

## ROMANIAN SECURITY IN AN EVOLVING EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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**Abstract\*\*:** *With the arrival of formerly Soviet-dominated Central Eastern European countries in the EU, the conceptualisation of European security was yet again challenged, this time by different perceptions of old threats, instead of different readings of modern threats. The evolving (Western) European security culture has tended to address the challenges stemming from beyond EU's borders, while, in this process, the new EU member states brought with them security concerns sprung from within EU's borders and EU's taboo neighbourhood (Russia). Romania was such a country, which, in spite of fully subscribing to the Western perspective on (rather politically neutral) modern threats, also displayed a conservative 'territorial defence' attitude rooted in its recent adverse history and compatible, to a great extent, with American conceptions of security matters. Lessening the European East-West mismatch over defining and addressing Europe's security challenges may occur through a process of asymmetrical adaptation to each other's security concerns, though this mismatch may equally endure over time and even generate centrifugal forces at the heart of EU's security policy-making.*

**Keywords:** *Romanian foreign policy, European security culture, transatlantic relations*

### Romanian security traditions

*Historical context: Russia, the Europe's 'other'*

Romania's understanding of its long and often adverse exposure to Russia has played a significant role in the evolution of the country's security culture. Assuming that "many national security interests depend on a particular construction of self identity in relation to the conceived identity of others" (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein 1996: 33-78), a rich literature on Russia's relationship with its European neighbours has portrayed the persistence

of the Russian 'other' as a threat to Europe and to the countries situated in its closest vicinity, in particular. The Russian danger was presented not just in terms of geography, as a border case, but also in terms of Europe's cultural superiority over Russia's "nomadic and barbarian" nature (Reynold 1950: 25-28). Moreover, Russia's "[singular] totalitarian civilisation" was seen as the "radical negation of the West" (Kundera 1984: 36).

Specifically, Central Eastern Europe under Soviet domination was portrayed as an "*Occident kidnappé*", a "European civilisation under siege by Soviet barbarians"

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(Kundera 1984: 33-38; Neumann 1999: 103-109). As a consequence, in the post-Soviet era, Central Eastern European countries (CEECs) sought protection under the transatlantic security umbrella, emphasizing their 'Europeanness' by opposition to Russia's lack of 'Europeanness' (Roberts 1964: 386-388), and even more, by "play[ing] up the alterity of Russia in order to increase the integration of the European self" (Neumann 1999: 110-112). Thus, while Western Europeans saw post-Cold War threats shifting to issues like terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and "other dangers that emanate[ed] from beyond Europe's borders", CEECs looked at NATO membership "as a protection against a resurgent Russia", continuing "to think of security in terms of territorial defence" (Larabee 2006: 117-131).

Western Europeans seemed to perceive the Russian threat from a less dramatic angle, in part because of the wider geographical space separating them from Russia, and partly because their passage into the post-modernism of 'soft power' was backed by the 'hard power' of the US, country which could not have afforded the luxury of making the same passage. On top of that, Western Europe's inward-looking attitude and departure from the territorial defence culture was also justified by its anti-war psychology and the challenges of a very difficult and heavy integration agenda (i.e. pursuing peace dividends in a post-1989 era; Kagan 2003).

Romania's foreign policy was designed to reduce the Soviet Union's influence in the region, during communist years, and to ensure quick integration with the West (NATO and EU accession) in the years following the collapse of the Soviet block.

Under Ceaușescu's regime, Romania was known as the awkward partner of

the West, being shown a "world-wide respect [that] it had seldom enjoyed in its history" for its independent "splendid performances" abroad (Brown 1988: 263; Shafir 1985: 193). Romania advocated a higher degree of autonomy for the Soviet Union's satellites in the Moscow-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, NATO's opposite number. It was assertive in relations with Yugoslavia, China, North Korea, African and Non-Aligned Movement countries, and it was instrumental in seeking international settlements (i.e. between Israel and Arab countries, China and the Soviet Union, etc.). In addition, Romania was the only member of the Warsaw Pact to denounce the 1968 Soviet aggression on Czechoslovakia, the first communist country to be visited by American and French presidents, to be granted the most-favoured nation status by the US (along with Poland), to be offered membership in GATT (1971), IMF and the World Bank (1972), and the Group of 77 (1976). However, as Western criticism of Romania's human rights record grew stronger in the 1980's, Romania became more and more isolated on the international stage (Iordachi 1996).

