

ROMANIA AND THE EU COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

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***ABSTRACT.** Within this article, the author tries to sum up the most salient steps undertaken by Romania on the way to the EU, with respect to an area of particular importance for the Union, i.e. CFSP. After a presentation on its actions in CFSP area, one reviews in short the stances adopted by Romania towards the new build of EU policies, i.e. ESDP as well as towards the Romanian involvement / participation in military crisis management. In the end, the European security policy and the enlargement of both the EU and NATO are assessed in the light of the coming IGC and against the background of the 9/11 events.*

Introduction

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on 11th September 2002, the debate over the role of the European Union (EU) on the international scene became more and more relevant. However, it seems that these events did not influence too much on the pragmatic side of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) / European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). In this context, it is worth asking about the role of the candidate countries within these processes. The emphasis within this paper will be on the stances adopted by Romania and the actions undertaken by our country with a view to support the successful implementation of this new and bold policy of the Union, i.e. ESDP, taking stock of the experience in the field of CFSP

1. Romania and CFSP

The accession negotiations with Romania were officially launched on 15 February 2000. Among the five chapters opened, there were also chapter 26 (external relations) and chapter 27 (CFSP). The negotiations on both chapters were

provisionally closed during the Accession Conference Romania – EU on 14 June 2000.

In its position paper, Romania declared to be ready to accept the *acquis* under chapter 26 and to implement it by 2007. Romania's statement was that at the date of accession it would ensure that all its agreements and treaties (in particular trade, economic and technical cooperation and investment accords) comply with the obligations of membership. The EU welcomed Romania's statement to encourage the development of economic relations between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, in the framework of the Common Commercial Policy, after Romania's accession. The conclusion was that this chapter did not require further negotiations.

In the same context, Romania declared to accept the existing *acquis* in the CFSP area and did not require any transitional period or derogation. The necessary structures for its implementation are in place, while Romania's foreign and security policy is based on the same principle and has the same orientation as the policy pursued by the EU. Romania will be ready to apply the existing *acquis* at the moment of

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accession. Due to the peculiarities of the CFSP *acquis*, the screening process earmarked four different domestic aspects to be tackled in order to fully comply with EU standards: the system of restrictive measures towards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) during the Milosevic regime; Afghanistan; the embargo on arms and military equipment against Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the visa restriction regime for persons involved in the military junta in Burma/Myanmar. Romania aligned itself with all the *demarches*, common positions and joint actions in the above mentioned four areas for which it was invited to do so. Bucharest also declared to be ready to examine the further development of the *acquis* and to inform on a regular basis the Accession Conference and the Association Council on the progress made in its adoption and implementation.

In 2002, Romania ratified the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, the European Commission mentioned within the 2002 Regular Report that the decision to sign a bilateral agreement with the USA on the non-surrender of each others' nationals to the ICC did not comply with the guiding principles laid down by the Council on 30 September 2002.

Relations with neighbouring countries are in normal parameters. The relations with FRY have taken a normal path now. As for those with Hungary, the bilateral difficulties created by the Status Law (promoted last year by the Hungarian Government in order to offer a special status to Hungarian minorities in such neighbouring countries as Romania and Slovakia) were overcome by the signature of a memorandum between the two respective prime ministers. In addition, there are ongoing negotiations with

Ukraine on the "Treaty on the State border regime" and the "Agreement on delimitation the maritime zones between Romania and Ukraine" as well as with Bulgaria on a similar Agreement. In spite of the Romanian proposals, there has been no response so far from the Ukrainian side. There were no new developments in the negotiations with Bulgaria in 2001 either.

In the future, Romania will continue to develop an active policy of good-neighbourliness – making use *inter alia* of the problem-solving potential of bi - or trilateral cooperation frameworks, with the goal of delivering stability to the region. Last year the Romanian Chairmanship of OSCE, together with the main international actors in Skopje (especially the EU and NATO), was deeply involved in the management of the crisis in Macedonia and the conclusion of a sound settlement along the principles laid down in the Ohrid Agreements.

At the EU summits in Laeken (December 2001) and Göteborg (June 2002), as well as in the 2002 Regular Report of the European Commission (October 2002), Romania was not mentioned among the „first wave” countries expected to be able to take part in the European Parliament elections in 2004 as EU members. However, these decisions were in line with the realistic objective set up by the Romanian Government, i.e. to open negotiations on all chapters in 2002 and to conclude them by the end of 2003 – beginning of 2004, with the aim to be in a position to join the Union by 2007.

2. Romania and ESDP

Although Romania has had the highest level of popular support for European and Euro-Atlantic integration among the candidates (80% for the EU and 85 % for NATO, according to the latest opinion polls), ESDP did not draw much public attention when it was launched. This could be explained through a lack of information and through the fact that NATO enlargement was (and still is) much more fashionable. However, at the political level, ESDP was dealt with as an important development in the process of the EU asserting its identity on the international scene.

