

## **Romania's Role in the International Relations of EU for the Eastern Partnership**

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**Abstract:** Romania, a European state, being at the confluence of culture, religion and policies of macroeconomic interest of the great powers, has always represented a factor of stability and a liaison between Western and Eastern state mentality. Now, more than any moment of the past afflicted by wars and utopian claims, Romania plays or at least should realize its importance in the EU's approaches regarding the neighborhood policies. In this paper we are trying to define and make understood the active role that Romania must have for a visionary evolution of what is called the European Union.

**Keywords:** Eastern partnership; the European Union; role; international relations

### **1. Introduction**

In order to understand this complex mechanism called the Eastern Partnership, we have the EU Treaty, Title V, Chapter I, outlining the principles and values on which European countries are consolidating their way towards an integrated and fair society and centred on the safety and well-being of each individual living in this society.

On the other hand, the 6 states in this cooperation process must be understood from several international and intrastate perspectives, which are basically the support and the background of the expected outcome. Therefore, Ukraine and Georgia, which are on the EU's right flank, with a great importance for the geostrategic position in the Black Sea and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and the Republic of

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Moldova on the left flank, equally important from a geostrategic point of view in the South Caucasus region, subscribe to this partnership in a continuous process of economic and legislative harmonization.

Romania's role in harmonizing the process of cooperation within the Eastern Partnership obviously follows the European legislative rules, but the experience in the former Eastern block makes Romanian diplomacy and the experience in the previous international relations with these countries constitute a very important back-up element for the actions of the European External Action Service of the EU (EEAS).

The role of the External Action Service (EEAS) supports the High Representative. It acts as an EU diplomatic service. The EEAS has a network of over 139 delegations and offices all over the world, having the task of promoting and protecting the EU's interests.<sup>1</sup>

The EU's Eastern Partnership policy, inaugurated in 2009, covers six post-Soviet states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Eastern partnership was created to support the economic, social and political reforms in these countries, enabling them to consolidate their democratization and good governance, energy security, environmental protection and social and economic development. All members, except Belarus, are part of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

Within the European Parliament there is a Southern Caucasus Delegation which supervises the Parliamentary Cooperation Committees (PCCs) for Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC) with Georgia and they monitor the work of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia.

## **2. The International Experience and the Active Role of Romania in the EU's Eastern Partnership**

Ensuring a stable, secure and prosperous neighborhood is a priority for Romania. Romania is working to maintain the EU's increased focus on the region and supports the Eastern partnership as a strategic action tool of the Union towards the Eastern partner countries, including in the context of the implementation of the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>.

Revised Neighborhood European Policy. Particular attention is paid to maintaining and strengthening the European path of Eastern partners, especially the Republic of Moldova.<sup>1</sup>

If we discuss about managing international disputes and Romania's capacity to clarify the disputes in such situations, we cannot fail to review the success of 5 years ago, on February the 3rd, 2009, when the International Court of Justice ruled in the dispute with Ukraine on the delimitation of the maritime spaces of the two Black Sea countries, giving Romania almost 80% of the disputed area, i.e. 9700 km<sup>2</sup> of continental shelf and exclusive economic area. The result was the first enlargement of sovereign jurisdiction and sovereign rights of Romania after 1918.

This decision was a success for the international law and of Romanian diplomacy, ending the dispute between Romania and Ukraine. Under these conditions, concrete steps have been clarified for the exploration and future exploitation of the economic resources of the area. In the Black Sea region, it also represented a model of peaceful settlement of a complicated and long-standing dispute, both states naturally accepting the Court's solution and implementing it without any difficulty.

Therefore, the use of international law instruments and an overall understanding of the neighbouring cooperation area places Romania on an extremely important EU action axis. Romania's versatility in the international relations with the former communist block and the rapid understanding of the European path that the neighboring states have undertaken to follow, makes Romania's presence indispensable in the process of negotiating and validating the norms aimed at integrating a safe and prosperous Europe.

In this respect, the Romanian state, through its specialized structures, puts into operation the strategic plan for EU cooperation and development in external relations. Thus, we present the guidelines for this strategy:

The legal framework for development funding under the development cooperation national policy is: Law 213/2016 regulating the international cooperation for development and humanitarian assistance actions financed from the Romanian state budget, the programmatic and institutional framework, as well as the financing and implementation framework in the field of international cooperation policy for development and humanitarian assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.mae.ro/node/1579](http://www.mae.ro/node/1579).

### **3. Areas of Activity**

According to art. 4 of Law 213/2016:

- The international cooperation for development and humanitarian assistance comprises all the measures undertaken and funded by Romania for international development;
- Humanitarian assistance includes the set of activities undertaken to help and support people in need in case of major natural disasters, hunger and malnutrition or other emergencies or conflicts, as well as to assist and support prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programs;
- Education for development represents the path of knowledge and skills needed to observe everyone's right of access throughout their lives to the opportunities for understanding and assuming global concerns in the development field and the local and personal relevance of these concerns and to assume its rights and responsibilities as a resident of an interdependent and changing world;
- Developing awareness in the field of development consists of those activities designed to promote better understanding and social responsibility regarding the underlying causes of poverty and the social structures that promote them;
- Communication in the field of development is a continuous social process based on dialogue, aimed at involving stakeholders, setting up media and channels to promote information exchange, risk and opportunity assessment, confidence building, social mobilization.

### **4. The Institutional Framework**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the coordinator of Romania's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance policy. It pursues the achievement of the international objectives and development commitments assumed by the Romanian state, annually report the carried out activities to the Government and concludes financing agreements with the beneficiaries of the programs.

