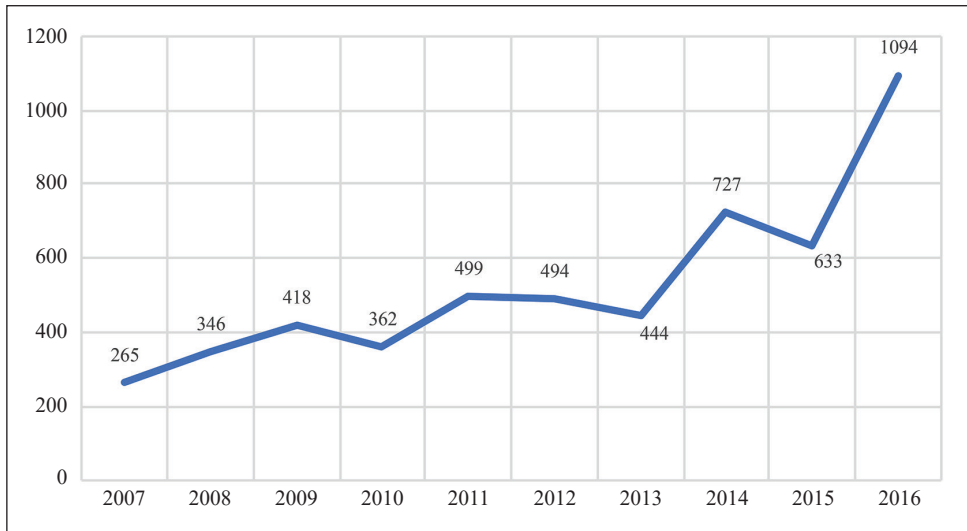

Figure 3.
Evolution of Romania's AOD budget (Million RON)

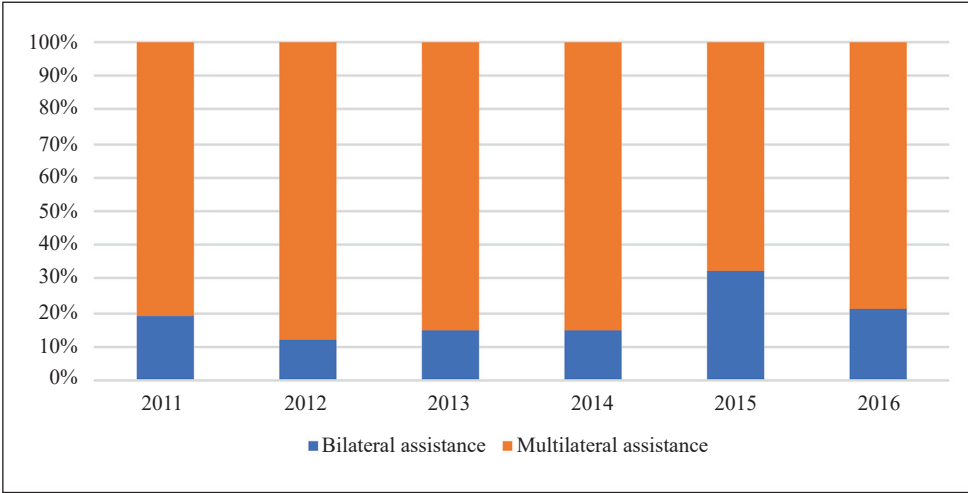*Source:* Raportul RoAid 2007–2016.

Figure 4.

Balance between bilateral and multilateral ODA in the case of Romania

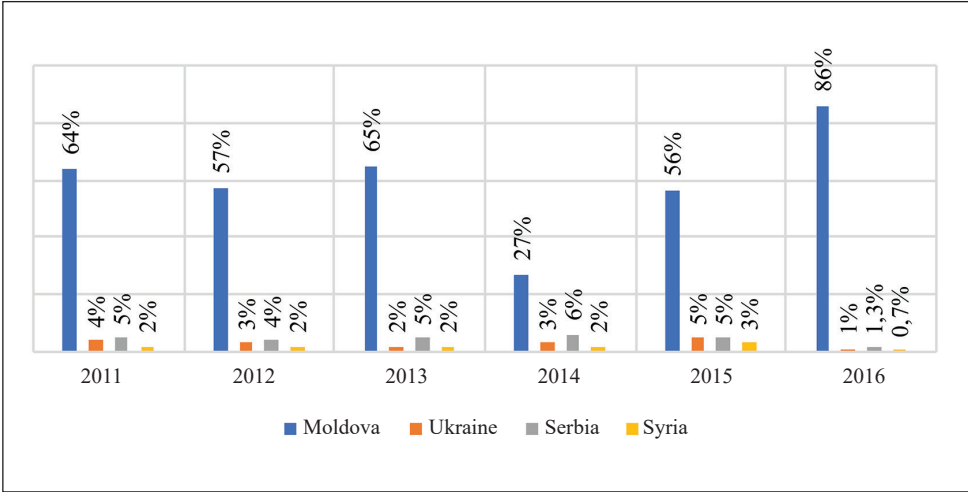*Source:* Raportul RoAid 2011–2018.