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, and after a short period of hesitation, Romania unambiguously chose the path of integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. In doing so, it was pushed by the re-emergence of ethnical conflicts in the Balkans and by Russia's attempts to inherit the Soviet Union's regional and global influence. Romania stirred up its repressed identity of 'European', 'Latin' and 'Western', by also playing up the Russian threat and by attempting to dissociate itself from the pejorative labels of 'Eastern European' or 'Balkan' country (Hosu 2002). Romania's support to NATO allies in the Kosovo

war of 1999 contributed significantly to securing NATO membership (in 2004). In the security-military field, during the entire post-communist period, cooperation with the US was central and reached ever higher levels.

*The Romanian public: uninformed, unaccounted for, and unthreatened*

One of the most comprehensive surveys on public perceptions of Romania's foreign and security policy (Voinescu and Dobre 2005), revealed that Romanians had little interest in, but little information about, the country's foreign affairs (4.7 on a scale from 1 to 10). They looked down on the way in which Romanian foreign policy was conducted. A majority of Romanians also felt that their opinions were not taken into consideration by foreign policy makers. Both the public and interviewed elites acknowledged that the most influential actor in foreign policy making was the President. On this note, however, the primary formal responsibility of conducting foreign policy appears to lie with the Government, whose governing strategy (including in the area of foreign policy) is endorsed by the Parliament at inauguration. The President is the Commander-in-chief, the head of the National Defence Supreme Council, has a say in nominating (foreign and defence) ministers and appoints ambassadors. Notwithstanding the constitutional ambiguity in the division of competencies in the foreign policy area, governing elites have demonstrated, in post-communist years, a solid unity on Romanian foreign policy goals and means.

When asked about their identity, 51% of Romanians defined themselves as European, 23% as world citizens and 16% as South-Eastern/Balkan people. About 35% of the respondents considered

that no neighbouring country should receive a special attention, 25% favoured stronger relations with Moldova, 18% with Hungary and 7% with Ukraine. The countries towards which Romanians felt most affectionate were Italy, Spain, France, the United States, Germany and the UK. The least liked were Russia and Arab countries. More than 55% supported the ongoing strategic relationship with the US.

Almost 70% of the respondents shared the view that Romania was not facing any major threat. Of the 21% of Romanians: 80% saw themselves threatened by terrorism, 65% by organised crime, 54% by WMD proliferation, 44% by separatist tendencies, 42% by Black Sea tensions and 34% by the expansionist attitudes of neighbouring countries. By contrast, 15 out of the 18 interviewed elites considered that Romania was facing major threats, giving equal importance to terrorism, organised crime and Black Sea conflicts. In spite of feeling close to the US, most Romanians thought that the US was responsible for the current international tensions (43%). Arab countries came second (23%), while only 1% blamed Russia.

The majority of Romanians (70%) looked favourably on NATO and the EU and perceived them as the two inseparable halves of the transatlantic fabric. They associated NATO with military security attributes and the EU with political emancipation and enhanced economic prosperity. The presence of Romanian troops abroad was endorsed by roughly 50% of the population. In their view, the military's objectives should be humanitarian and peace-keeping operations. Only 17% agreed with the use of military force to oust a foreign country's political leaders accused of committing international crimes. In contrast with the public perception, all interviewed elites

supported Romanian military presence in international theatres of operations, applying the same humanitarian/peace-keeping logic.

### *Challenging neighbourhood*

Romania's relations with neighbouring countries were often riddled with animosities, mainly ethnical and territorial – a constant feature of Central Eastern Europeans, in general. Such tensions deprived Romania of the capacity to generate or boost the regional political, social and economic cohesion that usually foments a security community.

Apart from the lingering culturally-motivated dislike of **Russia** in the Romanian common psyche (Glenny 1999), contemporary Romanian-Russian relations are characterised by relatively modest political, economic, cultural and diplomatic exchanges. In the past 20 years, the Romanian president paid four visits to Moscow, while the Russian president visited Bucharest only once (on the occasion of the 2008 NATO Summit). Bilateral trade between the two countries is heavily dominated by gas imports from Russia (almost 90% of total trade).