The European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes are essential national objectives of Romanian foreign policy. Consequently, Bucharest considers the political and military integration into the EU and NATO as complementary processes, contributing to the modernisation of Romanian society. Yet the opposition parties (especially the extreme right party, "Greater Romania") consider this dual-track approach as counterproductive and against the national interest.

Romania has welcomed the decisions adopted by the European Councils in Cologne and Helsinki. It has expressed its willingness and strong interest in actively participating in the arrangements for cooperation with third countries and becoming a fully-fledged participant in ESDP once it joins the EU. At the same time, Romania has been against unnecessary duplications with NATO, decoupling of Euro-Atlantic security and structures, and discrimination towards European allies involved in the development of ESDP. In Romania's view, much as the EU and NATO should act as complementary organisations in the field of crisis management, they should remain different in

nature, at least in the medium term. NATO remains the cornerstone of European security and the fundament of collective defense in the Euro-Atlantic area. The development and implementation of ESDP should build on the principles approved at the North-Atlantic Council in Berlin (1996) and Washington (1999). The process of development and implementation of ESDP should aim at strengthening the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) within NATO and preserving the transatlantic link as a pre-requisite for effective security architecture. The development of cooperation between the EU and NATO has to be fully consistent with the principle of autonomous decision-making capacity. The creation of the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) has to be put in place in accordance with the concept of „separable, but not separate” forces.

At the operational level, ESDP should draw on the experience acquired within the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the development of an evaluation mechanism should build on the achievements of its Planning and Review Process (PARP).

Initially, Romania insisted on the transfer of the WEU *acquis* to the EU's ESDP. It soon became apparent, however, that ESDP was designed especially for the EU member states and that the third countries should be happy with being associated to this process. Yet the Romanian perception of the Feira and Nice deliberations was that the EU paid more attention to the 15 + 6 format than to the 15 + 15 one. That is why Romania will promote a non-discriminatory approach towards all the 15 countries virtually associated to ESDP, starting with Union's military exercises' policy.

3. Romania and military crisis management

At the Military Capabilities Commitment Conference in Brussels (November 2000), Romania made its offer of additional forces for the ERRE. That offer was in line with the forces made available for WEU and consisted of land and maritime forces (about 1000 military personnel and four vessels). During the Capabilities Improvement Conference in Brussels (November 2001), Romania has made a significantly increased new offer in order to enhance its contribution to the achievement of the Helsinki Headline Goal-plus. The new offer included also forces with some experience in Peace Support Operations (PSO). All these forces are ready to meet the interoperability requirements for the execution of EU-led missions. The Supreme Council of National Defense decided that these forces be the same as those made available for NATO-led PSO. This approach was based on the financial and logistical capabilities requested for training and sustaining such forces in a theatre of operations, and on the criteria set by the EU bodies. The offer encompasses:

- *Land forces:* 5 infantry battalions and 1 infantry company, 1 paratroopers unit, 1 mountain troops unit, 1 military police unit, 1 engineer unit, 1 clearing unit, 1 reconnaissance unit, 1 transport unit;

- *Maritime forces:* 6 maritime and river vessels (out of which 2 rescue tugs, 1 mine sweeper and a frigate);

- *Air forces:* 4 MIG-21 Lancer combat aircrafts and 1 C-130 B carrier

The Romanian offer amounts to approx. 3,700 military personnel, probably the most important

one from all the candidate countries (bar Turkey). All these forces meet the EU requirements (ready to be deployed in full within 30 days, sustainable for 1 year and available from 2001). Moreover, at the CIC, Romania announced its readiness to contribute with 75 police officers to the European Police Headline Goal.

Meanwhile, the Romanian MoD has planned a more compact, more performing, and more efficient and flexible structure of forces, compatible with NATO standards, to be operational by the end of 2003. It will include 112,000 military personnel and 28,000 civilians. However, in the perspective of the coming Prague Summit¹, it is very likely for these figures to change in a radical way. In the planning blueprint, Romania's basic security and defense interests were considered, joining NATO being a wish, not an end in itself. As a Membership Action Plan (MAP) country, the process of reforming and restructuring the Romanian armed forces benefits from politically agreed financial support, so that the defense budget will be maintained at a level of at least 2 % of GDP. As compared to 1.9 % in 2001, it will be around 2.4 % in 2002, with a simultaneous growth of GDP and defense expenditure. The goal is to reach NATO standards concerning the budgetary allocation: 40% personnel expenses, 35-40% equipment acquisition, 20-25% operation and maintenance.