Figure 5.

Main receiver countries of ROU Bilateral assistance (% of the Bilateral Assistance Budget)

Source: Raportul RoAid 2007–2012; Raportul RoAid 2013; Raportul RoAid 2014; Raportul RoAid 2015–2017.
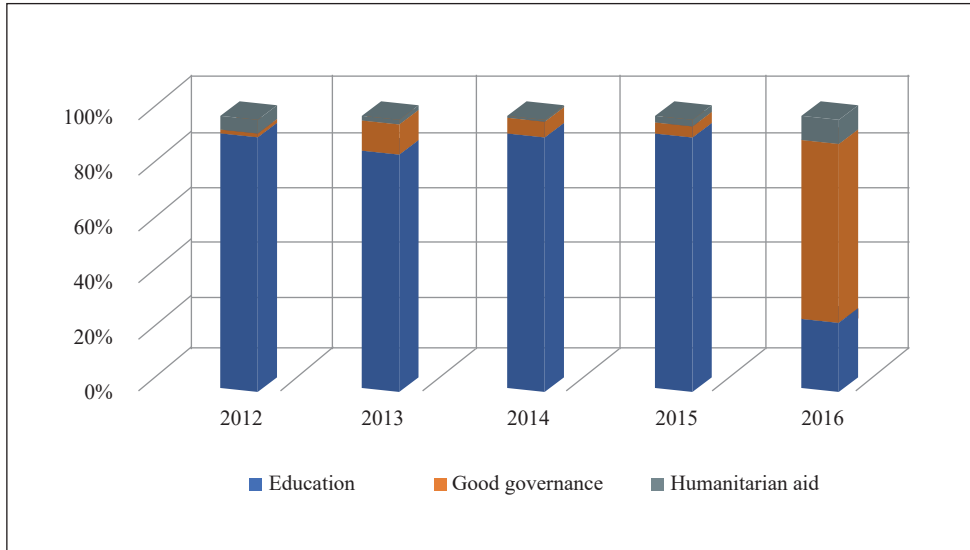
Figure 6.
Main domains of bilateral AOD 2012–2016

Source: Raportul RoAid 2011–2018.

Ever since it became a formal international donor (2007), Romania's development policy contribution was made either multilaterally (on regional or international fora), or bilaterally. Most of Romania's ODA (Official Development Assistance) funds have been distributed through multilateral cooperation mechanisms. Bilateral assistance reflects the major trends in Romanian Foreign and Security policy and is directed towards the countries in Romania's area of interest.

Stakeholders in decision-making: Coordinates of a centralised decision-making model

Romania is defined as a semi-presidential republic, the executive power resting with the President and the Government. Foreign and security policy decision-making in Romania can be considered centralised, the main stakeholders being the holders of the executive power – the President and the Government. The constant mainstream in Romanian foreign and security policy – NATO and EU integration, U.S. strategic partnership, and security and stability in the Black Sea Area and Southeastern Europe – are visible the most in foreign and security policy, where decision-makers are keen on showing a strong consensus. The centralised nature of foreign and security policy decision-making is paralleled by a high trust of Romanian citizens in regional security and defence organisations, such as NATO and the EU (Figures 7–8).

Since December 2014, Romania's Presidency is assured by Klaus Werner Johannis. According to the Romanian Constitution, the President has a five-year mandate, represents the Romanian state and guarantees its national independence, unity and territorial integrity. As far as foreign policy is concerned, the President's attribution includes signing international treaties on behalf of Romania, negotiated by the Government and submitted to Parliament's ratification within a reasonable period of time. He is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the President of the SNDC. Nevertheless, within this forum his vote is equal in terms of importance with the votes of the other members.

The President can declare, after getting the Parliament's approval, the partial or full mobilisation of the armed forces and, in case of armed aggression against the country, he can undertake measures for rejecting the aggression, which he must communicate immediately to the Parliament.