A treaty on friendly relations and co-operation between Romania and Russia was signed only late, in July 2003. The most difficult items on the agenda were the condemnation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, which provided for the annexation of Romania's eastern part of Moldova by the Soviet Union, and the recovery of Romania's multi-billion worth treasure sent for safe-keeping to Russia during World War I. An agreement on how these pending matters should be further dealt with was mentioned in a

separate annex to the Treaty.

The object of more recent harsh Romanian-Russian exchanges and disagreements has been Romania's accession to NATO, the stationing of Russian troops in Transnistria (the break-away region of the Republic of Moldova), the stationing of US troops on the Romanian Black Sea coast, Romania's participation in the revised US missile defence programme, and Romania's proposals for the creation of alternative energy routes that would decrease Europe's reliance on Russia's natural resources. In addition, at different moments in time, unfriendly rhetoric on both sides fuelled furthermore negative perceptions of each other.

Bilateral relations with **Moldova** were among the most complicated. Moldova, a former part of Greater Romania before World War II, [until recently]<sup>1</sup> governed by Russia-friendly communists, perceived Romania as a serious threat to its sovereignty. Moldova claimed that the hints at the Romanian origins of the majority of its population, and at the shared language, alluded to Romania's unionist hidden agenda. Also, Moldova accused Romania of interfering in its domestic politics in the violent aftermath of the legislative elections of April 2009. The climax was reached when Moldova expelled the Romanian ambassador (and rejected the appointment of a new one) and imposed a stricter visa regime on Romanians, coming thus to odds with its commitments towards the EU. Since September 2009, after the demise of the governing Communist Party, and its replacement by a pro-Western coalition, Romanian-Moldovan relations experienced dramatic positive developments both in terms of discourse and policy.

<sup>1</sup> In August 2009, a coalition of four pro-Western parties pushed the long-time governing Communist Party into opposition.

In spite of strained relations with the regime in Chişinău for most of the post-communist period, Romania has paid special attention to Moldova, with which it shares a common history, language and culture. It has adopted the principle 'one nation, two states' and taken up the "political and moral duty" of supporting Moldova's European and transatlantic perspective (Romanian Security Strategy 2007 (RSS)). The presence of Russian troops in the break-away region of Transnistria has been thought to be a direct threat to Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and by extension, a threat to Romania's security.

It is believed that, indirectly, the lingering 'frozen' conflicts in Romania's neighbourhood, may feed into its own domestic separatist/anarchical tendencies (i.e. the Hungarian minority's recurring calls for autonomy in Transylvania), situation which is portrayed by the RSS as a major threat to the national security, which needs to be tackled in a systematic and preventative manner.

Relations with **Ukraine** have lacked a "diplomatic culture", as described by a senior Romanian official<sup>2</sup>. At present, there seems to be considerable resentment in Kiev towards Romania, fuelled by Romania's recent success before the International Court of Justice in a maritime delimitation dispute. Also, Romania's attempts to expose internationally Ukraine's illegal channel building in the Danube Delta, and its claims of unfair treatment of Romanian minority groups living in Ukraine, added to the tension between the two countries.

Romanian-**Turkish** relations have steadily improved for the past 20 years, driving the parties into discussions over the

sealing of a formal strategic partnership. Both countries are NATO members, Romania is an outspoken supporter of Turkey's EU accession, Turkey is Romania's third largest trade partner (7-8 billion Euros per year) and plays a key role in the Nabucco gas pipeline project which is fervently defended and promoted by Romania as an alternative energy route. However, Romania's bid for greater influence in the Black Sea region has been met with ambivalence by Turkish authorities, given Turkey's more assertive foreign policy agenda of present days.

Relations with the other two neighbouring new EU member states, **Hungary** and **Bulgaria**, have not been fully harmonious, as one might have expected. A considerable well-organised Hungarian minority in Romania, ambiguously supported by some politicians in Budapest, regularly called for greater autonomy for Hungarian-dominated counties in Transylvania. Bulgaria, too, was not hesitant in suggesting to Brussels, during pre-accession years, that its preparations for EU membership be dissociated from Romania's, when it appeared that Romania was lagging behind (Dăianu 2003). Furthermore, Bulgaria remained "passive" when Romania struggled to mould a Black Sea dimension of the EU's neighbourhood policy (Hatto and Tomescu 2008: IV).