Since 1991 Bucharest has been actively involved in a large number of PSO, thus gaining a significant experience in the field: 9 UN operations, 3 NATO-led peace support operations and 4 missions under the OSCE umbrella. They include Angola (UNAVEM III and MONUA); Albania (ALBA); Bosnia-Herzegovina (IFOR, SFOR

¹ This article was written before the Prague summit.

I and II); Kosovo (KFOR); Afghanistan (ISAF); Iraq–Kuwait (UNIKOM); Congo (MONUC); Ethiopia-Eritrea (UNMEE); and OSCE missions in Georgia, FYROM and Kosovo. More than 9,000 Romanian military personnel have already been involved. Presently, Romania's main efforts are directed to its participation in SFOR (around 120 military personnel), KFOR (around 220 military personnel), ISAF (51 military personnel and a C-130 B carrier) and Enduring Freedom (411 military personnel). Recently (October 2002), the Romanian President approved the country's participation in the EU-led Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to begin in 2003.

Currently, Romania is also taking part in the following regional politico-military cooperation initiatives: Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe (MPFSEE)/South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG); Black Sea Naval Co-operation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR); Romanian-Hungarian Joint Peacekeeping Battalion; Multinational Engineer Battalion between Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine (Tisa Battalion); and Multinational Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade for UN Operations (SHIRBRIG). Furthermore, negotiations are taking place for the establishing of the Central European Nations Cooperation in Peace Support (CENCOOP). Romania approaches the regional cooperation as a prerequisite for the future European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

4. Romania and defense procurement

Romania considers that European cooperation in the field of defense industry is playing an essential role in improving the EU military capabilities. Bucharest is also keen on participating in Western European Armaments Group (WEAG); negotiations are on in order to concluding a memorandum of understanding between Romania and WEAG.

Romania's current and projected inventory of CFE-accountable equipment is below the established ceilings. Actually, during the Communist regime Romania had an important and well-developed defense industry sector. Romanian arms exports were directed to various conflict areas in the world. After 1989, the traditional arms export markets were lost once and for all and the domestic demand, too, shrank because of the lack of resources. As a consequence, the defense industry has undertaken a major process of restructuring. At the beginning of the 1990s there were approximately 130,000 employees in the sector: presently they amount to only 60,000 (according to some sources, the real figure is 45,000). The restructuring process was limited to downsizing personnel and various compensatory measures. Since 2001, the Ministry of Industry and Resources along with the MoD have managed the process/sector. According to the official sources, in 2002 further 26,500 employees may have to be laid off, while recovery programmes and other protection measures are envisaged. The government committed itself not to close any of the existing defense factories but either to convert them to civilian production or transformed them into modern military equipment producers.

In the past, several scandals exploded in defense procurement policy. Probably, the most famous one is related to the privatisation of IAR Brasov, once pride of the Romanian defense industry. According to the initial contract, the acquisition by Romania of 96 attack helicopters (close to the figure allowed by CFE Treaty and at a cost far exceeding the defense budget) was a condition set by Bell Helicopters for taking over the firm. One of the arguments used by the former government to support the takeover was based on the fact that it would have enhanced Romania's chances of NATO membership. In the end, after a long and controversial public debate, the government had to give up on its position. Meanwhile, there have been negotiations with the European group Eurocopter, but nothing concrete has happened so far.

According to the declared priorities and to the financial resources allocated for the defense sector, the restructuring process of the armed forces was to be undertaken in two stages. *In the first stage* (2000-2003), the process includes resizing the armed forces and establishing the new force structure; the professionalisation of the personnel; the modernisation and standardisation of training practices. During this stage, only acquisition programmes whose funding is ensured will be implemented, all the others will be rescheduled. Still, while the new structures are put in place, the partial modernisation of certain operational components will be carried on. In the second stage (2004-2007), the achievement of the planned operational capability will continue and major procurement programmes aimed at the modernisation of the Romania forces with support equipment and protection of the combat equipment typical of the 21st century battlefield

will be concluded. In other words, no major procurement programme will begin before 2004.

5. Romania and European security policy

Romania's view of the role of an enlarged EU is to have a Union with a more coherent and defined vision towards the main international actors, i.e. the US, Russia, and China. In the medium term, CFSP should function on an intergovernmental basis, especially as a consequence of the development and implementation of ESDP. The European Commission, however, should be ever more involved in this field. The EU is a regional power, but in many areas it acts as a global one. In Bucharest's eyes, the place of Europe in the international system could be defined as follows: the most faithful allied of the US, Russia's anchor within the community of democratic and free societies, and a powerful global actor in the field of trade and finance (via the euro). In the longer term, the emergence of ESDP could constitute the necessary incentive in order to transform the EU in a global actor and to fully assert its identity on the international scene. The Union should stick to its traditional way in promoting its values, i.e. through preventive actions. The EU seems to benefit from the advantage that there is no dominant country inside it. On the contrary, the Member States, especially the small and medium ones, should focus on the areas of foreign policy where they have experience and interests. With enlargement, these CFSP features are set to become stronger.