According to Romania's Constitution, as amended in 2003, the Armed Forces are exclusively subordinated to the people's will, for guaranteeing the sovereignty, independence and unity of the state, territorial integrity of the country and constitutional democracy.

The Prime Minister is the head of the Government and is seconded by 4 deputy prime ministers, in charge of the coordination of Romania's strategic partnerships, regional development, public administration and the ministry of the environment. The Government is organised in the following ministries: a) regional development and public administration; b) environment; c) national defence; d) internal affairs; e) foreign affairs; f) public finance; g) justice; h) agriculture and rural development; i) national education; j) economy; k) energy; l) transport; m) European funds; n) business, trade and entrepreneurship; o) health; p) culture and national identity; q) waters and forests; r) research and innovation; s) communication and information society; t) the young and sports; u) tourism; v) Romanians abroad; w) the relation with the Parliament; z) public finance. The composition of each Government may change from one cycle of governance to another, depending on the programs of governance.

The cabinet includes a Minister Delegate for European Affairs, subordinated to the MFA. Also, within the MFA, since 2016, Romania's International Development Cooperation Agency (RoAid) is the main coordinator of development cooperation and humanitarian aid (Law no. 213/2016).

Romania's fundamental law stipulates that the SNDC is the body organising and coordinating the activities with regards to national security and defence, the participation in maintaining international security and in collective defence within military alliances or coalitions, as well as in peace operations. The activity of the SNDC is subjected to the annual examination and approval of the Parliament. The members of the SNDC are: the President of Romania (President of the SNDC), the Prime Minister (Vice President of the SNDC), Ministers of Defence, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Economy, Public Finance, the Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service, the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Chief of the GS, Presidential Counsellor for National Security, and State Counsellor (the Secretary of the SNDC).

The national defence policy is conducted by the MoD, in accordance with the legal provisions and the national security strategy. MoD is accountable to the Parliament, Government and the SNDC for the ways in which the provisions of the Constitution, national legislation, Government and SNDC decisions, and international treaties to which Romania is part are implemented in the area of activity.

   The structure of the Romanian armed forces is adapted to the needs of territorial defence and support to NATO, having contributed to missions carried out under this aegis for over 17 years, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. By service branches, the Romanian Armed Forces are organised into Land Forces (36,000 personnel), Naval Forces (6,000 personnel) and Air Forces (10,300 personnel). To these, there shall also be added MoI para-militaries: the Border Guards (22,900) and the Gendarmerie (57,000). In addition, Romania developed cyber security strategies (Decision nr. 271/2013), defining the conceptual framework, aim, objectives, priorities and courses of action for providing cyber security at the national level. The MoD already has established a centre for response to cyber security incidents – CERTMIL – and a Cyber Defence Command is expected to be set up within the military command structure in 2018.

   Ever since the beginning of the 1990s, Romanian military institutions have gained the trust of the public. This is because the military had not had a special status during the communist regime and had not been used for the population's control. In this context, the armed forces were considered almost unanimously a "defender of the state" (Watts 2001, 599), becoming one of the most reputable domestic institutions, being outperformed only by the religious institutions in this respect. However, the efficiency of the security sector reform can be also seen in the light of the high scores by intelligence services in the statistics on public trust, which is significantly higher than the one given to the Government or Parliament (Figures 7–8).
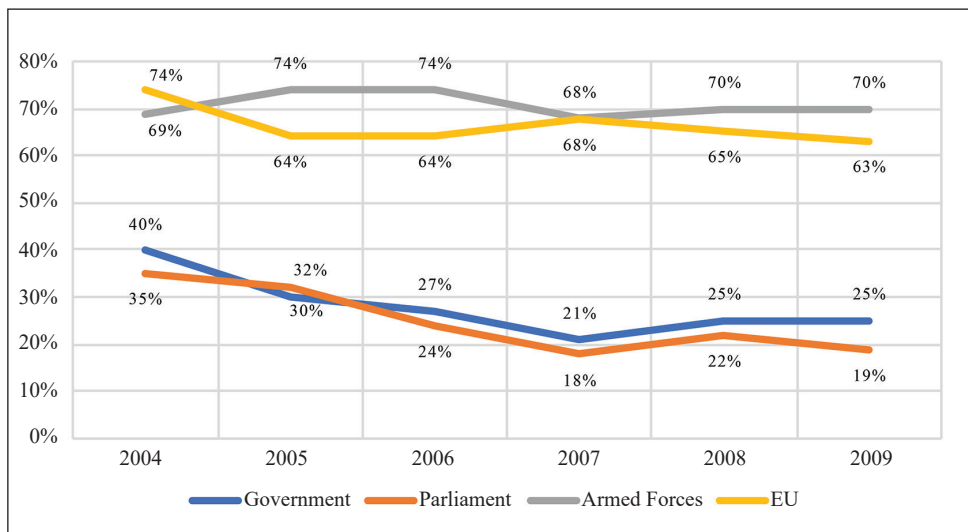

Figure 7.
Trust in foreign and security policy institutions – public opinion trends 2004–2009

Source: Eurobarometer 2004–2009.