Paradoxically, Romania's friendliest neighbour, **Serbia**, was reluctantly and temporarily alienated in the late 1990's in order to boost the country's NATO and EU membership credentials. Romania fully supported NATO attacks on Milosevic's Serbia and attempts to put a stop to atrocities in Kosovo. The situation reversed after becoming a NATO and EU member state. At present, Romania is

<sup>2</sup> Unnamed Romanian high-ranking official (in an April 2007 interview in Bucharest).

one of the staunchest and few supporters of Serbia's territorial integrity, in the context of Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence (curiously enough, in the same camp with Russia, and at odds with its Euro-Atlantic partners).

*Romania's most delicate security concerns: sovereignty and territorial integrity*

Apart from fully endorsing the Western reading of modern security challenges (terrorism, WMD proliferation, regional conflicts and organised crime), the latest Romanian Security Strategy (RSS 2007) explicitly and unequivocally points at the pre-eminence of NATO in collective defence arrangements, and at the importance of functional complementarity between the EU and NATO in the field of security and defence. The RSS calls for the development of a distinct role for Romania in the transatlantic security matrix, that of creating a more vigorous European and Euro-Atlantic presence in the Black Sea region. This has been seen critical for at least two reasons: to neutralise the dangers generated by regional separatist conflicts; and to advance bold energy projects aimed at diversifying European supply sources.

Both objectives indirectly allude to the need for a firmer international stance towards Russia, country which has been chastised for fuelling democratic deficits in the region and undermining the sovereignty of its neighbouring states (by illegally maintaining troops on their territories and/or by sponsoring separatist regimes). In addition, Russia has been criticised for using energy supplies to exert political influence over energy-dependent countries.

In this context, Romania has advocated measures meant to trim conventional weapons in the region and to bring to an

end the illegal stationing of military forces on the territories of neighbouring countries in several multilateral frameworks such as the own-bread Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue, OSCE and the EU's Black Sea Synergy. So far, it has achieved only limited results.

With regard to energy security, Romania persistently lobbied for a bolder EU energy policy that would provide for the diversification of supply routes, by connecting Europe with the Caucasus and Caspian regions via the Black Sea. The Nabucco gas project and the Pan European Oil Pipeline (PEOP) represent the core elements of this strategy, though they do not seem to enjoy a clear-cut political and financial support from the rest of the EU. Furthermore, Romania (together with Poland) even suggested the creation of an 'Energy NATO' to set up the basis for military action aimed at securing energy routes, thereby irritating Russia, and further driving away European partners.

### **The East-West tension at the heart of the evolving European security culture**

#### *The Western European security culture*

In parallel with the lingering Romanian perceptions of threat and following unworkable Western attempts to forge a European defence community somewhat detached from NATO, a distinct European security identity loomed with the Petersberg tasks agreed by WEU members in 1992, and taken over by the EU in 1999, at the same time with the consolidation of the ESDP within the CFSP framework. Western Europe came to the conclusion that it became necessary to start employing limited military force to sustain humanitarian/rescue missions, peace-keeping operations, crisis management and even peace-making missions.

The EU/NATO dichotomy was alleviated to some extent by the Berlin agreement of 1996-allowing for a European Security and Defence Identity within NATO, and the Berlin Plus compromise of 2002, which granted the EU the prospect of accessing NATO assets and capabilities, under certain conditions, in order to carry on ESDP missions. Furthermore, the EU decided to boost up its own capabilities by pledging to meet the (revised) Helsinki Headline Goals until 2010 (Cornish and Edwards 2001: 587-603; Cornish and Edwards 2005: 801-820).

On the ideological front, and closely related to the development of the CFSP/ESDP, the EU released, in 2003, its first security strategy paper (European Security Strategy - ESS), describing the ways in which Europe should tackle the modern challenges and threats to European and international security: terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, failed states and organised crime.

*...alienated Eastern security concerns?*

The fact of welcoming Eastern newcomers to the EU with a ready-made version of a European security strategy, immediately sparked off a sense of frustration among the new members, which felt that their most serious security concerns, those related to sovereignty and territorial defence, were completely missing from the Western mindmap.