(Law 213/2016, Article 5(1).

The Consultative Committee in the field of international cooperation for development and humanitarian assistance has attributions in the field of ensuring the unity of strategic planning and setting of priorities in the activities carried out

by the Romanian state. The Committee consists of representatives of specialized institutions, civil society, academic and business environment. (Law 213/2016, Article 7). The organization and functioning of the RoAid Agency are governed by Government Decision no. 1006/2016.

RoAid Development International Cooperation Agency ensures both programmatic planning in the field of international cooperation for development and humanitarian assistance, as well as its implementation. The Agency performs tasks such as budget programming, budget execution, monitoring, evaluation and reporting to national institutions and international organizations of actions undertaken by Romania (Law 213/2016, article 5(2). The organization and functioning of the RoAid Agency are regulated by Government Decision no. 1006/2016.

Programmatic framework

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs elaborates, in consultation with the Consultative Committee:

- The cooperation strategic multi-annual development program - a document containing development cooperation priorities and their implementation modalities for at least 4 years (Law 213/2016, Article 8);
- The development cooperation annual plan - a document planning Romania's concrete activities in the field during the financial year (Law 213/2016, art.9);

These documents are subject to approval by the Romanian Government.

Besides, in the context of the new global strategy of EU foreign policy and security, Romania, the Eastern border of the EU has a key role to play within the Eastern Partnership.

*At the European Council from June 28th, 2016, the High Representative Federico Mogherini presented the new Global Strategy of Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.*

*The strategy contains five main directions of action, the last two having a security dimension: the Resilience of states and societies from the East and South of the Union, regional Orders based on cooperation, global Governance for the 21st century, Union Security (a stronger Union), i.e. an integrated approach of conflicts.*

The implementation process of the implementation Plan in the field of security and defense represents a major priority at European level in the current period and significant progress has already been made.

Up-to-date progress is particularly related to the reform and integration of the common defense security policy (CDSP) civilian and military structures of crises management, the implementation of permanent structured cooperation, the establishment of a coordinated annual review process of defense. These developments were reflected in the first comprehensive implementation report of the EU Global Strategy. This document was presented by the High Representative Federico Mogherini on June 14th 2017, one year after the launch of the Global Strategy.

Romania's contribution to the development of civilian and military capabilities at European level.

Romania supports the strengthening of the EU's role in the field of security and defense, based on the principles of inclusiveness, solidarity and complementarity with NATO.

Romania is a member of some important structures for CDSP, such as the EU Security Centre (EUSC) in Torrejon (Spain), the EU Security Studies Institute (SSI) in Paris (France) or the European Defense Agency/ EDA), with the headquarters in Brussels.

To support some effective EU actions in the CSDP field, the member states have agreed on the need to build civilian and military capabilities dedicated to this purpose. The European Defense Agency (EDA) has a central role in the process of developing military capabilities, as well as limiting the fragmentation at European level in this strategic area by facilitating collaborative programs developed and carried out by the Member States under its “umbrella”. Romania, depending on the needs and interests in the field of equipment, is also involved, together with its partners within the EU, in a series of top-level development programs in order to get the highest added value from these efforts.<sup>1</sup>

The Capability Development Plan represents the main element of support in the process of Member States' defense planning and capacity development by limiting

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<sup>1</sup> [www.mae.ro/node/1879](http://www.mae.ro/node/1879).

duplications, thus creating the premises for a more effective response to crisis situations which the Union will have to deal with in the future.

Romania equally supports the programs under the Pooling & Sharing Initiative, aiming, among other things, to avoid duplication, to make better use of limited resources and to increase interoperability. In line with the military contribution, Romania has been involved in the EU Battle Groups/ EU BGs with specialized force packages. This policy of active involvement will continue in the future. Romania also supports the improvement of the modularity and flexibility of the EU BGs, which remain the main military tool of rapid response at the EU's disposal in the management of an external crisis.

At the meeting in June 19th, 2017, at the EU ministerial meeting regarding the Eastern partnership, they discussed the main points of interest governing this partnership and the implementation of the 20 results to be carried out.

The four areas are:<sup>1</sup>

- a stronger governance for institution building and good governance;
- a stronger society to increase mobility and interpersonal contacts;
- a stronger economy to stimulate economic development and take advantage of market opportunities for greater prosperity;
- a stronger connectivity to improve interconnections, especially in the field of transport and energy.

For this purpose, the High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn presented the ministers a working document, jointly drafted by the EEAS and the European Commission: “The Eastern partnership - Focusing on key priorities and outcomes”. The document, which identifies **20 outcomes for 2020** in the four areas, was firstly presented in December 2016 and revised this month on the basis of contributions from EU member states and the partner countries within the Eastern Partnership. In concrete terms, it sets out concrete expected results of cooperation and should act as a joint working plan for the summit and for the year 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.consilium.europa.eu>.

## 5. Conclusions

What is not dealt with in a very well-defined way are the monitoring mechanisms and the immediate measures to remedy the difficulties encountered during the process of developing the action lines on the four areas.

The EU cooperation with Russia has also an important role and will not hesitate, against the background of historical interests and new strategic challenges in the economic and military spheres, to use mechanisms and methods of interference in the Eastern partnership plans. It must be taken into account that at this moment, Russia has created its islands of influence and control in Hungary, Bulgaria and Serbia, a strategic aspect of great importance. Even though the Eastern partnership was created as a platform of promoting the rule of law and democracy, without a political purpose to counteract Russia, these aspects which Russia will not compromise must not be neglected.

To conclude, Romania could and must capitalize on its role as a pillar in the successful implementation of this partnership.

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