Another significant trend is the high amount of population trust invested in international or regional security organisations, which is usually higher than the one in national security related institutions. For instance, the analysis of the Eurobarometer's National Reports for Romania in the period 2004–2016 reveals that Romanians' trust in the EU has been high even in times of crisis, when the general view on the EU had a general tendency of decreasing. For instance, 50% of Romanians turned out to have a positive image of the EU, while the EU28 average was 35% (Eurobarometru Standard 86 2016). The poor level of trust invested in domestic political institutions has, therefore, a counterbalance in the trust given to EU institutions. The same seems to be valid for NATO as at least one of every two Romanians asserted they have trust to a large extent in both NATO and the EU.
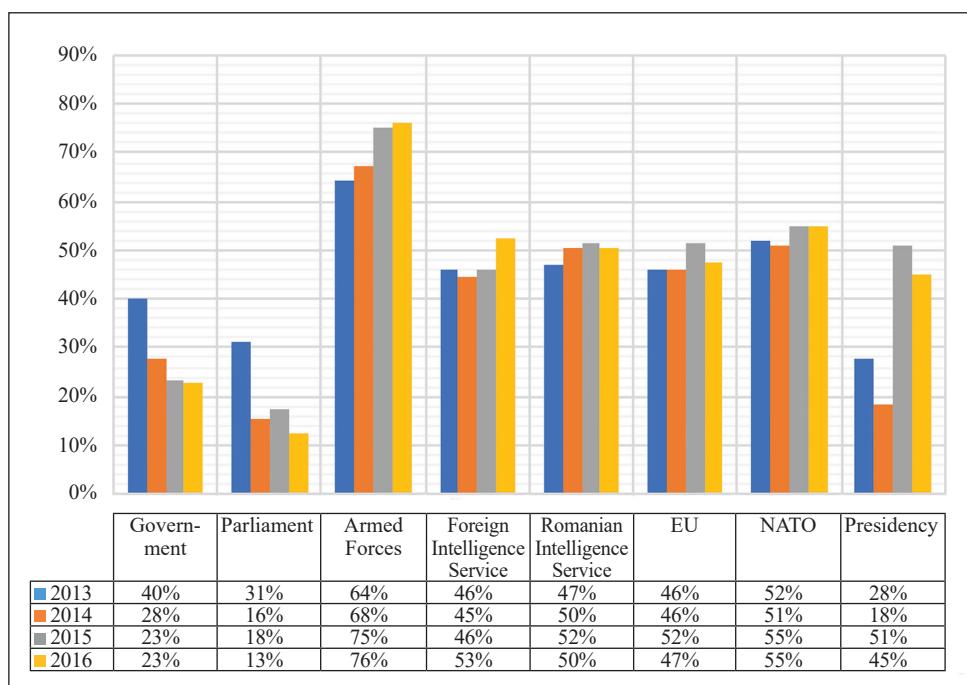

	Govern-ment	Parliament	Armed Forces	Foreign Intelligence Service	Romanian Intelligence Service	EU	NATO	Presidency
2013	40%	31%	64%	46%	47%	46%	52%	28%
2014	28%	16%	68%	45%	50%	46%	51%	18%
2015	23%	18%	75%	46%	52%	52%	55%	51%
2016	23%	13%	76%	53%	50%	47%	55%	45%

Figure 8.