Geographically, for Romania, the priorities of CFSP should be the Balkans, the CIS and Russia, and probably the Caucasus. Romania deems

necessary to pay more attention, during the next Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), to the definition of the geographical limits of the EU. This would contribute to the definition of a strategic approach to its eastern neighbours, i.e. the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

In the foreseeable future, the constructive abstention clause represents for the EU perhaps the only possible way to function on a normal basis in an intergovernmental area such as CFSP/ESDP. As for the application of enhanced cooperation to CFSP/ESDP, Romania supported the idea from the beginning and suggested to use the ESDP concept as an *avant-garde* of enlargement (there were proposals to extend the Association Agreement to the defense sector). The QMV procedure, by contrast, should not be used as a means to ignore or marginalize small and medium-size countries. Finally, given the progress made and to be made in the CFSP/ESDP, Bucharest will probably support the establishment of a Council of Ministers of Defense on the model of the General Affairs and External Relations Council.

Romania is in favour of the review of the Treaties and backs the idea of a European Constitution or a Constitutional Treaty on the Union. The role of the European Parliament should become more important and it should also be given some authority over defense expenditure as related to art.17 TEU-type operations. A Committee of National Parliaments, on the model of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, could also be set up. There would be two possible options: *a minimal one*, with the Committee having only a consultative role (thus solving also the problem of the future of the WEU Parliamentary Assembly); and *a maximal one*,

with it receiving some competencies and a right of co-decision with the present European Parliament.

The future of the EU-NATO relationship depends, in a decisive way, on the finalisation of the arrangements allowing the Union access to NATO assets and capabilities. Romania supports the efforts of the EU in this domain as well as the prospect of harmonising the two organisations' exercise policy, along the pattern of past WEU-NATO relations. The efforts of the EU in the field of ESDP should not lead to the creation of a European Army, at least in the short and medium term.

6. Romania and enlargement after September 11

After the tragic events of September 2001, Romania became aware that security is indivisible and that ignoring aggression may mean inviting aggression. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the whole world was united against a common enemy: terrorism. As a consequence, Romania has immediately declared itself a *de facto* NATO member and acted accordingly. A concrete step was to offer NATO forces free access to all land, maritime and air facilities identified in this context. Furthermore, Romania announced its contribution to ISAF and Enduring Freedom.

Although the initial general reaction was one of shock and solidarity with the US, few weeks later Romania found itself still immersed in its economic and social problems. It also became obvious that the country is not seen as a potential target for similar attacks. Yet Bucharest considers that the impact of September 11 has been directly felt by South-Eastern Europe as a region. First,

because it still is an area with a very high conflict potential. Second, because terrorists have been active within its borders. Third, because a shift in political attention away from here might have unpredictable consequences, at a time when unfinished business still requires the involvement of the international community. And fourth, because further disintegration in this region could have a disruptive effect on the necessary coordination efforts of the anti-terrorist campaign. That is why the US decision to stick to its commitments in the Balkans was well received in Romania.

Under the new circumstances, some countries of South-Eastern Europe decided to launch a new initiative on „Counterproliferation, Border Security and Counterterrorism”. Romania intends to play an active role in it. By assuming the chairmanship of SEDM Coordination Committee (SEDM-CC) and Political-Military Steering Committee (PMSC)/MPFSEE in 2001 and of SEEGROUP, as well as the Co-Presidency of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe Working Table III in 2002, Bucharest brings its contribution to the coordination process among the various cooperation initiatives in the region. In this endeavour, it will most certainly take stock of the experience gained while chairing the OSCE in 2001.

Finally, Romania does not see an immediate linkage between the enlargement of the EU, that of NATO and the present security situation. Although the NATO-Russia relationship took a new and positive path and put the Baltic States altogether in a better position than before, Romania has important assets and there are very good chances for it to be invited to join NATO.

Final remarks

According to its own assessment as well as in line with the EU official documents, in the area of CFSP Romania has been able to take on the obligations of membership since the beginning of the negotiating process. Negotiations on chapter 26 – CFSP and 27 – External Relations have been provisionally closed short after they were open.

Acting as a stability factor and security provider in a troubled area, i.e. South-Eastern Europe, Romania has demonstrated the good will to stick to its commitments and implemented successfully the provisions of “regional ownership” concept.

The 9/11 events gave Romania the opportunity to prove its appetite for European and Euro-Atlantic integration; the actions taken in line with the EU Plan of Action of September 2001 as well as its involvement in ISAF and Enduring Freedom have demonstrated that Romania was a credible and reliable partner.