From an Eastern perspective, not mentioning the 'elephant' in Europe's room (Russia) in security-related talks, was simply unacceptable. Ideally, the new enlarged EU should have naturally accommodated Eastern security concerns in a way in which EU's CFSP 'soft power' instruments could have been speedily employed in order to generate a robust EU response every time Russia challenged one

or more or all of the EU members. New member states have, of course, attempted to fire up EU's commitment to its new Eastern neighbourhood, achieving so far only modest results. These attempts were discretely thwarted by other member states which were reluctant to any initiative that, even remotely, might have looked confrontational towards Russia (e.g. Black Sea Synergy, Eastern Partnership).

Furthermore, the perception that an autonomous European defence was still pondered in some quarters of Western Europe represented an additional concern to the new member states. Firstly, becoming independent of US military capabilities, was already a very challenging ambition. Secondly, in spite of potentially acquiring new capabilities, CEECs did not appear confident enough that those capabilities might also be deployed in their desired direction. Thus, their allegiance to NATO/US seemed unshakable, despite noticeable changes in NATO's purpose and the implications of the participation of some NATO members in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

*Romania's making contact with the Western security culture*

Even today, Romanian high ranking officials still share the view that their country has not yet resolved its ambivalent stance towards Europe. On the one hand, Romania has proclaimed its 'Europeanness' and natural right of 'returning to Europe', in order to break away from the various unflattering identities and dangers associated with the Balkans and the East. On the other hand, Romania has remained suspicious about, and untrusting of, Western Europe's commitment to the security of its Eastern peers, who have historically seen themselves as victims of the shrewd horse trading between superpowers.

In this context, NATO (a euphemism for the US security pledge in Central Eastern European eyes) plays the leading role in the making of the Romanian security strategy. The recollection of past territorial losses and the perceived ongoing Russian threat keep Romanians locked into a 'territorial defence' state of mind which contrasts sharply with the evolving 'Russia-free' security culture espoused by Western countries.

During the post-communist years, Romania has sensed that its security concerns could realistically be alleviated by the US only via NATO, "falling in love with Article 5" of the North Atlantic Treaty (as the incumbent presidential national security adviser himself put it<sup>3</sup>). It appears that Romania would side with the US every time a major transatlantic rift emerges, the cost of alienating its European allies being seen as bearable. The realisation that the evolving (Western) European security culture may be departing from the conventional territorial defence thinking determined Romania not to shy away from fully supporting the US, which pledged to provide what the Europeans were falling short of.

Nevertheless, transatlantic divergences were painful to countries like Romania, which found them caught between the heavy-weights of the same family. Both NATO and EU accessions represented *sine qua non* objectives through which Romania would attain the long craved-after security and economic prosperity and would rekindle its Euro-Atlantic identity. Thus, a Romanian security strategy that should accommodate a Europe and an America at odds with each other has so far been unthinkable and inconceivable. Nevertheless, efforts to mitigate transatlantic divergences should not entail a loss of

American vigilance in a part of Europe that has not yet parted with its past perceived threats (as former heads of states of CEECs have pointed in an open letter to US President Obama<sup>4</sup>).

Consequently, a tit-for-tat exchange, in various degrees and at various levels, has started to take place between new and older member states: on one side, older member states critical of the newcomers for not being able to forget the past and realise the importance and dimension of the new security threats, and on the other side, new member states pointing at older member states' failure to notice the dangers still posed by a resurgent Russia (proven at the moment, by Russia's military conflict with Georgia and energy-related confrontation with Ukraine, among others).

The East-West tension over identifying European security challenges has already been portrayed as a complication of the EU enlargement process, which increases the odds of making contact with "zones of intractable conflict", but only to the extent to which the EU might have to respond to regional identity/religious conflicts with low-level military force (Richmond 2000: 42; Cornish and Edwards 2001: 598-599). It has been acknowledged that the EU played a significant role in bringing the Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008 to an end by employing persuasion and its good offices rather than military force, but in many Central Eastern European societies, the recognition of independence of the two break-away regions of Georgia by Russia represented another proof that attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one country is still possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century's Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with I. Fota (presidential national security adviser) in *Ziua*, 11 June 2009