Trust in foreign and security policy institutions – public opinion trends 2013–2016
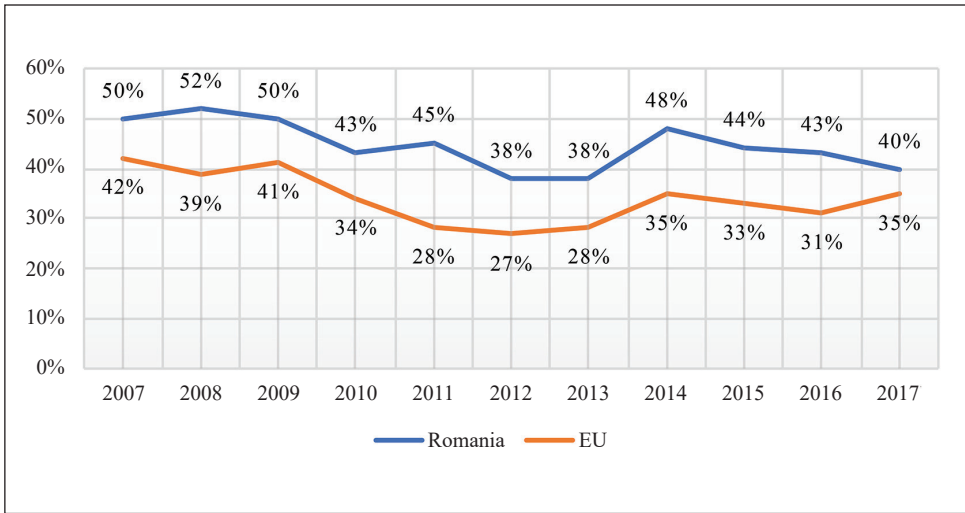
Source: INSCOP 2016.

Figure 9.

Positive view on the EU – Romania and the EU average

Source: Eurobarometer 2004–2009.

Several NGOs are also active in security and defence policy research, such as the European Institute for Risk, Security and Community Management (EURISC) or the Centre for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning. EURISC was established in 1995, having as its objective to study and inform the public about issues related to risk, security and communication.

As far as official development assistance is concerned, the MFA, through RoAid is the main coordinator. Also, in development assistance, the civil society seems to have a greater role. Ever since 2006, organisations acting in this area were reunited within the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations in Romania (FOND), to contribute to the development of cooperation policy, when Romania changed its status from recipient to donor. FOND was involved in the development of the development assistance legal framework and includes nowadays 39 organisations according to the FOND website (FOND s. a.).

FOND also laid the basis for the Black Sea NGO Forum, with the support of the MFA and the European Commission, as part of the Black Sea Synergy. The Black Sea NGO Forum is meant to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among NGOs in the Wider Black Sea Area, strengthening the NGOs' capacity to influence regional and national policies and to increase the number and quality of regional partnerships and projects (Black Sea NGO Forum s. a.). It is also presented as an opportunity for the non-governmental organisations within the Black Sea region, but also for the state actors to develop sustainable partnerships in this area.

Briefly, the major stakeholders in Romania's foreign and security policy are the state institutions – Presidency, Government and Parliament. However, the importance of mass media and the public at large shall not be underestimated. There is strong public support

for regional security organisations, stronger than that invested in national institutions. This may be one of the reasons for the large consensus shown by these institutions when it comes to carrying out foreign and security policy within NATO and the EU.

Case studies: Accession to NATO (2004) and supporting NATO intervention in Kosovo (1999)

The highly centralised decision-making process in Romania's foreign and security policy can be clearly illustrated by two major cases of foreign and security policy decisions – the one on becoming a NATO Member State and the one about support for the NATO military campaign in Kosovo in 1999.

Both NATO and EU membership were the results of foreign and security policy stakeholders' efforts concentrated in this direction. The timeframe 1996–2000 is widely considered the beginning of focused political and military efforts towards meeting the membership criteria. Achieving full membership in these organisations supposed the involvement of all decision-making stakeholders, as meeting the criteria for joining NATO supposed changes within a large spectrum of national institutions.

Ever since the early 1990s, there was an intense diplomatic activity, directed towards gaining the support of NATO and EU member states, and to getting closer to these organisations. The Romanian President made a visit to Paris, where he got France's support for Romania's adhesion to the Alliance. During the Political-Military Steering Committee Session on Parliamentary Oversight of the Defence Establishment, the Parliament interceded for gaining the support of the Alliance Member States for Romania's membership (1997). In the same trend, the MFA negotiated bilateral good neighbourhood treaties with Romania's neighbours (with Bulgaria in 1992 and Hungary in 1996). The SNDC approved the establishment of an Inter-Agency Commission for Romania's NATO integration within the Government, meant to coordinate and support the external actions regarding Romania's NATO integration, to evaluate the efficiency of the actions carried out in this respect, and to present reports to the SNDC and propose further actions. In 1994, Romania was the first post-communist country signing PfP (Partnership for Peace).

In 1999, a PfP International Conference was held in Bucharest, and an Inter-parliamentary Commission for Romania's NATO Integration was convened. It subsequently issued a National Adhesion Plan. Soon after, a National Security Strategy, focused on Euro-Atlantic integration, was presented to the Parliament.

After supporting NATO's operation in Kosovo (1999), Romania was offered a Membership Action Plan. President Emil Constantinescu insisted that Romania's deadline for membership be not later than 2002. Subsequently, Bucharest cooperated with NATO in the former Yugoslavia, participating with troops and civilian expertise in the Alliance's missions.

With the change of the presidency, Ion Iliescu (President 2000–2004) and Adrian Năstase (Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs) focused on the implementation of Romania's Euro-Atlantic Roadmaps. A special governmental meeting was held for the preparation of Romania's integration in NATO, with the participation of members of the Inter-Agency Commission for Romania's NATO Integration.

The major Romanian political parties issued the Declaration for Romania's adhesion to NATO, defining NATO membership as the fundamental foreign and security policy objective. Soon after, a National Plan for preparing Romania's adhesion to NATO was issued, comprising not only measures for meeting membership criteria, but also for promoting Romania's membership in NATO (through the coordination of the activities of embassies) and for promoting a common language between the Government and the civil society (Ziarul de Iași 2001). Involvement of the civil society in this decision could be tracked back to the Committee for NATO of the so-called social dialogue partners in Romania – NGOs aiming at promoting Romania's candidacy to become a member of the Alliance. They did so primarily by organising a cooperation framework with MFA and by being involved in a dialogue with NATO's Information and Press Office.

In February 2002, a report of the Romanian Government emphasised the importance of internal political support for Romania's NATO integration that could be achieved only on the basis of a multi-dimensional strategy, applied in almost all of the state institutions, together with mass media, society, and political parties (ZODIAN 2007, 117). Furthermore, after identifying vulnerabilities, the causes of the previous failures and the possible solutions, a schedule was set with clear actual responsibilities and measures for civilian and military authorities. NATO and EU integration went hand in hand, being two complementary processes. By consequence, it was asserted that there was a need for NATO-trained experts to help with Romania's performance in non-military areas, which would have gained security valences in the perspective of NATO and EU adhesion. Also, experts from other member states were involved in the training process not only of the MoD and MFA personnel, but other institutions as well (ZODIAN 2007, 118).

Various timelines of Romania's adhesion to NATO (MOSTOFLEI 2002, 144–163; ZODIAN 2007, 114–129), emphasise the importance of a series of conferences, stressing Romania's role as a regional stability actor. Among them, there is the Donors Conference within SEESP (2001, with the participation of the NATO Deputy SG for Political Affairs), the "Rose-Roth" Workshop on NATO's role in Black Sea security" organised by the Romanian Parliament and NATO Parliamentary Assembly (in Bucharest, 2001, with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Defence), and the "Public security issues in peacekeeping operations" NATO/EAPC international workshop (Bucharest, 2001).

Furthermore, in the context of the 9/11 events, Bucharest rallied to the international community's position and supported the U.S. response to the attacks. Parliament itself lent its support to participate in the counter-terrorist fight, together with the other NATO Member States, and to increase Romania's contribution to the SFOR and KFOR missions.

The Commissions for foreign policy and the commissions for defence, public order and national security of both the deputy and the senate chambers published a common report on NATO integration on 18 February 2004 regarding the draft of the Law of Romania's adhesion to the North Atlantic Treaty. The report showed the consented belief that Romania's adhesion to the Alliance is a historical moment, marking the materialisation of one of the fundamental foreign and security policy goals Romania followed constantly through all governments since 1990, supported by the large majority of the population (Raport comun 2004).

In the context of the Kosovo crisis (1998–1999), NATO asked military facilities from Romania and Bulgaria in its campaign against Milosevic's forces in Kosovo. Internally, Romania was getting through serious turbulences due to difficulties of the economy result-

ing in a decrease of the population's living standards, as well as a loss of the Government's popularity in the aftermath of the social revolt of January–February 1999. On this background, a nationalist political trend began to gain ground in the Romanian political arena. In foreign policy, Romania had reached a stalemate at the time in its process of getting closer to NATO and EU integration, despite receiving a U.S. promise of support towards accession to NATO (1997).

In 1999, Romania made one of the most controversial foreign and security policy decisions in its post-communist history – supporting the U.S.-led intervention in Kosovo, although it had traditionally good relations with Serbia. U.S. expression of support towards Romania's NATO integration may have functioned as an incentive for the government to offer the required support to NATO in the Kosovo campaign, despite the fact that NATO was beginning to lose trust in the public opinion, highly influenced by the rise of nationalist mass media (ZIELONKA–PRAVDA 2001, 403–404).