<sup>4</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 July 2009

More worryingly than the lack of an EU firm stance on issues of sovereignty and territorial defence are the EU actions that appear to run counter to Romania's most sensitive interests. Such a situation was generated by the decision of a large number of EU member states to recognise Kosovo's declaration of independence, which Romania considered illegal under international law. From the very beginning, Romania argued that the recognition of Kosovo's self-determination would constitute a dangerous precedent to the sovereignty of many states of Europe which were still confronted with latent and unhealed tensions of ethnical origin. In this context, EU's determination to deploy a consistent ESDP mission to Kosovo (EULEX), which could eventually take over the responsibilities of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, might equate with a de facto EU contribution to state-building activities in Kosovo. Given Romania's strong participation in EULEX, authorities in Bucharest insisted that EU's operations in Kosovo should remain under the UN authority in order to avoid being proven a de facto contributor to state-building efforts.

Romania has supported the vast majority of CFSP initiatives, during and after pre-accession years, and its participation in ESDP missions was vigorous, especially on those occasions when the EU/NATO Berlin agreements were activated. Romania's attachment to the CFSP/ESDP stems from a real interest in the stability of its neighbourhood, but also from a sheer desire to be perceived as a true European, thus reviving an identity that was undermined during almost five decades of self-divesting communism. The modern challenges to European/international security advocated by the ESS are definitely high on Romania's

agenda, but the sense of frustration triggered by the repudiation of the main culturally-sanctioned security threat from the community's security strategy is still acute.

*The power of socialisation...giving in or resisting it?*

It appears that the projection of Eastern security concerns to the EU level is a very difficult endeavour. The other option to bridging the East-West rift over security priorities is a top-down process of socialisation whereby the new members states in the East would gradually let go the chimeras of the past and join in the progressive mainstream of EU member states. However, this latter perspective as well, may not be easy to materialise. An adaptation of such magnitude would require a shift in the way in which Eastern countries perceive threats and a positive track record of developments on the ground that should refute older security concerns and endorse the challenges of modern times.

In this context, Poland, the largest new EU member state and one of the staunchest Atlanticists, is thought to have undergone a process of metamorphosis from America's protégé to a constructive European (Zaborowski 2004). The factors favouring such a development have been: the alleviation of old geopolitical and historical threats (Germany became Poland's ally, and Russia, while still a "state of concern", no longer represented a serious danger); the growing dissatisfaction over US's unilateralism and lack of concrete benefits from Poland's military incursion in Iraq; and the realisation that Poland could be one of the EU's movers and shakers, after proving its effectiveness in shaping an Eastern dimension of the EU, especially towards Ukraine and Belarus.

By comparison, Romania appears to be a lingering, die-hard Atlanticist. Indirectly, Russia-fuelled regional 'frozen' conflicts and energy crises are still perceived as a threat to the country's security. Romania's attachment to US security pledges is as strong as ever, Romania's presence in Iraq being seen more as an act of duty rather than a source of potential (economic) gains. With respect to Romania's capacity to influence EU actions in the Black Sea region, Romania has, so far, not shown the same degree of dexterity displayed by Poland, for various reasons: not being as big, becoming a EU member state three years later, experiencing slower institutional adaptation to the EU 'ways of doing things', and being geo-strategically closer to "zones of intractable conflict".

### **Concluding remarks**

It is clear that Romania's 'territorial defence' concern is satisfactorily addressed within a NATO/US framework only. Nevertheless, Romania's expectations regarding a more spirited EU involvement in its Eastern/Black Sea neighbourhood are not necessarily linked to EU's physical

potential, but rely mostly on the political will needed to generate a coherent, unified EU stance towards this particular geographical area.

A deadlock in gathering support for such an assertive EU role may determine a change of attitudes in either direction: those opposing it could, over time, become convinced about the opportunity and advantages of an EU common action; or those promoting it, may appreciate the difficulty of reaching a compromise on the matter and either admit the infeasibility of the EU project or pursue a policy of its own, detached from the EU.

In the given circumstances, and following the Polish example, it looks like Romania should be the one lowering down, and adapting, its expectations and ambitions for a more determined EU involvement in regional security arrangements. At the same time, the reality on the ground has not made it easier for Romania to perform that change, but on the contrary, it has reconfirmed and reinforced its worst fears, driving it even deeper into the apparently sole zone of comfort cultivated by the US and NATO.

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