Ever since the beginning of the crisis, Romania supported finding a political solution, but was constantly connected and involved in Western debates on this topic. There was an intense diplomatic activity as Bucharest was accepted as an interlocutor by all of the parties involved. For instance, Albania requested Bucharest's good offices in May 1998. Also, the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence made and received various visits of Western officials and participated in various fora of cooperation debating solutions for the Kosovo crisis and presenting Romania as a factor of stability in the Balkans (ZODIAN–ZODIAN 2007, 245–261): the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Pleşu, met Madeleine Albright and Strobe Talbott (U.S. Secretaries of State) and Richard Schifter in Washington, all of them key coordinators of U.S. Policy in the Balkans (MOSTOFLEI 2002, 144–163; ZODIAN 2007, 114–129); the Romanian President made a visit to the U.S. and discussed implications for the U.S.–Romanian Strategic Partnership, NATO and EU integration, and security in the Balkans. In October 1998, the Romanian Head of the Government, Radu Vasile, asserted in Brussels Romania's approval of the use of its air space by NATO in case of a military intervention in Kosovo. In the same month, Romania was represented at the Summit of South-East European Heads of State and Government (in Antalya), which searched for a political solution to the Kosovo conflict, but did not take a stance against a possible NATO military intervention.

At the same time, the crises in the former Yugoslavia only added to the already developing political-military crises in Romania's Eastern vicinity. The prospects of NATO integration seemed to get farther away due to strong internal economic, social and political turmoil. In the meantime, Russian officials expressed their position that NATO enlargement had reached its final point and that any other enlargement wave would challenge European stability (1997).

Romania was offered security guarantees and economic incentives from Moscow in return for giving up its NATO membership plan (ZIELONKA–PRAVDA 2001, 403–404), but the formal pro-Western position of the Romanian Government for NATO's military operation was expressed after 13 April, when the Russian Duma voted for establishing an Alliance between Russia, Belarus and Serbia (New York Times 1999), leaving Romania exposed to risks in the event of a Russian military intervention in the Balkans on the side of Serbia.

At the beginning of NATO operation, the Romanian President declared that NATO's intervention was both necessary and legitimate, and, after NATO began the bombardment

of the former Yugoslavia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his hope that NATO's military action would convince Belgrade to return to negotiations (Constantinescu 2002, 183–184). Of high relevance for the context in which the key stakeholders' consensus emerged is also the Romanian president's declaration, emphasising the efforts for finding a political solution of the conflict: "Presently, Romania is engaged in finding an international political solution for solving the conflict in Yugoslavia" (Constantinescu 1999). At the same time he also reiterated Romania's basic policy orientation: "Romania's security is also the result of its firm commitment to NATO and EU accession. For our country there is and there could be no other strategic options, third ways, nor void neutralities" (Constantinescu 1999). Soon afterwards, Romania's President submitted to the Parliament's approval a proposal to ban Russian air forces from flying over Romanian territory. The proposal was approved with 90% of the votes in favour (Constantinescu 2017). The decision was made after a Russian aircraft breached a Protocol previously agreed between the Romanian and the Russian Chiefs of Staff. The Romanian MoD notified the Russian MoD on this decision and the Romanian air forces accompanied the Russian aircraft until exiting Romanian air space. This decision is believed to have contributed to the prevention of one of the gravest confrontations between the U.S. and Russia after WWII on the field, in Kosovo (Constantinescu 2012).

Subsequently, the SNDC and the Government approved NATO's request and the decision was sent for Parliament's approval. The archive of the debates within the Parliament on this issue reveals the decrease of NATO's popularity among Romanian politicians (especially nationalist ones) in the context of launching the military campaign in Kosovo. The positions taken by the members of Parliament during the debates revealed the main arguments against granting support to the Alliance, but also the main fears building up with reference to security risks and threats. The main arguments against the decision were built on the low support of NATO's operation in Kosovo both internationally and on the part of the public. For instance, the Members of Parliament brought up topics such as: the lack of a UN mandate for NATO's operation; the good relations between Romania and Serbia; the common cultural and religious background with Serbs; Romania's vulnerability in case of the NATO campaign's failure; the lack of economic compensation for the economic losses after NATO's bombing of Danube bridges which not only stopped trade relations between Romania and Serbia, but also isolated Romania from the Western Europe market (Romanian Parliament Debates 1996–2000).

The public support for NATO's campaign in Kosovo was extremely low. According to an opinion survey published on 2 April 1999, only 1% of Romanians supported NATO's campaign in order to push back Serb troops from Kosovo. The public sentiment against the intervention was amplified by the coverage of the crisis in mass media institutions with anti-Western positions (Gallagher 2004, 248). However, there were national newspapers going in line with the idea that, by supporting NATO's campaign, the government quitted a duplicity-based foreign policy, showing engagement and loyalty to Western democracies and the North Atlantic Alliance (Gallagher 2004, 248). A similar vision was expressed by the Romanian president in the message addressed to Romanian citizens after the intervention of NATO's air forces in Kosovo.

In spite of the large public dissent regarding NATO's campaign, the Parliament debated and approved the decision to grant the Alliance unrestricted access to Romanian air space.

The Social Democratic Party, which represented the opposition at that time, preferred to abstain from this decision. The Minister of National Defence declared that Romania's and Serbia's interests became divergent and the sole possible solution and answer is supporting NATO. The same firm engagement was showed by the Chief of the General Staff when he expressed the need to support NATO until the solution of the Kosovo crisis.

In the course of the same month, during the NATO Summit in Washington (23–25 April 1999), the Alliance presented the MAP for Romania. In May, the Romanian Government and NATO representatives agreed the conditions under which NATO could use the Romanian air space and, subsequently, the MoD confirmed the fact that NATO is granted the right to use Romanian airports for the Czech and Polish troops which were part of the international peacekeeping troops (KFOR) to transit to Yugoslavia.

Given the background of the decrease of public trust in NATO, the decision to support NATO's Kosovo campaign eroded even more the popularity of the governing political party. The unanimity showed by a Government otherwise strongly divided in public was therefore remarkable.

Conclusions

In the regional security context of the early 1990s, marked by regional conflicts both in the eastern and in the southwestern neighbourhood of the country, Romania, which had been a member of the Warsaw Pact, widely known for its noncompliant attitude within this forum, showed a decisive orientation towards Euro-Atlantic integration. Until the accession, NATO and EU integration has been the benchmark of Romanian foreign and security policy, fundamentally shaping the decisions made by Bucharest.

Responsibly assuming all the implications of NATO and EU membership still guides the Romanian foreign and security policy, as they are still seen as the main and the highest security guarantees the country has ever benefitted of. At the same time, a large significance has been constantly attributed to maintaining and promoting peace and security in the country's immediate neighbourhood. The increase of the defence budget in the context of the growing instability in the WBSA and the similar increase of the MFA budget as the Romanian Presidency of the European Council is getting closer also stand as proof of Romania's commitment in this respect.

The perception of security risks and threats gradually evolved from a strong military focus in the early 1990s to developing a multidimensional approach on security. Regional conflicts, international terrorism and organised crime have been constant preoccupations in this respect. The shared vision on security challenges is not just the result of Romania's adhesion to Euro-Atlantic values, as the flow of history has proven that most of these phenomena do actually impact on both Romania's national security and that of the Euro-Atlantic community.

Meeting the accession criteria has functioned as an incentive for post-communist reforms in the security policy area, and Romania progressed at a relatively rapid pace in restructuring and reforming its foreign and security policy, the relevant institutions and its laws. The reforming of civil-military relations, according to Western standards, along with the reform of the Armed Forces and the intelligence services were among the firsts

steps taken with the view to reaching Euro-Atlantic standards. The fact that the population invests a large amount of trust in security-related institutions could be considered a relevant token in this respect. In fact, both NATO and the EU could be considered stakeholders in Romanian foreign and security policy decisions.

In terms of the internal stakeholders in decision-making, Romania could be defined as a centralised state. Stakeholders are mainly the national institutions, as strategies are designed, promoted and implemented at this level. Each one of these institutions constantly follows the same objective in accordance with its competencies. Nevertheless, the procedures of civil control create a favourable context for the decisions to be legitimate and to have the support of the population. NGOs with interests and activity in the area of foreign and security policy have developed mostly next to national institutions, cooperating with them and supporting them in reaching their objectives. In fact, one could conclude that the civil society has not strongly participated in these decisions. Arguments in this respect can be found in the text of national security strategies, when referring to the frailty of the civic spirit, or in the fact that national security strategies have been subjected to public debate only since 2006. The scarcity of the data regarding public debates on major foreign and security policy decisions also comes in the same line of thought. Debates among stakeholders are in fact very rarely public. Therefore, following the actual negotiation of the decisions is surely incomplete.

Foreign and security policy decisions seem to attract a solid consensus among the stakeholders as long as they are made with the view to NATO and EU membership. The Romanian public's trust invested in these organisations is far greater than what is given to national institutions. This comparison stands even in those periods when the EU or NATO themselves see decreasing trust from members of the Romanian public.

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